

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 17

This chapter is a further prophecy of the destruction of the Jews, with the causes of it, their sins, as their idolatry, which was notorious; of which their own consciences, their altars, and their children, were witnesses, (²⁴¹⁷⁰Jeremiah 17:1,2) for which they are threatened with the spoil of their substance and treasure, and discontinuance in their land, (²⁴¹⁷³Jeremiah 17:3,4) as also their confidence in an arm of flesh, which brought the curse of God upon them, when such are blessed that trust in him; and the difference between those that trust in men and those that trust in the Lord is illustrated by very apt similes, (²⁴¹⁷⁵Jeremiah 17:5-8), the source of which vain confidence is the wicked heart of man, known to none but God, (²⁴¹⁷⁹Jeremiah 17:9,10) and the vanity of it is exposed by a partridge sitting on eggs without hatching them, (²⁴¹⁷¹Jeremiah 17:11), and their departure from God, by trusting in the creature, and in outward things, is aggravated by their temple being the throne and seat of the divine Majesty; by what God is to his people that trust in him; and by the shame and ruin that follow an apostasy from him, (²⁴¹⁷²Jeremiah 17:12,13), wherefore the prophet, sensible of his own backslidings, prays to be healed and saved by the Lord, who should have all the praise and glory, (²⁴¹⁷⁴Jeremiah 17:14) and then relates the scoffs of the people at the word of God by him, another cause of their ruin; declares his own innocence and integrity; prays for protection and security from fear in a time of trouble; and for confusion, terror, and destruction to his persecutors, (²⁴¹⁷⁵Jeremiah 17:15-18), then follows an order to him from the Lord, to go and stand in the gate of the city, and exhort all ranks of men to the observation of the sabbath, with directions how to keep it, which had not been observed by their fathers, and which was another cause of their ruin, (²⁴¹⁷⁹Jeremiah 17:19-23), and the chapter is closed with promises of blessings in city, court, and country, in church and state, should they religiously observe the sabbath day; but if they profaned it, the city of Jerusalem, and its palaces, should be burnt with fire, (²⁴¹⁷⁴Jeremiah 17:24-27).

Ver. 1. *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron*, etc.] Or an iron tool, such as engravers use in working on hard matter:

[*and*] *with the point of a diamond*; such as glaziers use in cutting their glass; though this is not the word used for a diamond in (^{<12318>}Exodus 28:18), this word is elsewhere translated an adamant, (^{<3180>}Ezekiel 3:9 ^{<3172>}Zechariah 7:12). Bothart^{f346} takes it to be the smiris, which jewellers use in polishing their gems. Jarchi makes mention of a Midrash, or exposition, which explains the iron pen of Jeremiah, and the point of the adamant, or diamond, of Ezekiel, because of what is said of them, (^{<3118>}Jeremiah 1:18 ^{<3180>}Ezekiel 3:9). Kimchi thinks the word “shamir”, rendered “diamond”, is expressive of the subject matter on which their sin is said to be written, and not of the instrument with which; and then it is to be read thus,

“the sin of Judah is written with an iron pen (with an iron claw, or nail, of which mention is made in some Jewish writings) upon “shamir”, or an adamant stone;”

which is no other than their stony heart, as it follows:

it is graven upon the table of their heart; where it is so fixed that it cannot be rooted out, and will never be forgotten by them, but always remembered and desired; for which they have the strongest affections, having a place, and having made deep impressions there: or this may denote the evidence of it in their own consciences, which bore witness to it, and which they could not deny:

and upon the horns of your altars; on which the names of their idols were engraven or inscribed, (^{<4173>}Acts 17:23), so that their idolatry was notorious; their consciences within, and their altars without, were testimonies of it and besides, the blood of the sacrifices was poured upon the horns of the altar, (^{<1847>}Leviticus 4:7) and which, as it was done at the offering of sacrifices appointed of God, so very probably at the offering of sacrifices to idols, and which made their sin notorious; yea, even all the sacrifices of the ceremonial law were a standing testimony of their being sinners, and carried in them a confession of sin, and that they were deserving of death, and so were a handwriting against them; for there is no need to limit the sin of Judah here to idolatry, but it may include all their sins; and so the Targum expresses it in the plural number,

“the sins of Judah;”

though, if any particular sin is intended, it seems to be idolatry, by what follows.

Ver. 2. *Whilst their children remember their altars*, etc.] Which is a further proof of their long continuance in idolatrous practices, and a fresh witness against them; they trained up their children in them; who, when grown up, could not forget them, but imitated them, and went on in the same evil ways. Some render the words, “as they remember their children, so they remember their altars”^{f347}, and their groves, by the green trees upon the high hills”; they had the same love to their idols, and the worship of them, as they had to their children. This sense is received by Kimchi;^{f348}; yea, they had a greater affection for their idols than for their children; since they made their children pass through the fire to Moloch, and burnt their sons and their daughters to Baal. The Targum renders it, “their groves under every green tree”: (see ^{<2422>}Jeremiah 2:20 3:6). Kimchi and Ben Melech connect green trees not with groves but with altars; and take the sense to be, that their altars were by green trees; since groves and green trees were the same, and which altars also were upon high hills.

Ver. 3. *O my mountain in the midst of the field*, etc.] Meaning either the temple, called the mountain of the house, and of the Lord’s house, (^{<3382>}Micah 3:12 4:1), or else Jerusalem, which stood on a hill in the midst of a plain, surrounded with fruitful fields and gardens; or in the midst of a land like a field. The Targum is,

“because thou worshippst idols upon the mountains in the field:”

I will give thy substance and all thy treasures to the spoil; all the riches of the city and temple to be the spoil and plunder of the enemy; (see Gill on ^{<2453>}Jeremiah 15:13”).

and thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders. The sense is, that all their substance and treasure throughout their borders, the riches of the whole land, as well as of the city and temple, (^{<2453>}Jeremiah 15:13) and all their high places throughout the land, which were used for sin, for idolatrous practices, on account thereof, should become the spoil of the enemy.

Ver. 4. *And thou, even thyself*, etc.] Or, “thou, and in thee”^{f349}; that is, thou and those that are in thee, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea; or, “thou even through thyself”^{f350}; through thine own fault, by reason of thy sins and iniquities:

shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; be removed from it, and no longer enjoy it: or, “shalt intermit from thine heritage”^{f351}; shall not till the land, plough and sow, and reap, and gather the fruits of it: this was enjoined on every seventh year, when the land was to have its rest, or sabbath, (^{<1230>}Exodus 23:10,11), but this law they did not observe; and now, therefore, whether they would or not, the land should be intermitted, and not tilled and enjoyed by them. The Targum takes in the whole of the sense,

“and I will bring an enemy upon your land; and it shall be desolate as in the year of intermission: and I will take vengeance of judgment upon you, until I remove you from your inheritance which I have given unto you;”

the land of Canaan, which was given them for an inheritance:

I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not; the Babylonians in Chaldea; or, as Jerom thinks; the Romans. Of the different reading of these words, (see Gill on “^{<2453>}Jeremiah 15:13”):

for ye have I kindled a fire in mine anger; or by their sins had caused the anger of the Lord to burn like fire:

which shall burn for ever; as it will in hell, and therefore called everlasting fire: here it only means until these people and their country were consumed by the enemy; perhaps some reference is had to the burning of the city and temple by the Babylonians, or Romans, or both. These first four verses are left out by the Septuagint interpreters, Jerom thinks, to spare their own people.

Ver. 5. *Thus saith the Lord*, etc.] Here begins a new discourse, or part of one; or, however, another cause or reason of the ruin and destruction of the Jews is suggested; namely, their trust in man, or confidence in the creature, which is resented and condemned:

cursed be the man that trusteth in man; as the Jews did in the Egyptians and Assyrians; (see ^{<2419>}Jeremiah 2:36,37), and in Abraham their father, and in being his seed, as they did in Christ’s time; and which was trusting in the flesh; and as all such may be said to do who trust in their natural descent from good men, (^{<4109>}Matthew 3:9 ^{<4083>}John 8:33,39 ^{<4104>}Philippians 3:4,5), they also trusted in Moses, in the law of Moses, and in their having, hearing, and obeying it; which pronounces every man cursed that does not

perfectly perform it: they trusted in themselves, and in their own righteousness; despised others, and rejected Christ and his righteousness; and brought an anathema upon them, (⁴⁰⁵John 5:45 ⁴⁰⁹Luke 18:9) and all such that trust in their own hearts, and in their own works, trust in man, in the creature, in creature acts, and involve themselves in the curse here denounced. The Jews also, to this day, expect the Messiah to come as a mere man, and so trust in him as such; and all those that call themselves Christians, and take Christ to be a mere creature, as the Arians, and a mere man, as the Socinians, may be said to trust in man, and entail a curse upon themselves; though we trust in Christ, yet not as a man, but as he is the true and living God:

and maketh flesh his arm; or his confidence, as the Targum, to lean upon, and be protected by; man is but flesh, feeble, weak and inactive; frail and mortal; sinful and corrupt; and so very unfit to make an arm of, or to depend upon: God, and an arm of flesh, are opposed to each other; as are also rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having confidence in the flesh, (⁴⁰⁸2 Chronicles 32:8 ⁴⁰⁹Philippians 3:3):

and whose heart departeth from the Lord: as men's hearts may, under the greatest show of outward religion and righteousness; and as they always do, when they put their trust in such things; every act of unbelief and distrust of the Lord, and every act of trust and confidence in the creature, carry the heart off from God; every such act is a departing from the living God; (see ⁴⁰⁹Isaiah 29:13 ⁴⁰⁹Hebrews 3:12).

Ver. 6. *For he shall be like the heath in the desert*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "myrice": and so the Latin interpreter of the Targum; but the word that paraphrase makes use of according to R. Hai, mentioned by Kimchi, signifies something that is thorny without, and eatable within; but this is not likely to be intended here. The Septuagint version renders it, "wild myrice"; it seems to be the same that is called "erice", or "ling", and "heath"; which delights to grow in wild and waste places; hence such with us are called "heaths", whether this grows upon them or not. It is a low shrub, fruitless and useless; and, because neither bears fruit nor seed, is reckoned by Pliny^{f352} among unhappy plants, and such as are condemned or forbid religious uses; and very fit to represent such persons as truest in men and in themselves, and not in the Lord:

and shall not see when good cometh; perceive or receive any advantage by rain coming upon it; as such persons do not receive any good by the pure

ministration of the word, compared to rain; and so the self-righteous Jews did not see when the Messiah came, who is goodness itself; nor see him, and embrace him, nor his righteousness; but rejected him and that; went about to establish their own, and did not submit to his; nor did they attain to righteousness, or enjoy eternal life; as is the case of all self-justiciaries:

but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land, and not inhabited: which became literally true of the land of Judea, for the rejection of the Messiah, and trust in themselves; (see ^{<6223>}Deuteronomy 29:23) and may fitly represent the barren pastures of a man's own works of righteousness, which such as trust in themselves feed upon. All the characters are expressive of barrenness, as a wilderness, places parched with heat, and where salt is; for, as Pliny^{f353} says, where salt is found, it is barren, and produces nothing.

Ver. 7. *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord,* etc.] In the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, in Christ the essential Word of God; (see ^{<8122>}Psalm 2:12,6,7 85:11,12) who have a spiritual knowledge of him, and so trust in him, (^{<8990>}Psalm 9:10) who have seen the vanity and emptiness of all other objects of trust, there being no salvation in them, only in him; who betake themselves to him as their only refuge; lay hold, rest, and rely upon him, as their Saviour; commit their all unto him; trust him with all their concerns, respecting life and salvation, and with their immortal souls; and expect all from him, grace here, and glory hereafter: who trust in his person for their acceptance with God; in his righteousness for their justification; in his blood for the pardon of their sins; in his fulness for the supply of their wants; in his power for protection and preservation; and in all for eternal life and happiness: and such are blessed persons; for they are in the utmost safety; they are as Mount Zion, which can never be removed; they shall want no good thing, temporal or spiritual, proper for them; they enjoy great peace now, and in the world to come everlasting glory:

and whose hope the Lord is; the Word of the Lord, according to the Targum, as before: Christ, who is the Hope of Israel, our hope, and Christ in us the hope of glory, (^{<2448>}Jeremiah 14:8 ^{<5000>}1 Timothy 1:1 ^{<51027>}Colossians 1:27), whose hope is from the Lord, of which he is the author and giver; and is a good hope, through his grace; and which has the Lord Jesus Christ for its object; who turn in to him as prisoners of hope; and lay hold on him, the hope set before them; and do hope in him for pardoning mercy,

salvation, and eternal life. Blessed men! their hope shall not make them ashamed; they shall not be disappointed, (^{<486>}Psalm 146:5).

Ver. 8. *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters*, etc.] Not as a “heath or shrub”, but as a “tree”, a green olive tree, a palm tree, a cedar in Lebanon, a fruitful flourishing tree; and he is one that really is a tree of righteousness, that is filled with the fruits of righteousness; and not like one of the trees of the wood, that grows wild, or as a wild olive tree, but as one “planted” in a garden, vineyard, or field; and is one that is planted in Christ, in the likeness of his death and resurrection, and in the house of the Lord; and that not only by means of the ingrafted word, and of Gospel ministers, who plant and water instrumentally; but by the Lord himself, as the efficient cause; and therefore called “the planting of the Lord”; and such plants as shall never be plucked up, (^{<231>}Isaiah 60:21 61:3) and not like the earth in the wilderness, or trees in dry and barren soils; but like such that are planted “by the waters”, which run about their roots, and make them fruitful; by which may be meant the love of God, and the streams of it; the fulness of grace in Christ, and the word and ordinances, the still waters of the sanctuary, (^{<492>}Psalm 23:2 46:4 ^{<215>}Song of Solomon 4:15):

and that spreadeth out her roots by the river; and which is the cause of the spreading of them: such an one is rooted in Christ, and in the love of God, which is as a river; with which being watered, he casts out his roots as Lebanon, as the cedars there; and is both firm and fruitful; (see ^{<345>}Hosea 14:5):

and shall not see when heat cometh; shall perceive it, nor be affected with it, being planted so near a river: or “shall not fear”; which is the Cetib, or writing of the Hebrew text; and is followed by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; though the Keri, or marginal reading, is, “shall not see”; which is followed by the Targum, and by us, and others. The man that trusts in the Lord, he is not afraid of the heat of persecution when it comes, nor is he hurt by it; he does not perceive it, but grows the more under it; when a hypocrite and formal professor is withered by it; (see ^{<406>}Matthew 13:6,20,21):

but her leaf shall be green; neither fail, nor lose its colour: a profession of faith is held without wavering; there being a radical moisture, the truth of grace, a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life, to supply and support it:

and shall not be careful in the year of drought; for lack of moisture, having a sufficiency. The man that trusts in the Lord is, or ought to be, and may he, careful for nothing, but cast all his care on the Lord, that careth for him: whether this year of drought is to be understood of famine, in a literal sense; of carelessness in which, or strength of faith, Habakkuk is a famous instance, (^{<3817>}Habakkuk 3:17-19) or of a famine of the word, in a spiritual sense, through the persecutions of men; yet even the believer is not solicitous, or in anxious distress; God provides food for him, and nourishes him, as he does his church, though forced to fly into the wilderness:

neither shall cease from yielding fruit; the fruits of grace and righteousness, the fruits of good works, and which are brought forth by the good man, the believer in Christ, even unto old age, (^{<9214>}Psalm 92:14,15) with the whole compare (^{<3003>}Psalm 1:3), to which there seems to be an allusion.

Ver. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things*, etc.] This is the source of the idolatry and creature confidence of the Jews, sins which were the cause of their ruin; and though what is here said is particularly applicable to their hearts, yet is in general true of the heart of every man; which is “deceitful”, and deceiving; and puts a cheat upon the man himself whose it is: it deceives him with respect to sin; it proposes it to him under the notion of pleasure; it promises him a great deal in it, but does not yield a real pleasure to him; it is all fancy and imagination; a mere illusion and a dream; and what it gives is very short lived; it is but for a season, and ends in bitterness and death: or it proposes it under the notion of profit; it promises him riches, by such and such sinful ways it suggests; but, when he has got them, he is the loser by them; these deceitful riches choke the word, cause him to err from the faith, pierce him through with many sorrows, and endanger the loss of his soul: it promises honour and preferment in the world, but promotes him to shame; it promises him liberty, but brings him into bondage; it promises him impunity, peace, and security, when sudden destruction comes: it deceives him in point of knowledge; it persuades him that he is a very knowing person, when he is blind and ignorant, and knows nothing as he ought to know; and only deceives himself; for there is no true knowledge but of God in Christ, and of a crucified Christ, and salvation by him; (see ^{<41818>}1 Corinthians 3:18 8:1,2 ^{<4003>}Galatians 6:3) it deceives in the business of religion; it makes a man believe that he is a very holy and righteous man, and in a fair way for heaven, when he is far from that, and the character it gives him; in order to this, it suggests to him that

concupiscence or lust, or the inward workings of the mind, are not sin; and it is only on this principle that it can be accounted for, that Saul, before conversion, or any other man, should be led into such a mistake, as to conclude that, touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless: it represents other sins as mere peccadillos, as little sins, and not to be regarded; and even puts the name of virtue on vices; profuseness and prodigality it calls liberality, and doing public good; and covetousness has the name of frugality and good economy: it directs men to compare themselves and their outward conduct with others, that are very profane and dissolute; and from thence to form a good character of themselves, as better than others; and as it buoys up with the purity of human nature, so with the power of man's freewill to do that which is good, and particularly to repent at pleasure; and it puts the profane sinner upon trusting to the absolute mercy of God, and hides from him his justice and holiness; and it puts others upon depending upon the outward acts of religion, or upon speculative notions, to the neglect of real godliness; (see ^{<4022>}James 1:22,26). The man of a deceitful heart, the hypocrite, tries to deceive God himself, but he cannot; he oftentimes deceives men, and always himself; so do the profane sinner, the self-righteous man, and the false teacher; who attempts to deceive the very elect, but cannot; yea, a good man may be deceived by his own heart, of which Peter is a sad instance, (^{<4033>}Matthew 26:33,35,70,72,74). The heart is deceitful to a very great degree, it is superlatively so; "above all", above all creatures; the serpent and the fox are noted for their subtlety, and wicked men are compared to them for it; but these comparisons fall short of expressing the wicked subtlety and deceit in men's hearts; yea, it is more deceitful to a man than the devil, the great deceiver himself; because it is nearer to a man, and can come at him, and work upon him, when Satan cannot: or "about", or "concerning all things"^{<354>}; it is so in everything in which it is concerned, natural, civil, or religious, and especially the latter. The Septuagint version renders it "deep"; it is an abyss, a bottomless one; there is no fathoming of it; the depths of sin are in it; (see ^{<4016>}Psalms 64:6) and, seeing it is so deceitful, it should not be trusted in; a man should neither trust in his own heart, nor in another's, (^{<4035>}Proverbs 28:26 25:19), "and desperately wicked": everything in it is wicked; the thoughts of it are evil; the imaginations of the thoughts are so; even every imagination, and that only, and always, (^{<4015>}Genesis 6:5) the affections are inordinate; the mind and conscience are defiled; the understanding darkened, so dark as to call evil good, and good evil; and the will obstinate and perverse: all manner of sin and wickedness

is in it; it is the cage of every unclean bird, and the hold of every foul spirit; all sin is forged and framed in it; and all manner of evil comes out of it, (~~681~~ Revelation 18:1 ~~4059~~ Matthew 15:19) yea, it is wickedness itself, (~~918~~ Psalm 5:9), it is so even to desperation; it is “incurably wicked”,^{f355}, as it may be rendered; it is so without the grace of God, and blood of Christ:

who can know it? angels do not, Satan cannot; only the spirit of a man can know the things of a man within him; though the natural man does not know the plague of his own heart; the Pharisee and perfectionist do not, or they would not say they were without sin; such rant arises from the ignorance of their own hearts; only a spiritual man knows his own heart, the plague of it, the deceitfulness and wickedness in it; and he does not know it all; God only knows it fully, as is expressed in the next words, which are an answer to the question; (see ~~461~~ 1 Corinthians 2:11 ~~1088~~ Kings 8:38 ~~992~~ Psalm 19:12).

Ver. 10. *I the Lord search the heart*, etc.] The inward parts of it, every room and corner in it; and know the thoughts of it; all its intents, purposes, designs, contrivances, and imaginations; all the secret motions of it, and the wickedness that is in it; so that this is an answer to the question in the preceding verse; and therefore, though the heart is deceitful, it cannot deceive him, because he judges not according to outward appearance; he sees and knows the heart; and none but the Lord, or he who is Jehovah, can so search the heart as thus to know it; wherefore, since Christ is said to search the reins and the heart, and to know the thoughts of men, and to be a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, he must be Jehovah, and the true God, (~~6023~~ Revelation 2:23 ~~4094~~ Matthew 19:4 ~~8012~~ Hebrews 4:12,13):

I try the reins; the most inward and remote parts, covered with fat, and out of sight: these are the seat of the affections; and the Lord tries these, whether they are towards him or not; and whether sincere or hypocritical; Christ the omniscient God knew Peter’s love to him, and the sincerity of it; for which he appeals to him as such, (~~4217~~ John 21:17):

even to give every man accordions to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings; to do which it is necessary to search the heart, and try the reins, the fountain of all actions; and in which the principles of them are, and according to which they are denominated and judged of: in the future judgment every secret thing will be brought into account; the counsels of the heart will be made manifest; the book of conscience will be opened; and

out of it, as well as other books, men will be judged according to their ways and works; and therefore it is requisite that the Judge should be the Lord God omniscient, the searcher and trier of the hearts and reins, as Christ is.

Ver. 11. *As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not,* etc.]

Here seems to be another sin pointed at, as the cause of the ruin of the Jews; as idolatry and trust in the creature before mentioned; so riches unjustly got, and these boasted of and trusted in; the folly of which is illustrated by the simile of a bird sitting on eggs, and not hatching them; being either addled, or broke by the male through lust, or by the foot of man or beast, being laid on the ground; Or by a bird which “gathers”^{f356}, as some; or “hatches”, as others, eggs it has not laid; which being hatched, run away from it, and so not enjoyed by it. The Targum is,

“as the partridge, or “koraah”, which gathers eggs that are not its own, and nourishes young ones which will not follow it, so, etc.”

whether the partridge is meant by “kore”, the word here used, is uncertain. Bochart^{f357} thinks the “woodcock”, or “snite” or “snipe”, is intended. Jarchi interprets it, by the “cuckoo”, which is not likely; since that does not take away another’s eggs, and sit on them; but lays its own eggs in another’s nest, and leaves them to be hatched by it; but it must be understood rather of such an one that gets the eggs of another, and hatches them, but cannot keep the young when hatched; and this is said of the partridge, that when its own eggs are broke, it will get others, and sit upon them, and hatch them; but being hatched, knowing her not to be their dam, and hearing the voice of that which is, run from her to it^{f358}:

so he that getteth riches, and not by right; but by fraud, rapine, and oppression; such are they that will be rich, that are resolved upon it at any rate, right or wrong; and such persons may succeed, and become rich by illicit methods; but then, as such riches may be truly called “mammon of unrighteousness”; so they will not profit in a time to come, in a day of wrath; neither are they of long continuance now: for such a man

shall leave them in the midst of his days; which, according to the common term of life, and course of nature, he might hope to arrive to; he shall die, and not enjoy what he has got together; while he is promising himself much and long happiness, his soul is required of him; and whose his substance shall be, he knows not; the riches he has heaped up together, he knows not

who shall gather; nor to whom he leaves them, whether a wise man or a fool: however, this is certain as to himself,

and at his end shall be a fool; he shall appear to be one for getting riches in an unlawful way; for trusting in uncertain riches; for promising himself a great deal of pleasure and felicity in them for a long time, which he could not secure; and for neglecting the true riches of grace and glory; (see ~~2129~~ Luke 12:19-21). The Targum is,

“at his end he is called a wicked man;”

because of the unjust manner in which he has got his riches, and which appears by his end; every wicked man is a fool. The word here used is “Nabal”; and as is his name, so is he.

Ver. 12. *A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary.*] The temple, which was a sanctified place, where the holy God dwelt, his holy worship was observed, and his holy people met together. Here, from the beginning of its erection, from the time of its dedication, the Lord took up his residence; the glory of the Lord filled the house; he set up his throne in it, a high and glorious one; he dwelt between the cherubim, over the mercy seat, typical of the throne of grace. Kimchi and Ben Melech observe that R. Samuel Ben Tibbon is of opinion that the “caph” of similitude is here wanting; and that it should be interpreted thus, “as a glorious high throne”, etc.: heaven is the high and glorious throne, where the Lord sits and reigns; and the temple or sanctuary bore some likeness and resemblance to it; it was a figure of it; and every place where God is worshipped, and grants his presence, is no other but “the house of God, and the gate of heaven”; and therefore it was great wickedness and ingratitude in the Jews, who were so highly favoured of God, to forsake him, his house, his worship, his word and ordinances, as the following verses show; and which suggest another reason of their destruction. The words in connection with the following verse may be read thus,

“and thou, whose glorious high throne the place of our sanctuary [is], O Lord, the Hope of Israel, etc.”

Ver. 13. *O Lord, the Hope of Israel,* etc.] Of all true Israelites; such as are regenerate persons, and true believers in him; Christ is the author and giver of that hope that is in them; the door of it unto them; the object on which it is exercised; the ground and foundation of it, or what gives encouragement to it; and the person they are hoping for; Old Testament saints hoped,

waited for, and expected his first coming; and New Testament saints are hoping for his second coming, and to be for ever with him^{f359}:

all that forsake thee shall be ashamed; who forsake him as the Hope of Israel, and place their hope elsewhere; in the creature, in themselves, in their riches, in their righteousness, and profession of religion; such shall be ashamed of their vain hope; whereas a true hope, a hope upon the right object, on Christ the Hope of Israel, makes not ashamed; nor shall the man that has it be ashamed of that. The Targum paraphrases it,

“all who forsake thy worship shall be ashamed;”

for they forsake their own mercies, who forsake the house and ordinances of God, and the assembling of themselves together:

and they that depart from me; the prophet; refusing to hear the word of the Lord by him, which was all one as departing from the Lord. Some render it, “from thee”, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; and so the Targum,

“and the ungodly that transgress thy word;”

whose heart departed from the Lord, as in ^{ארו}*Jeremiah 17:1* notwithstanding their show of devotion and religion. Some render the words, “that are chastised by me”; but repent not, and are not reformed thereby; reading not *yrwsw*, as the Masorites direct, and we, and many others, follow; but according to the letters, and retaining them, *yrwsy*^{f360}:

shall be written in the earth; have a name among earthly and carnal men, and be called so, being sensual and carnal, and minding nothing but earth and earthly things; and shall not be written among the living in Jerusalem, or have a name and a place among spiritual men: or they shall be of a short continuance; their memory shall rot; their names be put out for ever; and their memorial perish with them; for things written in the dust do not continue, but are presently destroyed by a puff of wind, or by the treading of the foot upon them; or they shall die, and return to the earth, and be laid in the grave, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; or shall perish eternally, die the second death, being not written in the Lamb’s book of life. The Targum is,

“into hell shall they fall.”

The phrase is opposed to a being written, or having names written in heaven, (^{<2101>}Luke 10:20 ^{<8122>}Hebrews 12:22); which is the same as to be written in the book of life, or to be ordained unto eternal life, (^{<3013>}Philippians 4:3 ^{<4138>}Acts 13:48); and what is the case of such who are not written in heaven, but in earth, may be seen in (^{<6015>}Revelation 20:15 21:27);

because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters; (see Gill on "^{<2403>}Jeremiah 2:13").

Ver. 14. *Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed,* etc.] These are the words of the prophet, sensible of his own sins and backslidings, and of the part which he himself had in these corrupt and declining times; and being conscious of his own impotency to cure himself; and being fully satisfied of the power of the Lord to heal him; and being well assured, if he was healed by him, he should be thoroughly and effectually healed; therefore he applies unto him. Sins are diseases; healing them is the forgiveness of them; God only can grant this: or this may have respect to the consolation of him, whose soul was distressed, grieved, and wounded, with the consideration of the sins of his people, and the calamities coming upon them on that account:

save me, and I shall be saved; with a temporal, spiritual, and eternal salvation; save me from the corruptions of the times, from the designs of my enemies; preserve me to thy kingdom and glory; there are none saved but whom the Lord saves, and those that are saved by him are saved to a purpose; they can never perish:

for thou [art] my praise; the cause of it, by reason of mercies bestowed; the object of it, whom he did and would praise evermore, because of his favours, particularly the blessings of healing and salvation by him; (see ^{<9A01>}Psalms 103:1-4).

Ver. 15. *Behold, they say unto me,* etc.] Or, "they are saying unto me"^{f361}, continually; these were their daily flouts and jeers:

Where [is] the word of the Lord? that thou hast so often talked of? thou hast for a long time threatened us with a siege, and famine, pestilence, and the sword, and captivity, but none of these come to pass; where is the accomplishment of them? thou hast pretended to have the word of the Lord for all this; but where is it, or the fulfilment of it? so the Targum,

“where is that which thou hast prophesied in the name of the Lord?”

the judgments, as punishments for sin, he prophesied of. This has been always usual in all ages, that when God’s judgments threatened have not been immediately executed, scoffers and mockers have rose up, suggesting they would never come; (see ^{<3027>}Malachi 2:17 ^{<608B>}2 Peter 3:3,4);

let it come now; immediately, or we shall not believe it ever will; a very impudent, daring, and wicked expression: this is like that in (^{<2359>}Isaiah 5:19). The Targum is,

“let it now be confirmed;”

or fulfilled; declaring as their impiety, so their infidelity; not believing it ever would be fulfilled.

Ver. 16. *As for me, I have not hastened from [being] a pastor to follow thee*, etc.] Though he had met with so much ill usage, and was hated by the people for bringing such messages to them, and was jeered and scoffed at because his prophecies were not accomplished; yet he had not been hasty, and solicitous, and importunate with the Lord to dismiss him from his service; but was willing to continue in his office as a pastor or prophet, and to follow the Lord fully, and faithfully perform the work he had called him to, whatever difficulties and discouragements attended him, or reproaches were cast upon him. Some render the words, “I hastened not”, or “I have not urged”, or “pressed to be a pastor after thee”^{f362}; to which the sense of Kimchi agrees,

“I did not press myself, or was anxious about the matter, that I should be a shepherd after thee, or a prophet;”

he did not run before he was sent; he did not thrust himself into this office; he was not forward, but backward to it, as appears from (^{<2406>}Jeremiah 1:6); a pastor of the Lord is an under shepherd; one that has his mission and commission from the Lord; who obeys him in all things; follows his directions; goes where and with what he sends him; and such an one was Jeremiah; though it was not what he sought after, and was pressing for; and this he says to take off the edge of the people’s resentment against him; to which agree the following words:

neither have I desired the woeful day, thou knowest; he foresaw that reproaches and calumnies would be cast upon him, and that bonds and afflictions would abide him wherever he went with his messages and prophecies; he knew it would be a woeful and miserable day to him, whenever he was sent as a prophet to this people; and that he should meet with nothing but sorrow, and trouble, and vexation of spirit; and therefore it could not be desirable to him, as a man, to be in such an office, or to be sent on such an errand; to be a messenger of such terrible things, and to denounce such woeful judgments; and much less did he desire the execution of them, even though he had prophesied of them; having not so much regard to his own honour and credit, as an affection to the people, and a compassionate concern for their welfare; and for all this he could appeal to the heart searching and rein trying God. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac and Arabic versions, render it, “man’s day”; (see ^{<40B>}1 Corinthians 4:3); but the Targum paraphrases it agreeably to the sense given,

“and the evil day which thou shall bring upon them, I have not desired:”

that which came out of my lips was [right] before thee; as he could appeal to the omniscient God for the truth of the above, so for this, that he delivered nothing by way of prophecy but what he had from the Lord; and that he delivered out truly and faithfully whatever he had from him; and it was all done openly and publicly, and in his sight, with all sincerity and truth; (see ^{<40B>}2 Corinthians 2:17).

Ver. 17. *Be not a terror unto me*, etc.] By deserting him, and leaving him in the hands of his enemies; or by denying him supports under their reproaches and persecution; or by withdrawing his gracious presence from him, than which nothing is more terrible to a good man; or by withholding the comfortable influences of his Spirit; or by suffering terrors to be injected into him from any quarter; and more is meant than is expressed; namely, that God would be a comforter of him, and bear him up under all his troubles:

thou [art] my hope in the day of evil: the author and object of his hope; the ground and foundation of it, from whom he hoped for deliverance, when it was a time of distress with him, from outward as well as from inward enemies; he was his hope in a time of outward calamity, and in the hour of death and day of judgment.

Ver. 18. *Let them be confounded that persecute me*, etc.] With words with reproaches, with scoffs and jeers, saying, “where is the word of the Lord?” (^{<4174>}Jeremiah 17:14); let such be ashamed that scoffingly put such a question, by seeing the accomplishment of it:

but let not me be confounded; who have delivered it out as the word of the Lord, that should be surely fulfilled; let not me be brought to shame by the failure of it and be reckoned as a false prophet:

let them be dismayed; terrified and affrighted when they shall see the judgments of God coming upon them, which they have jeeringly called for:

but let not me be dismayed; by their not coming, or when they shall come; but preserve and protect me:

bring upon them the day of evil; of punishment; which they put far away, and scoff at; though the prophet did not desire the woeful day to come upon the people in general, yet upon his persecutors in particular. Jarchi interprets it of the men of Anathoth alone; and which desire of his did not arise from malice towards them, but from indignation at their sin and for the glory of the divine Being, whose name was blasphemed by them:

and destroy them with double destruction; not with two sorts of judgments, sword and famine, as Jerom; but with an utter destruction, with breach after breach, destruction after destruction, until they were entirely destroyed; unless it should have regard to the two times of destruction, first by the Chaldeans, and then by the Romans.

Ver. 19. *Thus said the Lord unto me*, etc.] Here begins a new sermon or discourse, concerning the sanctification of the sabbath, and a very proper place to begin a new chapter:

Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people; where there were great numbers of people passing and repassing; and whither the people resorted upon one account or another; or where they dwelt. Some particular gate of the city of Jerusalem seems to be meant; and not the gate of the temple, as Abarbanel. Some think the sheep gate, and others the water gate, (^{<4181>}Nehemiah 3:1,26); perhaps rather the latter, since the Nethinims dwelt near it, who were the Gibeonites, so called, because given to the congregation of Israel, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to it; and these were “the children of the people”, of the nations of the world, the old Canaanites, as well as they were the servants of the people

of Israel: but what particular gate is intended is not certain; it is very likely it was one that was near the court, by what follows:

whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by which they go out; when they went out to war and returned; or went to their country houses and came back; or on any business and occasion whatever. This shows a reason why the prophet was to go and stand in this gate first; because his message was to be first delivered to these great personages, who had a personal concern herein, and who could influence others by their authority and example:

and in all the gates of Jerusalem; after he had been in the former, and delivered his message; for it concerned all the inhabitants of the city, high and low, rich and poor, male and female, young and old; and therefore he was to go to every gate, and stand and proclaim there, as being the most public places of resort and concourse, and where people were continually going and coming.

Ver. 20. *And say unto them, hear ye the word of the Lord*, etc.]

Concerning the sanctification of the sabbath; for this was not of human, but of divine institution:

ye kings of Judah; which must be understood either, as Kimchi thinks, of the then present king and his sons, so called because they would reign after him; for, there was but one king at a time; and who, perhaps, at this time, was Josiah: or else the king and his nobles, the princes of the land, are meant:

and all Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates; the people in the several parts of the land of Judea, that came to Jerusalem either for trade and merchandise, or for worship, and all that dwelt in the metropolis; for the business the prophet had to charge them with concerned them all.

Ver. 21. *Thus saith the Lord, take heed to yourselves*, etc.] That ye sin not against the Lord, by breaking the sabbath, and so bring wrath and ruin upon yourselves: or “to your souls”^{f363}; to the inward frame of them, that they be in disposition for the work of that day; and that they be wholly engaged therein, even all the powers and faculties of them; and that they be not taken up in thoughts and cares about other things:

and bear no burden on the sabbath day; as no worldly thoughts and cares should, cumber the mind, and lie heavy thereon, to the interruption of

spiritual exercises of religion; so neither should any weight or burden be borne by the body, or carried from place to place; as not by themselves, so neither by their servants, nor by their cattle, nor in carts and wagons, nor by any instrument whatever; in short, all servile work was forbidden:

nor bring [it] in by the gates of Jerusalem; to be unloaded and sold there, as wine, grapes, figs, and fish, were, in the times of Nehemiah, (^{<16315>}Nehemiah 13:15,16,19).

Ver. 22. *Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day,* etc.] Not of dirt and soil only, as some restrain the sense; but of any ware or merchandise, in order to be sold in the city or elsewhere:

neither do ye any work; any servile work, any kind of manufacture, either within doors or without; or exercise any kind of trade, or barter and merchandise, or do any sort of worldly business; nothing but what was of mere necessity, for the preservation of life; (see ^{<12110>}Exodus 20:10);

but hallow ye the sabbath day; or, “sanctify it”^{f364}; by separating it from all worldly business, and devoting it to the worship of God in public and private, spending it wholly in acts of religion and piety:

as I commanded your fathers; not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but those that came out of Egypt, to whom, and to their posterity after them, this commandment was enjoined, (^{<12118>}Exodus 20:8-10 31:13-17); so that this was not a novel injunction, but what was commanded from the beginning of their civil and church state; from the time of their coming out of Egypt, and becoming a separate people and nation, under a theocracy, or the government of God himself; being chosen and set apart to be a special, peculiar, and holy people to himself, of which the sanctification of the sabbath was a sign; and was to be observed unto the Messiah’s coming, the sum and substance of it, (^{<51216>}Colossians 2:16,17).

Ver. 23. *But they obeyed not,* etc.] Or, “heard not”^{f365}; so as to observe and do; that is, their fathers did not; this command was very early disobeyed, and more or less in all intervening times:

neither inclined their ear; or listened attentively to what was said to them; but if they heard at all, it was in a very indifferent and careless manner, as if they cared not whether they heard or not; whereas persons intent on hearing bow the head, and turn the ear; and if they have one better than

another, will turn that, in order to take in what they are attentive to; but so did not the Jewish fathers:

but made their neck stiff; or “hard”^{f366}; and would not bend it, to take upon them the yoke of the commandments: a metaphor taken from untamed oxen, that will not submit the neck to the yoke, but draw back from it. The Septuagint and Arabic versions understand all this, not of the Jewish fathers of old, but of their children, even of the then present generation, rendering the words, “but hardened their neck more than their fathers”; they were more stiffnecked, refractory, and disobedient than they were; this was always the character of this people; as were the fathers, so were the children, if not worse; (see ^{<4075>}Acts 7:51);

that they might not hear nor receive instruction; about the command of the sabbath, or any other: or “correction”, or “discipline”^{f367}; the yoke of which they were as unwilling to bear as the yoke of the commandments, (^{<2618>}Jeremiah 31:18).

Ver. 24. *And it shall come to pass*, etc.] Or, “yet it shall come to pass”^{f368}; so it shall be, notwithstanding all former disobedience and rebellion:

if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord; or, “in hearing hear”^{f369}; hearken attentively, and readily obey the command given, before mentioned, so as

to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day; to be bought or sold, or to be wrought on or with; and so likewise to carry nothing out of their houses or city, which, though not expressed, is understood as before; and this respects not only the city of Jerusalem, but all other cities and towns in Judea; for the word of the Lord, concerning this matter, was sent to all Judah, the whole land of Judea, (^{<2473>}Jeremiah 17:20);

but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; one part of the sanctification of the sabbath lay in a cessation from all servile work, though not wholly, but also in the observance of religious worship, and the one was in order to the other; for, unless they abstained from worldly business, they could not be at leisure to attend divine service.

Ver. 25. *Then shall there enter into the gates of this city*, etc.] In a very public and splendid manner:

kings and princes, sitting upon the throne of David; that is, kings, with the princes of the blood, or with their nobles, who shall be of the house and line of David; and in a continual succession shall sit upon his throne, and possess the kingdom of the house of Judah, and rule over them in great glory, peace, and prosperity:

riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; some riding in chariots, and some on horses; the king, with some of the princes of the blood, in one chariot; his nobles in others, or on horseback; with great numbers of the citizens of Jerusalem, and people from all parts, flocking to see them, and join in the procession, and so make it more grand and august:

and this city shall remain for ever; or, “be inhabited for ever”^{f370}; a long time, and not be destroyed, as has been threatened, or its inhabitants carried captive.

Ver. 26. *And they shall come from the cities of Judah*, etc.] That is, men shall come from all parts of the land of Judea to the city of Jerusalem, and to the temple; especially at the times of their solemn feasts, three times a year, as the law directed:

and from the places about Jerusalem; and from all the towns and villages adjacent to it, such as Bethany and Bethphage, and many others:

and from the land of Benjamin; which tribe continued with the tribe of Judah when the rest revolted, and was now with it, and still would continue with it, and join with it in religious worship, were they careful to observe what the Lord commanded them:

and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south; these respect the several parts of the land of Judah, which, the Jews^{f371} say, was divided into three parts, the mountain, plain or champaign country, and the valley: the “plain” was that part where Lydda and other cities were; the “mountain” is the same with the hill country of Judea, (~~4019~~ Luke 1:39,65); and the “south” the southern part of the land, that which is called the wilderness of Judea, of which (see ~~4050~~ Joshua 15:20-63). The above Jewish writers say^{f372}, that from Bethhoron to Emmaus was the mountain or hill country; from Emmaus to Lydda the plain; and from Lydda to the sea the valley; now, from all these places should persons come to the temple:

bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, and meat offerings and incense; sacrifices and offerings of all sorts, according to the law; hereby signifying, that if the sabbath was observed, as it would go well with the kings and princes of Judah, they would keep a splendid court, and have a numerous retinue, so it would be well with the priests that served at the altar; sacrifices would be brought to them; of which they would have their part, as well as God have glory by an obedience to his laws; and, besides these, other sacrifices would also be brought, as follows:

and bringing sacrifices of praise unto the house of the Lord; thank offerings for mercies received and deliverances wrought, as well as sacrifices for sins committed; and this was one sort of the peace offerings, (^(R71)Leviticus 7:11-15).

Ver. 27. *But if ye will not hearken unto me,* etc.] With respect to this particular point, more especially:

to hallow the sabbath day; to keep it holy to the Lord in a religious way, in the exercise of the duties of religion, both public and private:

and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; or, “and go through”; or, so as “to go through”^{f373} &c; and may intend either one and the same thing, namely entering in at the gates with a burden upon the shoulders; or two things, bearing a burden, and carrying it any where in or out of the city; and an unnecessary passing and repassing through the gates of the city, whether a man has or has not a burden upon him, since the sabbath might be violated either way:

then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof; where the prophet was to publish all this, and where the people sinned by passing and repassing, and carrying burdens in and out on the sabbath day:

and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem; the king’s palace, and the palaces of the princes and nobles, as well as the cottages of the poorer sort:

and it shall not be quenched; until it has utterly destroyed the city: this was fulfilled by the Chaldeans, (⁽²⁶²³⁾Jeremiah 52:13). The Jews say there is no fire kindled but where the sabbath is profaned; and that Jerusalem was destroyed because they profaned the sabbath^{f374}.