

# CHAPTER 13

## INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 13

In this chapter, under the similes of a girdle and bottles of wine, the destruction of the Jews is set forth. Some exhortations are given them to repent and humble themselves, even men of all ranks and degrees among them; and their sins, the source of their calamities, are pointed out to them. An order is given to the prophet to get him a linen girdle, with instructions what to do with it, and which he observed, (<sup><2413B></sup>Jeremiah 13:1,2), a fresh order to take it and hide it in the hole of a rock by the river Euphrates, which he accordingly did, (<sup><2413B></sup>Jeremiah 13:3-5) and he is bid a third time to go and take it from thence, which he did; when he found it spoiled, and good for nothing, (<sup><2413B></sup>Jeremiah 13:6,7), then follows the application of this simile, or the signification of this sign; that in like manner the pride of Judah and Jerusalem should be marred, and for their wickedness and idolatry should become good for nothing, like that girdle; whereas they ought to have cleaved to the Lord, as a girdle does to a man's loins, and to have been an honourable people to him, (<sup><2413B></sup>Jeremiah 13:8-11). By the simile of bottles filled with wine is signified that all the inhabitants of the land, king, priests, prophets, and common people, should be like drunken men, that should dash one against another, and destroy each other, which the mercy of God would not prevent, (<sup><2413D></sup>Jeremiah 13:12-14), some exhortations are made to the people in general, to be humble, and confess their sins, and give glory to God, before it was too late; which are enforced by the prophet's affectionate concern for them, (<sup><2413E></sup>Jeremiah 13:15-17) and to the king and queen in particular, since their crown and kingdom were about to be taken from them; the cities, in the southern parts, going to be shut up, and not opened; and even the whole land of Judea, and all its inhabitants, in a little time would be carried captive, (<sup><2413B></sup>Jeremiah 13:18,19), and, to certify them of the truth of these things, they are bid to look to the north, from whence the enemy was coming to carry them captive, even the beautiful flock committed to their care, (<sup><2413D></sup>Jeremiah 13:20), and to consider what they could say for themselves, when their punishment should come upon them suddenly, as the sorrows of a woman in travail, (<sup><2413D></sup>Jeremiah 13:21) and should they ask the reason of this, it

was owing to the multitude of their iniquities, and to their habit and custom of sinning, which made their case desperate, (<sup>2432</sup>Jeremiah 13:22,23), wherefore a resolution is taken to disperse them among the nations, and that this should be their lot and portion, because of their many abominations, and yet not without some concern that they might be purged from their iniquities, (<sup>2434</sup>Jeremiah 13:24-27).

**Ver. 1.** *Thus saith the Lord unto me*, etc.] In a vision, and by the spirit of prophecy: when this was said is not certain, very likely in the reign of Jehoiakim; the prophet gives an account of what had been done, the present tense is put for the past.

*Go and get thee a linen girdle*; or, “a girdle of linens”<sup>f252</sup>; a girdle made of flax or fine linen, which the prophet had not used to wear; and having none, is bid to go, perhaps from Anathoth to Jerusalem, to “get” one, or “buy” one: this girdle represents the people of the Jews in their more pure and less corrupted state, when they were a people near unto the Lord, and greatly regarded by him, and had a share in his affections; when they cleaved unto him, and served him, and were to his praise and glory: “and put it upon thy loins”; near the reins, the seat of affection and desire, and that it might be visible and ornamental; denoting what has been before observed: “and” or

*but put it not in water* or, “bring it not through it”<sup>f253</sup>; meaning either before he put it on his loins; and the sense is, that he was not to wash it, and whiten it, but to wear it just as it was wrought, signifying that those people were originally taken by the Lord of his own mercy, and without any merits of theirs, rough, unwashed, and unpolished as they were: or else, after he had wore it, as Jarchi, when it was soiled with sweat; yet not to be washed, that it might rot the sooner: and so may design the corrupt and filthy state of this people, and the ruin brought thereby upon them, which was not to be prevented.

**Ver. 2.** *So I got a girdle*, etc.] Or, bought<sup>f254</sup> a linen one, as directed:

*according to the word of the Lord*; his express order and command; the prophet was not disobedient to the heavenly vision:

*and I put it on my loins*; without washing it before or after, and wore it publicly for some time.

**Ver. 3.** *And the word of the Lord*, etc.] The Targum is,

“the word of prophecy from before the Lord:”

*came unto me the second time, saying*; what distance of time there was between this order and the former is not known.

**Ver. 4.** *Take the girdle which thou hast got, which is upon thy loins*, etc.] Either he is bid to take it off his loins, on which it was; or to go with it on them; seeing the taking it off does not seem absolutely necessary; and go with it to the place directed to in the following words:

*and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock*; by the river side, where the waters, coming and going, would reach and wet it, and it drying again, would rot the sooner. This signifies the carrying of the Jews captive to Babylon, by which city the river Euphrates ran, and the obscure state and condition they would be in there; and where all their pride and glory would be marred, as afterwards declared.

**Ver. 5.** *So I went and hid it by Euphrates*, etc.] Or, “in”<sup>f255</sup> it; in a hole of the rock, upon the banks of it:

*as the Lord commanded me*: all this seems to be done not really, but visionally; it can hardly be thought that Jeremy should be sent on two such long journeys, on such an account, which would take up a considerable time to perform it in; but rather that he went and came in like manner as Ezekiel did, in the visions of God, from Chaldea to Jerusalem, and from thence to Chaldea again, (<sup><318B></sup>Ezekiel 8:3 11:24), and so Maimonides<sup>f256</sup> was of opinion, as Kimchi on the place observes, that all this was done in a vision of prophecy.

**Ver. 6.** *And it came to pass after many days*, etc.] When the girdle had lain long in the hole, by the side of Euphrates; this denotes the length of the Babylonish captivity, which was seventy years:

*that the Lord said unto me, arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence, which I commanded thee to hide there*; which may denote the return of these people from captivity, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah; (see <sup><251></sup>Jeremiah 25:11,12), though this seems to be visionally done, in order to express the wretched state and condition these people were in; either before the captivity, which was the cause of it; or at their return from it, when they were no better for it.

**Ver. 7.** *Then I went to Euphrates*, etc.] In a vision; this is the second journey, of which (See Gill on “<sup><24135></sup>Jeremiah 13:5”),

*and digged*; the hole, in process of time, being stopped up with soil or sand, that were thrown up over it; this digging was in a visionary way; (see <sup><24185></sup>Ezekiel 8:8):

*and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it*; which he knew again by some token or another:

*and, behold, the girdle was marred*; or “corrupted”<sup>f257</sup>; it was become rotten by the washing of the water over it, and its long continuance in such a place:

*it was profitable for nothing*; it could not be put upon a man’s loins, or be wore any more; nor was it fit for any other use, it was so sadly spoiled and so thoroughly rotten. It is in the Hebrew text, “it shall not prosper to all”<sup>f258</sup> things; that is, not “to anything”<sup>f259</sup>, as many render it.

**Ver. 8.** *Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying*.] Or the word of prophecy from before the Lord, as the Targum; and now follows the application of this sign to the thing signified, and the whole intention of it is opened.

**Ver. 9.** *Thus saith the Lord, after this manner*, etc.] As this girdle has been hid in Euphrates, and has been marred and rendered useless; so in like manner, and by such like means,

*will I mar the pride of Judah, and the great pride of Jerusalem*; or their glory, or excellency<sup>f260</sup>; that which they gloried in, and were proud of; their city which was burnt, and their temple which was destroyed by the Chaldeans; their king, princes, and nobles, who were carried captive into Babylon, by the river Euphrates, and stripped of all their grandeur, honour, and glory; and so the Targum,

“so will I corrupt the strength of the men of Judah, and the strength of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, which is much;”

and to which agrees the Syriac version, which renders it,

“the proud or haughty men of Judah, and the many haughty men of Jerusalem.”

**Ver. 10.** *This evil people, which refuse to hear my words*, etc.] Sent by the prophets, to whom they turned a deaf ear; and though they pressed them, and importunately desired them to give them a hearing, they refused it; and this showed them to be a bad people, very degenerate and wicked; and which further appears by what follows:

*which walk in the imagination of their heart*; which was evil, stubborn, and rebellious, (see <sup><407></sup>Jeremiah 7:24 9:14):

*and walk after other gods, to serve them, and to worship them*; went to Egypt and Assyria to pay their adoration to those who were not by nature gods; and this was the cause of their ruin and destruction:

*shall even be as this girdle, which is good for nothing*: as they were corrupt in their practices, and were become useless and unserviceable to God; so they would be carried captive into a foreign country, where they would be inglorious, and unprofitable, uncomfortable in themselves, and of no use to one another.

**Ver. 11.** *For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man*, etc.] Being girt tight unto him:

*so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah*; whom he chose above all people, and caused to approach unto him, and dwell in his courts; whom he favoured with his presence, and encouraged them to follow after him, and cleave to him in faith and affection, and with full purpose of heart; so that they were a people near unto him as a man's girdle is to his loins: and the end of this was, and would have been, had they continued so,

*that they might be unto me for a people*; his own people, a special and peculiar people above all others, peculiarly favoured and blessed by him, and continue so, and in the enjoyment of all good things:

*and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory*; for a famous and renowned people, that should be to the praise and glory of God, and an honour to him, and an ornament to the profession of him; whereas they were the reverse:

*but they would not hear*; the words of the Lord, nor obey his voice; but served other gods, departed from the Lord, to whom they should have cleaved, and so became like this rotten girdle.

**Ver. 12.** *Therefore thou shalt speak unto them this word*, etc.] The following parable:

*thus saith the Lord God of Israel*; what was to be said is prefaced with these words, to show that it was not a trifling matter, but of moment and importance, and not to be slighted and despised as it was:

*every bottle shall be filled with wine*; meaning every inhabitant of Judea and Jerusalem, comparable to bottles or earthen vessels, as the Jewish writers interpret it, for their being empty of all that is good, and for their frailty and brittleness being liable to be broke to pieces, and to utter ruin and destruction; these are threatened to be “filled with wine”; not literally taken, such as they loved; though there may be an allusion to their intemperance, and so this is a just retaliation for their sins; but figuratively, with the wine of divine wrath; and their being filled with it denotes the greatness of the calamities which should come upon them, and be around them on all sides:

*and they shall say unto thee*; upon hearing the above, and by way of reply to it:

*do we not certainly know*; or, “knowing do we not know”<sup>f261</sup>; can we be thought to be ignorant of this,

*that every bottle shall be filled with wine?* every child knows this; what else are bottles made for? is this the errand thou art sent on by the Lord? and is this all the knowledge and information that we are to have by thy prophesying? or what dost thou mean by telling us that which we and everybody know? what is designed by this? surely thou must have another meaning in it than what the words express.

**Ver. 13.** *Then shall thou say unto them*, etc.] Explaining the above words:

*thus saith the Lord, behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land*; this is the application of the parable, and shows that by every bottle is meant every inhabitant of Judea:

*even the kings that sit upon David's throne*; or, “that sit for David on his throne”<sup>f262</sup>; that succeed him one after another; more kings may be meant than one, as Jehoiakim and Zedekiah; or the present reigning king, and the princes of the brood, are designed; who, though of David's family, and on his throne, yet this could not secure them from the calamity threatened:

*and the priests*; who ministered in holy things; their sacred office and function would not preserve them from ruin:

*and the prophets*; the false prophets, as the Targum, that prophesied smooth things, and prophesied them peace and safety, these should be involved in the common destruction:

*and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with drunkenness*; with tribulation, as the Targum interprets it; and adds,

“and shall be like a drunken man;”

giddy, stupid, unable to help themselves, or to advise one another.

**Ver. 14.** *And I will dash them one against another*, etc.] As drunken men fall foul on one another, and quarrel and fight; or in allusion to bottles and earthen vessels they are before compared to; and may denote the internal broils and contentions among themselves, that instead of assisting each other in their distress, they would be destroying one another; which was notorious in the last siege of Jerusalem:

*even the fathers and the sons together, saith the Lord*; no relation, nor even age nor sex, being regarded:

*I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them*: the Lord’s hand was in all this; everything was by his permission, and according to his will; he would not prevent the enemy’s invading, besieging, and taking them, nor hinder themselves from destroying one another; but suffer a general calamity to come upon them, without showing the least mercy to them, so great were their sins, and such the provocation.

**Ver. 15.** *Hear ye, and give ear*, etc.] Both to what goes before, and what follows after. The words doubled denote the closest and strictest attention:

*be not proud*; haughty, scornful, as above all instruction, and needing no advice and counsel, self-conceited, despising the word of God, and his messages by his prophets; or, “do not lift up yourselves”<sup>f263</sup>; above others, and against God:

*for the Lord hath spoken*; it is not I, but the Lord; and what he has said shall certainly come to pass; so the Targum,

“for in the word of the Lord it is so decreed;”

it is in vain to oppose him; his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure; none ever hardened themselves against him, and prospered.

**Ver. 16.** *Give glory to the Lord your God*, etc.] By confessing sin unto him; by humiliation for it before him; by believing what he says, hearkening to his word, and obeying his commands, and living to his honour and glory; (see <sup><117D></sup>Joshua 7:19), especially by believing in Christ, the true God, and true Messiah, embracing his Gospel, and his ordinances:

*before he cause darkness*; before the Lord brings on the dark dispensation threatened, the calamity before spoken of; repent while space is given, before it is too late; so the Targum,

“before tribulation comes upon you, and ye be like to those that walk in darkness.”

The Babylonish captivity may be meant, which was a dark day with the Jews, as is their present case, and which may be included; and it is applicable to any dark state of the church of God, such as may be now apprehended as near, through the spread of Popery, the growth of errors and heresies, the persecution of the saints, the slaying of the witnesses, the cessation of the Gospel ministry and ordinances for a while; which is that day of darkness and gloominess, that hour of temptation that shall come upon all the earth, to try its inhabitants; happy those that give glory to God by their faith in him, and by keeping the word of his patience:

*and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains*; or, “of twilight”; or, “of the evening”; or rather, “upon the mountains in the evening”<sup>f264</sup>; at eventide; at which time it is troublesome and dangerous travelling on mountains. These may design either the mountains to which they would flee for shelter, (<sup><1216></sup>Matthew 24:16), or those which lay in the way to Babylon, over which they should travel when carried captive; or rather the kingdoms of Babylon and Media, whither they should be carried, and where they should endure much affliction and hardship; it being usual to signify kingdoms by mountains; so Babylon itself is, (<sup><1525></sup>Jeremiah 51:25 <sup><341E></sup>Zechariah 4:7), perhaps there may be some allusion, as Sanctus thinks, to Babylon itself, which being situated in a marshy place, might be generally covered with a cloud or mist, and, together with the smoke of the city, might look like a dark mountain; and especially the hanging gardens in it looked at a distance like<sup>f265</sup> mountains with forests on them. It may be applied to the eventide of the latter day, when many shall stumble and fall



through mountains of difficulties and discouragements in the way of religion; of professing the pure Gospel and ordinances of it, through the prevailing darkness of the age, and the persecution of men; and to the evening of life, and the dark mountains of death and eternity, on which men may be said to stumble and fall when they die; and when their everlasting state will appear to be fixed as immovable as mountains; and there will be no more means of grace, of faith, repentance, and conversion, but blackness of darkness for evermore, outer darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth; wherefore, before this time comes, it behooves persons to be concerned for the glory of God, and the everlasting welfare of their souls:

*and while ye look for light*; prosperity and happiness, as the false prophets gave out they should have; or for help and assistance from the Egyptians, to whom they sent:

*he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness*; that is, the Lord, who would disappoint them, and, instead of having that relief and comfort they were promised, would bring upon them such shocking calamities, which would be as terrible as death itself, or at least as the shadow of death, and be like gross darkness, even such as was in Egypt, which might be felt; (see <sup><340></sup>Isaiah 49:9).

**Ver. 17.** *But if ye will not hear it*, etc.] The advice and exhortation now given, to repent of sin, be humble before God, and glorify him:

*my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride*; he would no more act in a public character; but, laying aside his office as a prophet and public instructor, would retire to some corner, where he might not be seen or heard, and there lament the sins of the people, particularly their “pride”, which had been the cause of their ruin; or mourn on account of their glory and excellency, as the word may be rendered, which would depart from them; their city and temple would be burnt; and their king, princes, and nobles, and the flower of the nation, carried into Babylon; so the Jews<sup>f266</sup> interpret it of the glory of Israel, which should cease from them, and be given to the nations of the world; (See Gill on “<sup><243></sup>Jeremiah 13:9”);

*mine eyes shall weep sore*; or, “shedding tears it shall shed tears”<sup>f267</sup>; in great abundance, being, as he wished his eyes might be, a fountain of tears to weep night and day, (<sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 9:1):

*and run down with tears*; or, “mine eye let down tears”<sup>f268</sup>; upon the cheek in great plenty. The phrases are expressive of the sorrow of his heart for

the distresses of his people, and of the certainty of them; the reason of which follows:

*because the Lord's flock is carried away captive:* that is, the Lord's people, as the Targum; to whom he stood in the relation of a shepherd, and they to him under the character of a flock; and this was what so sensibly touched the heart of the prophet, that they were a people that the Lord had an interest in, a regard unto, and among whom he had been formerly glorified; wherefore it was to the loss of his honour and interest that these should be given into the hands of their enemies, and be carried captive; and this troubled him, for nothing lies nearer the heart of a good man than the glory of God.

**Ver. 18.** *Say unto the king, and to the queen,* etc.] Jehoiachin, and his mother Nehushta, as it is generally interpreted by the Jewish commentators, and others; who, with many princes and officers, were carried captive into Babylon, (<sup><12412></sup>2 Kings 24:12-15) or rather Zedekiah and his wife; since the captivity after threatened is a perfect and complete one, which Jehoiachin's was not:

*humble yourselves, sit down;* or, "sit down humbled"<sup>f269</sup>; come down from your thrones, and sit in the dust; humble yourselves before the Lord for your own sins, and the sins of the people; in times of general corruption, and which threatens a nation with ruin, it becomes kings and princes to set an example of repentance, humiliation, and reformation; though it may be this is rather a prediction of what would be, that they should descend from their throne, and lose their grandeur, and be in a low and abject condition, than an exhortation to what was their duty; since it follows:

*for your principalities shall come down;* their royal state and greatness, and all the ensigns of it; and especially such as they had upon their heads, as the word used denotes, and as the following explanation shows:

*even the crown of your glory;* or glorious crown, which should fall from their heads, or be taken from them, when they should be no more served in state, or treated as crowned heads.

**Ver. 19.** *The cities of the south shall be shut up, and none shall open them,* etc.] Meaning the cities of Judah, which lay in the southern part of the land of Israel, and to the south of Babylon; which might be said to be shut up, and not in the power of any to open, when besieged by the Chaldean army; or rather when destroyed, that there were none to go in

and out; though some think the cities of Egypt are intended, which lay south of Judea, from whence the Jews should not have the relief they expected, and where they should find no refuge; but the former sense seems best:

*Judah shall be carried away captive all of it;* it was in part carried away in Jehoiachin's time, and wholly in Zedekiah's; which seems to be here respected:

*it shall be wholly carried away captive;* or, in perfections<sup>f270</sup>; most perfectly and completely; the same thing is meant as before, only in different words repeated, to express the certainty of it.

**Ver. 20.** *Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north,* etc.] There are a Keri and a Cetib of the words "lift up" and "behold"; they are written in the singular number, and may be considered as directed to the king, as the words following are; and they are read in the plural number, the state and whole body of the people being called upon to observe the Chaldean army, which came from the north; and is represented as on the march, just at hand to invade, besiege, take, and carry them captive. The Septuagint version renders it, "lift up thine eyes, O Jerusalem"; and the Arabic version, "O Israel: where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" that is, the people, as the Targum interprets it, which were committed to the care and charge of the king, as sheep into the hands of a shepherd; and were a fine body of people, chosen of God and precious, distinguished above all others by wholesome and righteous laws and statutes, and special privileges; a people who were a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, and a peculiar people, the glory of the whole earth; but now carried, or about to be carried, captive. It is no unusual thing to represent a king as a shepherd, and his people as a flock, guided, governed, and protected by him, and who is accountable for his trust to the King of kings; (see <sup><1987></sup>Psalm 78:71,72).

**Ver. 21.** *What will thou say when he shall punish thee?* etc.] Or, "visit upon thee"<sup>f271</sup>; that is, either when God shall punish thee for thy sins, thou canst bring no charge of injustice against him, or murmur and repine at the punishment inflicted on thee; so Jarchi; to which agrees the Targum,

"when he shall visit on thee thy sin;"

or else, to which the following words seem to incline, when the enemy shall visit upon thee; so Kimchi and Abarbinel, when the Chaldeans shall come

upon thee, and pay thee a visit, an unwelcome one; yet who wilt thou have to blame but thyself? so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “when they shall visit thee”; these words are directed, not to the king, nor to the queen neither; but to the body of the people, the Jewish state, represented as a woman; who, upon consideration of things past, would have a great deal of reason to reflect upon themselves for what they had done in former times, which had led on to their ruin and destruction:

*(for thou hast taught them to be captains, and as chief over thee;)* the Jews showed the Assyrians the way into their country, used them to come thither, and taught them how to conquer them, and be masters over them; or, “hast taught them against thee”<sup>f272</sup>; to thy hurt and detriment, to be captains or governors;

*for an head,* to have the rule over them: this was done by Ahaz, when he sent to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria to come and save him out of the hands of the kings of Syria and Israel, (<sup><2K></sup>2 Kings 16:7) and by Hezekiah, when he showed the messengers of the king of Babylon all his treasures; these were invitations and temptations to come and plunder them:

*shall not sorrows take thee as a woman in travail?* denoting the suddenness of their calamities; the sharpness and severity of them; and that they would be inevitable, and could not be prevented.

**Ver. 22.** *And if thou say in thine heart,* etc.] Not daring to express it with the mouth; and which, notwithstanding, God, that knows the heart, was privy to, and could discern all the secret workings of it; putting such a question as this:

*wherefore come these things upon me?* all these calamities, the invasion and siege of the enemy, famine, sword, captivity, etc.: the answer returned is,

*for the greatness of thine iniquity;* the enormous crimes the Jews were guilty of, such as idolatry, blasphemy, etc. which were attended with aggravated circumstances: or, “for the multitude of thine iniquity”<sup>f273</sup>; their sins being so many, as well as great:

*are thy skirts discovered, and thy heels made bare;* being obliged to walk naked and barefoot, their buttocks uncovered, and their legs and feet naked, without stockings or shoes, as captives used to be led, to their great shame and disgrace; (see <sup><31D></sup>Isaiah 20:2-4). The phrases are expressive of

captivity, and the manner of it; the cause of which was the greatness and multitude of their sins. The Targum is,

“because thy sins are multiplied, thy confusion is revealed, thy shame is seen.”

**Ver. 23.** *Can the Ethiopian change his skin?* etc.] Or, “the Cushite”; either, as the Arabic version, the “Abyssine”, the inhabitant of the eastern Ethiopia; properly an Ethiopian, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it; or, the “Chusean Arabian”; the inhabitant of Arabia Chusea, which was nearer Judea than the other Ethiopia, and better known, and which were of a dark complexion. The Targum renders it, the Indian; and so does the Syriac version. In the Misna<sup>f274</sup> mention is made of Indian garments, with which the high priest was clothed on the day of atonement; upon which the gloss<sup>f275</sup> is, that they were of linen of the country of India; and which is the land of Cush (or Ethiopia), as Jonathan Ben Uzziel interprets (<sup>חֵצְבֵי</sup>Jeremiah 13:23)

“can the Cushite, the Indian, change his skin?”

and it is highly probable, that, in the time of Jeremiah, no other India was known by the Jews but Ethiopia, or Arabia Chusea, and no other black people but the inhabitants thereof, or any other than the Arabians; and, as Braunius<sup>f276</sup> observes, it need not be wondered at, that with the Jews, in those times, Ethiopia and India should be reckoned the same country; when with the ancients, whatever was beyond the Mediterranean sea, as Arabia, Ethiopia, and even Judea itself, was called India; so Joppa, a city of Phoenicia, from whence Andromeda was fetched by Perseus, is by Ovid<sup>f277</sup> said to be in India; so Bochart<sup>f278</sup> interprets the words of the Saracens or Arabians, who are of a swarthy colour, and some black; and indeed have their name from the same word the raven has, which is black; and particularly the inhabitants of Kedar were black, one part of Arabia, to which the allusion is in (<sup>צִוְמֵם</sup>Song of Solomon 1:5). Jarchi interprets the word here by “the moor”, the blackamoor, whose skin is naturally black, and cannot be changed by himself or others; hence to wash the blackamoor white is a proverbial expression for labour in vain, or attempting to do that which is not to be done:

*or the leopard his spots?* a creature full of spots, and whose spots are natural to it; and therefore cannot be removed by any means. Some think a creature called “the ounce”, or “cat-a-mountain” is meant, whose spots are

many, and of a blackish colour; but the description well agrees with the leopard, which is a creature full of spots, and has its name in the eastern languages, particularly the Chaldee and Arabic, from a word<sup>f279</sup> which signifies “spotted”, “variegated”, as this creature is; so the female is called “*varia*” by Pliny<sup>f280</sup>, because, of its various spots; and these spots are black, as the Arabic writers in Bochart<sup>f281</sup>. The word here used signifies such marks as are made in a body beat and bruised, which we call black and blue; hence some render it “livid”, or black and blue spots<sup>f282</sup>; and these marks are in the skin and hair of this creature, and are natural to it, and cannot be changed; and it is usual with other writers<sup>f283</sup> to call them spots, as well as the Scripture:

*then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil*; signifying that they were naturally sinners, as blackness is natural to the Ethiopian, and spots to the leopard; and were from their birth and infancy such, and had been so long habituated to sin, by custom founded upon nature, that there was no hope of them; they were obstinate in sin, bent upon it, and incorrigible in it; and this is another reason given why the above calamities came upon them. The metaphors used in this text fitly express the state and condition of men by nature; they are like the Ethiopian or blackamoor; very black, both with original and actual sin; very guilty, and very uncomely; and their blackness is natural to them; they have it from their parents, and by birth; it is with them from their infancy, and youth upwards; and very hard and difficult to be removed; it cannot be washed off by ceremonial ablutions, moral duties, evangelical ordinances, or outward humiliations; yea, it is impossible to be removed but by the grace of God and blood of Christ. Their sins are aptly compared to the leopard’s spots, which are many and natural, and difficult to get clear off. What is figuratively expressed in the above metaphors is more plainly signified by being “accustomed” or “taught to do evil”<sup>f284</sup>; which denotes a series and course of sinning; a settled habit and custom in it, founded on nature, and arising from it; which a man learns and acquires naturally, and of himself, whereby he becomes void of fear and shame; and there is a good deal of difficulty, and indeed a moral impossibility, that such persons should “do good”: nothing short of the powerful and efficacious grace of God can put a man into a state and capacity of doing good aright, from right principles to right ends, and of continuing in it; for there is no good in such men; nor have they any true notion of doing good, nor inclination to it, nor any ability to perform it: in order to it, it is absolutely necessary that they should first be

made good men by the grace of God; that they should be regenerated and quickened by the Spirit of God; that they should be created in Christ Jesus unto good works, and have faith in him; all which is by the grace of God, and not of themselves.

**Ver. 24.** *Therefore will I scatter them as the stubble that passeth away,* etc.] Because of their many sins, and continuance in them, their habits and custom of sinning, they are threatened with being carried captive into other nations, where they should be dispersed and separated one from another, which would make their state and condition very uncomfortable; and this would be as easily and as swiftly done as the light stubble which is blown away by every puff of wind; nor would they be able any more to resist the enemy, and help themselves, than the stubble is to stand before the wind; as follows:

*by the wind of the wilderness;* which blows freely and strongly; so the Chaldean army is compared to a dry wind of the high places in the wilderness, even a full wind that should scatter and destroy, (<sup>20411</sup>Jeremiah 4:11,12); or, “to the wind of the wilderness”<sup>f285</sup>; and so may denote the wilderness of the people, or the land of Babylon, whither they should be carried captive, and from whence the wind should come that should bring them thither. Kimchi and Ben Melech make mention sea wilderness between Jerusalem and Babylon, as what may be intended.

**Ver. 25.** *This is thy lot,* etc.] Meaning not the king’s, or the queen’s only, but the lot of the whole Jewish state:

*the portion of thy measures from me, saith the Lord;* which were divided and distributed, and measured out to them by the Lord, who appointed these calamities to befall them, and brought them upon them, and that in righteous judgment. The Targum is,

“and the portion of thine inheritance;”

who, instead of having the land of Canaan for their inheritance, to which the allusion is, and of which they boasted, the land of Babylon was assigned them, not to be possessors of it, but captives in it; and instead of having God to be their portion and inheritance, they were banished from him, and this was but righteous measure; they had measure for measure:

*because thou hast forgotten me;* their Maker and Benefactor; the goodness he had shown them, the mercies and benefits he had bestowed upon them;

or, “my law”, as the Arabic version; or, “my worship”, as the Targum; therefore he forgot them, took no notice of them, hid his face from them, and gave them up into the hands of their enemies:

*and trusted in falsehood*; either in the Egyptians and Assyrians, who deceived them; or in their idols, which were falsehood and lying vanities, and could not help them.

**Ver. 26.** *Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face*, etc.] Turn them up, or throw them over the head or face; that is, expose to public shame and disgrace; which was done when their city and temple were burnt, and they were carried captive; hence it follows:

*that thy shame may appear*; that their sins might appear to themselves and others, of which they had reason to be ashamed. The allusion is to the treatment which captive women sometimes meet with, or adulterous women, to which the Jews are here compared. The Targum is,

“and I also will reveal the confusion of thy sin upon thy face, and thy shame shall be seen.”

**Ver. 27.** *I have seen thine adulteries*, etc.] Not literally such, though they were greatly guilty of that sin; but figuratively, their idolatries:

*thy neighings*; expressive of their strong desires after other gods, like that of adulterers and adulteresses after one another; and both which are like the neighing of horses. Kimchi thinks this designs their rejoicing in their evil works:

*the lewdness of thy whoredom*; their sinful thoughts, and wicked desires, which were continually after their idols and idolatrous practices:

*and thine abominations on the hills in the fields*; their idols, which were abominable to God, and ought to have been so to them; and which they placed on high hills, and there worshipped them; all which were seen and known by the Lord, nor could it be denied by them; and this was the reason of their being carried captive, and therefore could not complain they had been hardly dealt with; yea, notwithstanding all this, the Lord expresses a tender and compassionate concern for them:

*woe unto thee, O Jerusalem!* sad will be thy case, dreadful are the calamities coming upon thee, unless thou repentest:



*wilt thou not be made clean?* wilt thou show no concern, and make use of no means to be cleansed, nor seek for it, where it is to be had? neither repent of sin, nor reform from it, nor seek to God for his grace, signified by clean water; or to the blood of Christ, the fountain opened, which cleanses from it:

*when shall it once be?* some instances there were of it in the times of Christ and his apostles; but it will not be completely done until they seek the Lord, and his Christ, and fear him, and his goodness, in the latter day; when they shall turn unto him, and all Israel shall be saved; or, “thou wilt not be cleansed after a long time”<sup>f286</sup>; this the Lord foresaw, and therefore pronounces her case sad and miserable.