

# CHAPTER 31

## INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 31

This chapter is connected with the former, respects the same times, and is full of prophecies and promises of spiritual blessings; of the coming of Christ; of the multiplication of his people, and the increase of their joy; of the conversion of the Gentiles; of the covenant of grace; and of the stability of the saints. It begins with the principal promise of the covenant, confirmed by past experience, of divine goodness, and with a fresh declaration of God's everlasting love, (<sup>2310</sup>Jeremiah 31:1-3); an instance of which would appear, in planting vines or churches in Samaria, the metropolis of Ephraim or the ten tribes, under the ministry of the apostles, the watchmen, on Mount Ephraim; whereby the Israel of God would be built, beautified, and made to rejoice, (<sup>2310</sup>Jeremiah 31:4-6); yea, it would be matter of joy to all that heard of it; since, notwithstanding distance and other difficulties, a great number should come to Christ, and to his church, drawn by the Father's love to them, and as owing to the relation he stands in to them, (<sup>2310</sup>Jeremiah 31:7-9); redemption out of the hands of Satan, and every spiritual enemy, must be published among the Gentiles; which would cause great joy, and give great satisfaction to the priests and people of the Lord, expressed by various metaphors, (<sup>2310</sup>Jeremiah 31:10-14); and though, upon the birth of the Redeemer, there would be an event, which might tend to damp the joy of saints on account of it, the murder of the infants at Bethlehem; yet some things are said to encourage faith, hope, and joy, and to abate sorrow and weeping, (<sup>2315</sup>Jeremiah 31:15-17); Ephraim's affliction, and behaviour under it, his repentance and reception, are recorded, (<sup>2318</sup>Jeremiah 31:18-20); backsliding Israel are called upon to return, in consideration of the birth of the Messiah, (<sup>2321</sup>Jeremiah 31:21,22); the happy and flourishing estate of the people of God is promised; all which were made known to the prophet by a dream in the night, (<sup>2323</sup>Jeremiah 31:23-26); and fresh promises are made, that the Lord would do them good, and not punish the children for their fathers' sins, but everyone for their own, (<sup>2328</sup>Jeremiah 31:28-30); and then an account is given of the new covenant of grace, as distinct from the old, and of the articles of it; the inscription of the law in the heart, spiritual knowledge of

the Lord, and remission of sin, (<sup><263></sup>Jeremiah 31:31-34); then follow assurances of the everlasting continuance of the true Israel and church of God, (<sup><263></sup>Jeremiah 31:35-37); and the chapter is concluded with a promise of rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, and of the holiness of it, and of its abiding for ever, (<sup><263></sup>Jeremiah 31:38-40).

**Ver. 1.** *At the same time, saith the Lord,* etc.] The time of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation, the latter days; when the Jews shall consider the prophecies of the Old Testament, and observe how they have been fulfilled in Jesus; and shall reflect upon their disbelief and rejection of him; and shall turn unto him, and serve the Lord their God, and David their king; (see <sup><261></sup>Jeremiah 30:9,21,22,24);

*will I be the God of all the families of Israel;* not of some few persons only, or of one of a city, and two of a family, but of every family; and this will be when “all Israel” shall be converted and saved, and a nation shall be born at once; then will God show himself to them as their covenant God, manifest his love to them, and bestow the blessings of his grace upon them:

*and they shall be my people;* behave as such to him; own him to be their God, and serve and worship him.

**Ver. 2.** *Thus saith the Lord, the people [which were] left of the sword,* etc.] Which were not consumed by the sword of Pharaoh, who perished not through his cruel edicts, and by his sword, when drawn at the Red sea; nor by the sword of the Amalekites and Amorites; or of their own brethren, who sometimes, for their sins, were ordered to slay many, as on account of the molten calf, and joining to Baalpeor: but there was a remnant that escaped, who

*found grace in the wilderness;* in the sight of God, who went before them, protected and defended them from their enemies; gave them his holy law, his statutes, and his judgments; fed them with manna and quails; clave the rocks, and gave them water to drink; and supplied them with everything necessary for them, (<sup><268></sup>Psalms 78:5,15-28);

*[even] Israel, when I went to cause him to rest;* went before him in a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night; and in the ark, the symbol of his presence; and not only to search out a resting place for them for a few days, but to bring them to Canaan, the land of rest, which he had promised them, (<sup><262></sup>Exodus 13:21 <sup><268></sup>Numbers 10:33 <sup><262></sup>Deuteronomy 12:9,10); now this past instance of divine goodness is mentioned, to

encourage faith in the fulfilment of the above promise. The whole is paraphrased by the Targum thus,

“these things saith the Lord, who gave mercies to the people that came out of Egypt; he supplied their necessities in the wilderness, when they fled from before those who slay with the sword; he led them by his word, to cause Israel to dwell in a place of rest.”

Some render the words in the future, “shall find grace”, etc. “shall go to his rest”, etc. and so apply it to the Jews that escaped the sword of the Chaldeans, and found favour in the wilderness of the people into which they were brought, and as they returned into their own land from the captivity. And it, may be also applied to the Jews that were left of the sword of the Romans in their last destruction, who have found much favour among the nations; as they do in ours, and others, now; and who in time will return to their own land, and be in rest, (<sup>(2810)</sup>Jeremiah 30:10). Yea, it is applicable enough to the church and people of God in their present state; who are left of the sword of the Papists, and are now in the wilderness, where they are nourished for a time, and times, and half a time; and before long will be brought into a state of settled rest and tranquillity.

**Ver. 3.** *The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, [saying]*, etc.] Either to the prophet, bidding him say to the church what follows, so Jarchi: or to Christ, who was from eternity with the Father; lay in his bosom; between whom the council of peace was; with whom the covenant was made; and whom God loved before the foundation of the world; and which is observed by him, for the comfort of his people, (<sup>(4872)</sup>John 17:24 15:9); so Cocceius; but rather they are the words of Israel, or the church, owning the above instances of God’s grace and goodness; and that he had greatly appeared to them, and for them, in former times; but then this was a great while ago; and besides, now he hid his face from them, and they were under the tokens of his displeasure, and not of his love; to which the Lord replies, for the word “saying” is not in the text, which makes the following a continuation of the church’s speech, though wrongly; since they are the words of the Lord, taking up the church for speaking too slightly and improperly of his love, and in a complaining way:

*yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love*; not only of old, or a good while ago, but from all eternity, and with a love which will always last, and does, notwithstanding dark and afflictive providences; for this love is like himself, sovereign, unchangeable, and everlasting: “I have loved thee”: I,

who am the great God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; a God of infinite purity and holiness; do whatever I please in heaven and in earth; and am the Lord that changes not: “have loved”; not love only now, and shall hereafter; but have loved, not for some time past only, but from all eternity, with the same love I now do: “thee” personally, “Jacob, have I loved”, (~~4913~~ Romans 9:13); thee nakedly, and not thine, or for anything done by thee; thee separately and distinctly, and not others; thee a creature, vile and sinful, a transgressor from the womb, and known to be so beforehand; “thee” now openly, and in an applicatory way, through the evidence of the spirit: “with an everlasting love”: a love from everlasting, which does not commence in time with faith, repentance, and new obedience; these being the fruits and effects of it; but was from all eternity, as appears from the eternal choice of the persons loved in Christ; from the everlasting covenant made with them in him; from the constitution and setting up of Christ as their Mediator from everlasting; and from the security of their persons and grace in him, before the world began: and this love will endure to everlasting, without any variation or change; nothing can separate from it. The evidence of it follows:

*therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee*; out of a state of nature; out of Satan’s hands; out of the pit wherein is no water, the horrible pit, the mire and clay; unto Christ, his person, blood, righteousness, and fulness, by faith to lay hold upon them; unto his church, and to a participation of the ordinances and privileges of it; to nearer communion with God, and at last will draw to eternal glory. This is the Father’s act, and to him it is usually ascribed: it chiefly regards the work of conversion, and the influence of divine grace on that; though it also includes after acts of drawing: it supposes weakness in men; is the effect of powerful and efficacious grace; and is done without offering any violence or force to the will of man, who is drawn with, and not against, his will. This is an instance of the love of God; a fruit and effect of it: it is love that draws a soul to Christ, and is the cause of its coming to him; it is love that reveals him to it, and causes it to come to him; love is then manifested and shed abroad in the heart; a cord of it is let down into it, and with it the Lord draws; it is not by the threats of the law, but by the declarations of grace in the Gospel; the cause of drawing is love, and the manner of it is with it. The Targum of the whole verse is,

“Jerusalem said, of old the Lord appeared to our fathers; prophet, say unto them, lo, I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore have led you with goodness.”

It may be rendered, “I have drawn out”, or “extended, lovingkindness to thee”<sup>f588</sup>; (see <sup><6960></sup>Psalm 36:10).

**Ver. 4.** *Again, I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel,* etc.] The same with “all the families of Israel”, (<sup><2900></sup>Jeremiah 31:1); who, when converted, will be espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin; have a sincere affection for him; unfeigned faith in him, and purely worship him; receiving the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and submitting to the ordinances of it; and then will the church, comparable to a building, consisting of lively stones, laid upon the foundation Christ, which is fallen down, and lies in ruins, be rebuilt, and none shall hinder it; and a glorious building it will be, and will continue so, when its stones are laid with fair colours; its foundations with sapphires; its windows made of agates; its gates of carbuncles; and all its borders of pleasant stones, (<sup><2541></sup>Isaiah 54:11,12 <sup><41516></sup>Acts 15:16);

*thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets;* or timbrels, instruments of music, such as women used at times of public joy and mirth, (<sup><0150></sup>Exodus 15:20 <sup><0713></sup>Judges 11:34 <sup><0806></sup>1 Samuel 18:6); which became them, and were very ornamental to them; and their playing on these was usually attended with dancing; hence it follows:

*and shalt go forth in the dances of them that make merry;* phrases expressive of spiritual joy, which will be in the hearts of the saints, and expressed by the behaviour of them at the time of the conversion of the Jews, which will be the marriage of the Lamb; and when the bride will be ready, being adorned with the robe of Christ’s righteousness, and with the graces of his Spirit, and be brought into his presence, accompanied with a chorus of virgins her companions, undefiled ones, having harps in their hands, singing the Lamb’s new song; (see <sup><6642></sup>Revelation 14:2-4 19:7-9 <sup><0953></sup>Psalm 45:13-15).

**Ver. 5.** *Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria,* etc.] Mountains are proper places for vines, and which generally produce the best wine; but vines are not to be understood merely literally, or as only expressive of the outward peace, plenty, and prosperity of Samaria, with other places given to the Jews, as Josephus<sup>f589</sup> observes they were by the

Demetrii; which they might improve by planting vines, etc. but figuratively of the planting of Gospel churches there, comparable to vines, (<sup><2193></sup>Song of Solomon 2:13 7:12); which was done in the first times of the Gospel; (see <sup><302></sup>John 4:29,30,42 <sup><4185></sup>Acts 8:5,6,12 9:31); and which was a pledge of what will be done in those parts hereafter in the latter day:

*the planters shall plant, and shall eat [them] as common things*; the fruit of the vines planted by them. The allusion is to the law of eating the fruit of trees planted on the fifth year of their plantation, when, and not till then, it was lawful to eat of it; but here the planters might eat of it as soon as it was produced, even as the fruit of the fifth year, which was common and lawful, (<sup><18923></sup>Leviticus 19:23,25). The “planters” are the ministers of the Gospel; such an one the Apostle Paul was; who are instruments in founding and raising churches, and of planting members in them, as well as of watering, and making them fruitful; and who receive themselves benefit from hence; not only in things temporal, but spiritual; it giving them a real pleasure and satisfaction to see the plants grow and thrive, which they have planted, (<sup><4186></sup>1 Corinthians 3:6-8 9:7) (<sup><39214></sup>Psalms 92:14).

**Ver. 6.** *For there shall be a day*, etc.] The whole Gospel dispensation is “a day”, made so by the bright rising of the sun of righteousness; here it seems to design some certain fixed period of time in that dispensation, when the light of the Gospel will break out most gloriously, and it will be a clear day; as it will be when the Jews will be converted:

*[that] the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim*; the same with the mountains of Samaria; for Samaria was the head or metropolis of Ephraim, (<sup><2709></sup>Isaiah 7:9); and these are the watchmen that kept the vines there, (<sup><2435></sup>Jeremiah 31:5); for the allusion is not to watchmen of states and cities, but to watchers of vineyards, and to such the ministers of the Gospel are compared, (<sup><2706></sup>Song of Solomon 1:6 8:11,12). Grotius thinks there is an allusion in the word “Notzerim” to the title of Nazarenes, given to Christ and his followers; and Abarbanel the Jew on the place observes, that the prophet, by the Holy Ghost, foresaw that the Romans would believe in Jesus of Nazareth, and therefore would be called Nazarenes from him; (see <sup><4185></sup>Acts 24:5); so that Christian ministers may be well thought to be here intended: who

*shall cry, arise ye*; lift up their voice like a trumpet, and cry aloud to persons as asleep, or in dead and lifeless frames, to awake, arouse, and rise up, and shake off their sloth and indolence, saying:

*and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God*; to the church of God, to attend the word of God, his worship and ordinances; to which sometimes there is a backwardness, arising from sloth, from a lukewarm frame of spirit, from a love of the world, and a vain conceit of their own sufficiency and knowledge; and it is the business of Gospel ministers to stir up persons to frequent the house of God, and attend public worship in it; since it is not only their duty, but their interest and privilege; here they have true pleasure, and real profit; and it is to their honour to continue here, and not forsake the assembling of themselves together: but they should not rest here, trusting to, and depending on, these things; but should go “to the Lord [their] God”; not only seek and pray unto him, but should be desirous of hearing of him, and from him; of seeing him, his power and his glory, and him in his beauty; and of having communion with him; and should exercise faith upon him as their own God. Christ seems to be intended; going to him is exercising faith upon him, for righteousness and strength, peace, pardon, life, and salvation; and saying, as Thomas did, “my Lord, and my God”, (~~408~~ John 20:28).

**Ver. 7.** *For thus saith the Lord, sing with gladness for Jacob*, etc.] For the restoration of Jacob, or the conversion of the Jews; which will be matter of joy to the Christians among the Gentiles; who seem to be here called upon to express their joy on that occasion, as they will; for it will be to them as life from the dead, (~~415~~ Romans 11:15 15:10 ~~660~~ Revelation 19:7). Kimchi thinks there is a trajection in the words; and that they may be rendered, “thus saith the Lord to Jacob, sing with gladness”; as if the exhortation was to him to rejoice, and not to others on his account; and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it; and to the same sense the Syriac version, “thus saith the Lord, sing, O ye of the house of Jacob, with gladness”; and so the Targum; it will no doubt be a joyful time with them:

*and shout among the chief of the nations*; where they shall be when converted, as in Great Britain, and other places: or, “on the top of the nations”<sup>f590</sup>; on some high place among them. It seems to denote the publicness of the shout; it will be open and manifest to all; so the Targum,

“and exult with head uncovered, in the sight of all people;”

Turks, Papists, and Pagans:

*publish ye*; or “cause to hear”, or “to be heard”<sup>f591</sup>; cause their voice to be heard, both in prayer and praise to God; or cause men to hear their faith in

Christ, and profession of it; and publish that Gospel, and spread it among others, which before they rejected and despised:

*praise ye*; the Lord for his wonderful grace in the conversion of them:

*and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel*; his covenant people; the remnant according to the election of grace. This is a direction to the Jews that are converted, to pray for the rest that are not; or to the Gentiles to pray for them; who are before called upon to rejoice at the first appearance of this wonderful work, and to spread it abroad, and to go on publishing the Gospel for the more forwarding of it; and to praise the Lord for what he had done; and to pray unto him to go on with the work of saving his people, the residue of them.

**Ver. 8.** *Behold, I will bring them from the north country*, etc.] As from Babylon, at the end of the seventy years' captivity, which lay north of Judea; so, in the latter day, from those northern countries, as ours, where they now are in great numbers:

*and gather them from the coasts of the earth*; or "sides" of it; from all the parts of the world where they are:

*[and] with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together*; signifying that no difficulties whatsoever should hinder them in their return to their own land; provision should be made for persons under these circumstances, so unfit to travel. All this may be understood, in a figurative sense, of those who are spiritually "blind"; who are made to see their lost estate, and need of Christ; and are brought to him, and to his church, in a way they had not known, and in paths they knew not before: and of the lame and impotent, unable to do any good thing in a spiritual sense, and will not come to Christ, unless drawn; these are made to leap as a hart, and to flee to Christ for refuge, and run the ways of his commandments: and of such who are laden and burdened, as "women with child"; and who are encouraged and enabled as such to come to Christ, and cast their burdens on him, and find rest for their souls: and of such who are in pain and distress, as one "that travaileth with child": in the pangs of the new birth, under a sense of wrath, and as ready to perish; who also are enabled to come and venture their souls on Christ, receive his Gospel, and submit to his ordinances, where they find peace and comfort:

*a great company shall return thither*; three thousand were converted under one sermon, in the first times of the Gospel; and, in the latter day, the



nation of the Jews shall be born again at once; the number of the children of Israel shall then be as the sand of the sea, and great shall be the day of Jezreel, (<sup><260></sup>Isaiah 66:8 <sup><300></sup>Hosea 1:10,11).

**Ver. 9.** *They shall come with weeping*, etc.] For joy, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; of which there are instances, (<sup><1291></sup>Genesis 29:11 43:30 45:2,14); so the Jews will come to Christ, and to the Gospel church, as well as into their own land, with joy that they have found the Messiah, and are brought under his government, and into the enjoyment of the privileges of the Gospel, and the possession of their own land; or with tears of repentance for all their sins, original and actual, especially for their sin of unbelief, and rejection of the Messiah; they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn, when a spirit of grace and supplication is poured out upon them, (<sup><320></sup>Zechariah 12:10); with which agrees what follows:

*and with supplications will I lead them*; to Christ, and his church; and being drawn by the Father, and led by the Spirit, they will come to him with supplications and entreaties for mercy to be showed unto them; particularly for pardoning grace and mercy, and for salvation by him, which they will now see they stand in need of. Some render it, “with favours”<sup>f592</sup>, or mercies; blessings of grace bestowed on them; as a justifying righteousness; remission of sins; adoption; sanctifying grace; a right and title and meetness for eternal life; which are all owing to the free favour and grace of God:

*I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters*; or, “to rivers of waters”<sup>f593</sup>; to God himself, the fountain of living waters; and his everlasting love, that river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; and to Christ, the fountain of gardens, and well of living waters; and to those wells of salvation, and fulness of grace, that are in him; and to the Gospel, its doctrines and ordinances, which are the still waters to it, by which the great Shepherd leads his flock. These rivers of waters may denote the blessings of grace which spring from the love of God, and flow through Christ in his word and ordinances, in great abundance; and it is very pleasant and profitable walking by these:

*in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble*; in a direct way to Christ, without going round about, by works of righteousness done by them, to render them acceptable to him; but they shall go directly to him as they are; or in a plain way, as it is to them that understand it, and in which men, though fools, shall not err: or in a righteous way, a way of righteousness;

in a way that leads to Christ for righteousness; and in which men are taught to live soberly, righteously, and godly; and in which, though they may stumble and fall into sin, for “in many things we all offend”, (<sup><30R2></sup>James 3:2); yet not stumble at the word, as some do; or at the stumbling stone, Christ, as the Jews’ forefathers did; or so as to fall, be broken, and perish, (<sup><20R4></sup>Isaiah 8:14,15);

*for am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn*; and so very dear to him, as in (<sup><26R2></sup>Jeremiah 31:20). So the Targum,

“and Ephraim is beloved before me;”

all the blessings of grace which God bestows upon men, whether Jews or Gentiles, all flow from a prior relation he stands in to them; he first takes them into the relation of children, is a father to them in covenant; and then bestows children’s blessings and covenant mercies on them. The allusion, perhaps, is to Joseph’s having the birthright, and whose younger son, Ephraim, was preferred to Manasseh the elder, (<sup><13R2></sup>1 Chronicles 5:2 <sup><14R4></sup>Genesis 48:14,20). Ephraim intends the same as Israel, the ten tribes, and includes the whole body of the Jewish nation.

**Ver. 10.** *Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations*, etc.] The Gentiles: who are called upon to hear the word of the Gospel; the word of peace, reconciliation, and salvation by Christ, sent among them by him, for the calling and conversion of them, that they might believe in him, and profess his name:

*and declare [it] in the isles afar off*; having heard, received, and embraced the Gospel themselves, it became them to make it known to others; not only to those upon the continent and the isles adjacent, but to those afar off from it; such as these isles of ours, of Great Britain and Ireland; where, blessed be the Lord, this Gospel has been declared to the conversion and comfort of many, and to the glory of Christ:

*and say, he that scattered Israel will gather him*: that is, the Lord that hath scattered the Jews throughout the nations of the world, and even in the isles afar off, will before long gather them together, and bring them into their own land. This may be understood of the spiritual Israel, be they Jews or Gentiles, the children of God scattered up and down in the world; and who, by reason of sin, and while in an unregenerate estate, are alienated from God, and at a distance from him; but are gathered together in one head, Christ, when he died for them, and redeemed them; and in the

effectual calling, when they are gathered to God and Christ, one by one; and afterwards to more near communion with them; and, at last, to glory, and which is the sum and substance of the Gospel to be heard and declared:

*and keep him as a shepherd [doth] his flock;* so that they shall be scattered no more, as the Jews have been; nor any of them lost, as God's elect were in their first head Adam: they are Christ's flock, given him by the Father, and purchased with his blood; and having gathered them as above, he will keep them in his hands, from whence none can pluck them, and preserve them by his almighty power unto salvation; which doctrine of the saints' perseverance is a most comfortable doctrine of the Gospel to be published and declared.

**Ver. 11.** *For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob,* etc.] Not the patriarch Jacob singly and personally, though he no doubt was a redeemed one; nor his carnal posterity, at least not all of them, only a remnant among them, and especially not them only; but the Gentiles also, even all the elect of God, his church and people, of whatsoever nation, which frequently go by this name in the prophetic writings: and this redemption of them by Christ, which, though future, is spoken of as past, because of the certainty of it; and is the ground and foundation of their being gathered in effectual calling, and of their final perseverance; for redemption has its certain effect, and Christ will never lose the purchase of his blood; (see <sup>3108</sup>Zechariah 10:8);

*and ransomed him from the hand of [him that was] stronger than he;* meaning Satan, the strong man armed; who is stronger than man, as appears by his possession of the bodies of men, inflicting diseases on them, and death itself, of which he had the power when permitted; and by his influence over the minds of men; by his temptations to sin, in which he so much succeeds; and even by the prevalence of his temptations over the saints themselves; and by the power which he had over our first parents in innocence, whom he prevailed upon to eat the forbidden fruit, which brought ruin on themselves, and on their posterity; by which means he got them into his hands, and God's elect among the rest, whom he leads captive at his will; and being enfeebled by sin, are so weak as not to be able to rescue themselves out of his hands; for he is stronger than they; but Christ is stronger than the strong man armed; he is the Redeemer that is mighty, and has taken the prey out of his hands, and has led captivity

captive: and this he has done, not only by power and conquest, spoiling Satan and his principalities and powers; but by paying a “ransom” price for these captives into the hands of God; and which is no other than his precious blood, his life, himself; and so must be a sufficient ransom for them. This redemption was typified by the deliverance of the Jews out of the hands of the Chaldeans, a mighty nation, and stronger than they; and is the ground, reason, and foundation, of the restoration of that people in the latter day.

**Ver. 12.** *Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion,* etc.]

The Targum is,

“in the mountain of the house of the sanctuary, which is built on Zion;”

but though there be an allusion to the temple built on it, and which may be called the height of it; yet the church of Christ in Gospel times is meant; the city built on a hill, where the saints, enjoying Gospel ordinances, dwell on high, and have all suitable provisions made for them; and here being come freely and willingly, though brought by the Lord, and drawn by his grace, they “sing” the songs of electing, redeeming, calling, justifying, pardoning, and adopting grace; and which they will still do in a better manner, when they get to the height of Zion above:

*and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord;* to the perfection of his goodness, which is essential to him, infinite and eternal; and is diffusive and communicative, not only in a providential way, but in a way of grace and mercy; and especially in pardoning grace and mercy, which sensible sinners take notice of, and flee unto, and not their own merits; and who would faint under a sense of sin, without a sight of it; but this, viewed in such a light, makes all the perfections of God look amiable and lovely, which otherwise would be terrible; and encourages faith, hope, fear, and thankfulness: likewise to Christ, who is the goodness of the Lord; in whom his goodness is laid up; in whom it is proclaimed; through whom it is displayed; by whom it is communicated; who himself is the great gift of it, as well as he himself is good; and his goodness extends to his people, and to him sensible sinners apply for it: also to the goodness and fatness of the house and church of God; those rich provisions which are made in it for the comfort and refreshment of his people; hence it follows:

*for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd*; not for temporal blessings, which are for the good of the body only; but for spiritual blessings, signified by these, which are for the good of the soul, as the next clause shows: “for wheat”; for the Gospel and the doctrines of it, which are the finest of the wheat; and are as preferable to false doctrines as chaff is to wheat, and are soul nourishing and strengthening; (see <sup><2438></sup>Jeremiah 23:28). Moreover, Christ himself is compared to wheat, and was typified by the manna, the corn of heaven, and angels’ food; and is the bread of God, and the bread of life; and to be had in the church and ordinances of it; (see <sup><4924></sup>John 12:24); “and for wine”; the precious truths of the word, which, like the best wine, go down sweetly; the discoveries of the love of God and Christ, which are better than spiced wine; and the blood of Christ, signified by the wine in the Lord’s supper, which is drink indeed, (<sup><2109></sup>Song of Solomon 7:9 2:2,4 <sup><4165></sup>John 6:55); “and for oil”; the grace of the Spirit, and larger measures of it; which is the golden oil, that through the golden pipes of ordinances is emptied out of the fulness of grace in Christ into the hearts of his people, (<sup><3042></sup>Zechariah 4:12); “and for the young of the flock, and of the herd”; the best of them, which being slain in sacrifice, typified Christ the passover lamb, and fatted calf, and which makes the principal part of the Gospel feast, (<sup><4124></sup>Matthew 22:4); now, for all these the redeemed of the Lord “flow” to Zion, and to the goodness of the Lord there; which denotes their coming in great numbers, in shoals, as the streams of a flowing river; in conjunction and harmony “together”: in the lively and flowing exercise of grace, and all moving one way, and to one centre, and with the greatest pleasure, delight, and cheerfulness; thus the Targum,

“and they shall delight in the good which the Lord giveth unto them;”

and so the Syriac version:

*and their soul shall be as a watered garden*; in a thriving and prosperous condition: the soul of a believer is as a “garden”, in which are planted the graces of the Spirit; and which does not lie open to everyone, but to Christ, who is the object of every grace; has the sole property of this garden, where he walks and dwells: and this is “watered” by the Lord himself, with the dews of his grace, and by the ministry of his word; which drops and distils as the rain upon the mown grass; when every plant lifts up its head, and looks pleasant, shoots up and grows, and brings forth fruit:

*and they shall not sorrow any more at all*: have no occasion for it, being loved with an everlasting love, (<sup>2610B</sup>Jeremiah 31:3); redeemed by Christ out of the hand of their mighty enemies, (<sup>2611B</sup>Jeremiah 31:11); and enjoying all the goodness of the Lord, and of his house, as in this verse; and being partakers of Christ, and the blessings of grace in him, in whom there is always cause of rejoicing; though this will not have its full accomplishment as long as the saints are in the present state; having a body of sin and death, being liable to the temptations of Satan, and divine desertions; and until they come into the Jerusalem state, when there will be no more sinning, and so no more sorrowing, (<sup>6204</sup>Revelation 21:4).

**Ver. 13.** *Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together*, etc.] Not any particular virgin, but all virgins, as Kimchi interprets it. The Targum is,

“then shall the congregation of Israel rejoice as in dances;”

it may very well be understood of the church of Christ, espoused to him as a chaste virgin, and of her spiritual joy in him, in allusion to the joy expressed by such persons in dancing, both upon civil and religious accounts; and it denotes that the joy should be very general and extensive, that persons of every age and sex should partake of it; (see <sup>3307</sup>Zechariah 9:17);

*for I will turn their mourning into joy*: their mourning for sin, and for want of the divine presence, into joy, on account of the goodness of the Lord to them, and the large provisions made for them; though they come weeping to Zion, yet, when come thither, sing in the height of it, (<sup>2610</sup>Jeremiah 31:9,12); their fasts, as elsewhere, are turned into festivals; sometimes the joy of the saints is suddenly turned into grief, and again their sorrow turned into joy; (see <sup>4305</sup>Psalms 30:5-7,11,12);

*and will comfort them*; with the discoveries of love, with the divine Presence, and views of pardoning grace:

*and make them rejoice from their sorrow*; cause their sorrow to break off through joy: or, “after their sorrow”<sup>1594</sup>; that being ended, joy shall succeed.

**Ver. 14.** *And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness*, etc.] Meaning either the ministers of the Gospel, who should not only be liberally provided for as to their maintenance, which is too low a sense; but

filled with spiritual good things, with the doctrines of the Gospel, and a comfortable experience of them, that they may be able to feed others with knowledge and understanding; or since, under the Gospel dispensation, there is no such distinct order of men under the name of priests, but all the saints are made kings and priests to God, they may be here meant, as follows:

*and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord;* to which they are said to flow, (see Gill on “<sup><2812></sup>Jeremiah 31:12”). But, lest it should be thought that there would be no manner of trouble and affliction in those times, two instances, as follow, are given; the one at the beginning, and the other towards the close of them, expressive of distress; one on temporal, the other on spiritual accounts.

**Ver. 15.** *Thus saith the Lord, a voice was heard in Ramah,* etc.] Which signifies a high place; hence the Targum paraphrases it,

“in the high place of the world;”

and so the Vulgate Latin version,

“in a high place;”

but it is here the proper name of a place, of a city in the tribe of Benjamin, (<sup><4685></sup>Joshua 18:25); and this voice heard was not a voice of joy and gladness as before, but of

*lamentation [and] bitter weeping;* signifying great sorrow and distress upon some very extraordinary occasion; and is as follows:

*Rachel weeping for her children;* not really and in person, but by a figurative way of speaking. Rachel is introduced as representing the Jewish women in those parts mourning for their slaughtered infants, even those that were slaughtered some time after the birth of Christ; for to this barbarous fact are the words applied by the Evangelist Matthew, as a fulfilment of them, (<sup><4126></sup>Matthew 2:16-18); and with great propriety and pertinence is Rachel brought in as the chief, yea, sole mourner, representing all the sorrowful mothers; since Ramah was in the tribe of Benjamin, a child of hers, as far as which, it seems, the bloody massacre referred to reached, from Bethlehem, where it began; and since Rachel’s grave was between these two places, (<sup><01518></sup>Genesis 35:18,19); she is represented as rising out of her grave to act this part; or it signifies, that

could she have been sensible of this inhuman affair, and could have come out of her grave, she would have done what she is here represented to do; and the rather is she mentioned, since she was so affectionately fond and desirous of children, (<sup>(-030)</sup>Genesis 30:1);

*refused to be comforted for her children*; by any of her friends, the loss was so great, the affliction so heavy:

*because they [were] not*; or, “because he was not”<sup>f595</sup>; the Messiah was not, but was slain among the rest of the children, as the Jewish mothers, whom Rachel represented, imagined; and this heightened their distress, and filled them with more grief and trouble than the loss of their own children: but as Matthew has the plural number, the Targum, and all the Oriental versions, it is best to understand it of the children who “were not”; that is, they were dead; they were not in the land of the living, as this phrase is used in (<sup>(-037)</sup>Genesis 37:30 42:13,36); which shows that this is not to be understood of the Babylonish captivity, and of the mourning of the Jewish women on that account; since the cause of this was death, and not captivity; besides, mourning for so general a calamity as captivity would not have been confined to mothers, and to some only, and to one particular place; though so the Jewish writers interpret it; and the Targum, which is,

“a voice was heard in the high place of the world, the house of Israel weeping and mourning after Jeremiah the prophet, whom Nabuzaradan the chief of those that slew, sent from Ramah; lamentation and weeping with bitterness, Jerusalem weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were gone into captivity.”

**Ver. 16.** *Thus saith the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears*, etc.] Though sorrow on such an occasion may be lawfully indulged, yet it ought to be moderated; and attention should be given to those things which may serve to relieve under it, and especially when they come from the Lord himself; then a stop is to be put to the mournful voice, and wet eyes are to be dried up:

*for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord*; in bearing these children, and bringing them into the world, and expressing such an affectionate and tender concern for them; signifying, that the trouble of bearing and bringing them into the world, and nursing them the time they did live, should not, as it might seem, be fruitless, and to answer no end; but it should be seen



hereafter, that all this was not in vain; nor should they think it so; but that they have an ample recompense of all their sorrow and trouble:

*and they shall come again from the land of the enemy*; meaning either Joseph, and Mary, and Jesus; who, by the warning of an angel, went into Egypt, the land of the enemy, where the Jewish fathers were once evilly entreated, just before this barbarity was committed; where they stayed till all danger was over, and then returned; (see <sup><4023></sup>Matthew 2:13-21); compared with (<sup><3810></sup>Hosea 11:1); or rather the murdered children, who, in the resurrection morn, shall return from the grave, the land of that “last enemy”, death, which shall be destroyed, (<sup><4653></sup>1 Corinthians 15:26); and so Rachel, and the Jewish mothers she represents, are comforted with the hopes of a better resurrection; (see <sup><3815></sup>Hebrews 11:35 <sup><3943></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:13,14).

**Ver. 17.** *And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord*, etc.] Or, “hope for thy posterity”<sup>f596</sup>; for their children that had been massacred, that these should rise again, and enjoy a blessed immortality, as the next clause seems to explain and confirm it:

*that thy children shall come again to their own border*: either to the border of the land of Israel, as Joseph, Mary, and Jesus did, (<sup><4021></sup>Matthew 2:21,22); or rather to the borders of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, where this cruel murder was committed; and so the intimation is, that they shall rise again, and stand upon that very spot of ground where their blood was split; and not only so, but enter into and dwell upon the new earth in the Jerusalem state; and also enter into the heavenly Canaan, and dwell with Christ for evermore, on whose account their lives were taken away.

**Ver. 18.** *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself [thus]*, etc.] Not Ephraim in person; though, as he was a very affectionate and tenderhearted man, as appears from (<sup><3372></sup>1 Chronicles 7:22); he is with like propriety introduced, as Rachel before; but Ephraim intends Israel, or the ten tribes, and even all the people of the Jews; and the prophecy seems to respect the conversion of them in the latter day, when they shall be in soul trouble, and bemoan their sins, and their sinful and wretched estate, and especially their rejection of the Messiah; when they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn, and be in bitterness, as one that mourns for his firstborn, and which the Lord will take notice of and observe, (<sup><3420></sup>Zechariah 12:10,11 <sup><3448></sup>Hosea 14:8); and it may be applied to the case of every sensible sinner bemoaning their sinful nature; want of

righteousness; impotence to all that is spiritually good; their violations of the righteous law of God; and the curse they are liable to on account of it; their many sins against a God of love, grace, and mercy; and their ruined and undone state and condition by sin; all which the Lord takes notice of: “hearing I have heard”<sup>f597</sup>; which denotes the certainty of it, and with what attention he hears, yea, with what pleasure; it is the moan of his doves, of those who are like doves of the valley, everyone mourning for his iniquity; he hears, so as he answers; and sympathizing with them, he sends comfort to them, and delivers them out of their troubles:

*thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised*; this is the case bemoaned; not so much the chastising hand of God, as unaffectedness with it, and not being the better for it; the Lord has indeed, as if Ephraim should say, chastised me, and I have been chastised by him, and that is all; it has made no manner of impression upon me; I have not received correction, nor has it been of any use to me; and this he bemoaned: and this will be the case of the Jews when they are converted; they will then reflect upon all the corrections and chastisements of God under which they have been ever since the rejection of the Messiah, and still are; and yet are now stupid under them, and take no notice of them, and are never the better for them; and this they will lament when their eyes are opened: and so it is with particular persons at conversion; in their state of unregeneracy they have been chastened and corrected by the Lord, by one providence or another, by one disease and disorder or another, and they have not observed it; it has not wrought upon them, nor awakened them to a sense of danger; God has spoken once, and twice, in this rough way, and they have not perceived; he has stricken them, and they have not grieved; beaten them, and they felt it not; but now being made sensible, they bemoan their former stupidity and inattention, and wonder at the forbearance and goodness of God:

*as a bullock unaccustomed [to the yoke]*; or to draw the plough; as senseless and as stupid, yea, as thoughtless of danger, as that creature is when led to the slaughter; as “untaught”, as the word<sup>f598</sup> signifies; as ignorant of divine and spiritual things; knowing nothing of Christ, or God in Christ, or of the way of salvation by him, and of the operations of his Spirit and grace; as unruly as that to bear the yoke of the law, or the yoke of Christ; and as impatient under the yoke of affliction, kicking, tossing, and flinging, like a wild bull in a net; all which give concern to an

awakened mind, that now sees its need of conversion, and prays for it, as follows:

*turn thou me, and I shall be turned*; which designs not a mere reformation of manners, or conversion to a doctrine or doctrines; nor a restoration after backslidings; nor a carrying on of the work of grace on the soul, and a daily renewing it; but the first work of conversion; which lies in a man's being turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God; is a turn of the heart, and not of the head and action only; of the will, affections, and bias of the mind; it is a turning of persons to the Lord Jesus Christ, to look to him for righteousness, life, and salvation; and in such sense will the Jews be turned in the latter day, (<sup><4016></sup>2 Corinthians 3:16); and this being prayed for, not only shows a sense of need of it, but of inability to work it; that it is not in the power of man to do it; that he is not active, but passive in it; that it is the Lord's work, and his only; and that when he does it, it is done effectually:

*for thou [art] the Lord my God*: the "Lord", the mighty Jehovah, and therefore able to do it; "my God", covenant God, who has promised to do it; and by virtue of covenant grace will be the conversion of the Jews; and to which the conversion of everyone is owing, (<sup><4115></sup>Romans 11:25,26); or, "for thou [shalt be] the Lord my God"; I will own, acknowledge, fear, serve, and glorify thee as such, being converted to thee; (see <sup><1231></sup>Genesis 28:20,21).

**Ver. 19.** *Surely after that I was turned I repented*, etc.] Ephraim's prayer was answered; as he prayed he might be turned, he was; and when he was turned, then he repented, not only of sin in general, but of such sins as he had been particularly guilty of; not only of the grosser actions of life, but of inward sins, secret lusts and corruptions; even of sins of holy things, having now different sentiments, affections, and conduct: and this is what is called evangelical repentance, and is from the grace of God; springs from love; flows from a sight of God and a view of Christ; is increased by the discoveries of God's love, and is unto life and salvation; and this sort of repentance follows upon conversion; there must be first a true and real conversion before this evangelical repentance can take place:

*and after that I was instructed I smote upon [my] thigh*: as expressive of sorrow for sin after a godly sort; of indignation at it; and shame and confusion for it; and also of astonishment, at the mercy, forbearance, and long suffering of God, (<sup><3212></sup>Ezekiel 21:12 <sup><4183></sup>Luke 18:13); and this

humiliation follows upon spiritual instruction, which is previously necessary to it; “after it was made known to me”<sup>f599</sup>; as the words may be rendered; what a sinful, guilty, impure, and impotent, and unrighteous creature he was; after that he became acquainted with himself, and his wretched state and condition; when instructed either by the rod, or by the word, and by the Spirit of God, in the use of both, or either; when led into the knowledge of divine things; of the love and grace of God through Christ; of the person, offices, and glory of Christ; of the way of life and salvation by him; and of the doctrines of pardon, and righteousness, and acceptance through him:

*I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth*; in his conscience; the sins and follies of his youth being presented and set before him, and he convinced of them, was filled with shame and confusion at the remembrance of them; which is a common thing when a man is thoroughly awakened and converted, and is brought to true repentance and humiliation. So the Targum,

“because we have received the reproach of our sins, which were of old?”

**Ver. 20.** [*Is Ephraim my dear son?* etc.] Questions put in this form, in the Hebrew language, usually more vehemently deny; and then the sense must be, Ephraim is not my dear son: and agreeably to this all the following clauses must be interpreted; which seems quite contrary to the scope and design of the context: wherefore it seems better to render the words thus, “[Is not] Ephraim my dear son?”<sup>f600</sup> yes, he is; and so is everyone that stands in the relation of children to the Lord, they are all of them his dear children, (~~481~~ Ephesians 5:1); his beloved ones, loved by him with an everlasting love; they are “precious” to him, as the word used signifies; they are dear to him as the apple of his eye; they are highly esteemed of by him; they are his jewels and peculiar treasure: how precious they are to him appears by his parting with his own most precious Son for their sakes; by sympathizing with them under all their afflictions; by providing so largely and liberally for them; by feeding them with the most delicious food; by clothing them with the robe of righteousness, and garments of salvation; by protecting them with a guard of angels, and preparing an incorruptible inheritance for them;

*[is he] a pleasant child?* or, “is he [not] a child of delights”<sup>f601</sup>? verily he is: and so are all the children of God by adopting grace; they are pleasant to

him for delights; they are little images of himself, in whom he is well pleased; they are lovely and comely in his sight, through the perfect comeliness of Christ, that is put upon them; their speech is comely and pleasant to him; their prayer is his delight; and especially he loves to hear them cry “Abba”, Father, though they do but lisp it out; just as parents take pleasure in their children, which are images of themselves, and comely in their view; particularly when they begin to talk, and can just lisp out their names. Moreover, as the little actions of children, though there may be a great deal of childishness in them, are pleasing to their parents, so are the acts of grace and duty well pleasing to God; those of faith, hope, fear, and love, and the several duties of religion, though but imperfectly performed: and their nearness to him, and communion with him, which he indulges them with, show his delight in them; he kisses them with the kisses of his mouth; he dandles them on his knee, and comforts them, as one whom his mother comforts; he carries them in his bosom; he takes them by the hand, and teaches them to go, and lays meat before them;

*for since I spake against him*; in his word, and by his providences; by way of complaint, as a peevish, perverse, backsliding, and rebellious child; by way of threatening with the rod, in case of impenitence and obstinacy; by way of rebuke, though in love, for many misdemeanors and offences; and in a providential, though not in a judicial way: God has nothing against his children in a judicial way, all their sins being stoned for by Christ; but in a providential way he has many things against them for their correction and chastisement; at least which seem to be against them, though they all work together for their good. However, as he here says,

*I do earnestly remember him still*; or, “in remembering I will” or “do remember him still”<sup>f602</sup>; constantly as well as earnestly; God never forgets his children, though they and others may think he does; (see ~~2394~~ Isaiah 49:14-16); he forgets their sins, but not their persons; he is ever mindful of his covenant with them, and remembers his promises to them; he remembers both his love to them, and their love to him; yea, he remembers their thoughts of him, their words concerning him, and their works done in his name, and to his glory; his dear children are had in everlasting remembrance, and are never forgotten by him;

*therefore my bowels are troubled for him*; sound for him, or yearn toward him; so that he did not do what he threatened, or was seemingly about to do. The phrase is expressive of great relentings, strong and melting pity in

his heart, towards his his dear and delightful children; (see <sup><3108</sup>Hosea 11:8,9);

*I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord;* or show mercy to him; as the Lord does to his children, by receiving them graciously upon, their return; by manifesting and applying pardoning grace; by bestowing fresh mercies and favours on them; and by bringing them safe to eternal glory and happiness.

**Ver. 21.** *Set thee up way marks, make thee high heaps,* etc.] Of stones, raised up as pillars, or like pyramids; or upright, as palm trees, which signification the word <sup>f603</sup> has; to be marks and signs, to know the way again upon a return. The Targum is,

“O congregation of Israel, remember the right works of thy fathers; pour out supplications; in bitterness set thy heart.”

And so the Vulgate Latin version interprets the last clause, “put on bitteresses”, without any sense; so Cocceius. The design of the words is to put the Jews upon thoughts of returning to their own land, and to prepare for it;

*set thine heart towards the highway, [even] the way [which] thou wentest;* from Judea to Babylon, or into other countries; think of going the same way back again; for, as there was a highway from Judea, there is one to it; let thine heart be upon returning that way. Jarchi reads, “the way which I went”; that is, the way in which the Lord went with the people; the right way in which he guided and directed them; and in which following him, they could not err; (see <sup><3318</sup>Isaiah 35:8). The Targum is,

“consider the works which thou hast done, whether they are fight, when thou goest in a way afar off;”

*turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities;* an invitation and encouragement to the Jews to turn again to their own land; as from the Babylonish captivity, so from all lands in the latter day; which is yet to be fulfilled, and to which the prophecy more properly belongs.

**Ver. 22.** *How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter?* etc.] From place to, place, from country to country, from one kingdom to another, as the Jews do to this day; and not return unto the Lord, and David their king, and to their own country? Or, “how long wilt thou be

foolish”<sup>f604</sup>? in backsliding from the Lord; in slighting the written word; neglecting the promises and prophecies, the exhortations, cautions, and instructions therein given; in adhering to and extolling the traditions of the elders, even above the Scriptures; in pertinaciously rejecting the Messiah, next prophesied of; all which folly the Jews are still guilty of, and continue in. So the word signifies in the Arabic language<sup>f605</sup>;

*for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man*; a mighty one, a mighty man, the man Jehovah’s fellow; conceived, contained, and encompassed, in the womb of the virgin, the woman, whose seed he was to be of, and of whom he was: this was a “new”, unheard of, extraordinary thing, a “creation”, a work of almighty power! the human nature of Christ was formed and prepared by the power of the Holy Ghost, without the help of man; and this now is mentioned as an argument and an encouragement to the Jews to return to their own land, since the Messiah is born there of a virgin, as it was foretold he should. This seems to be the true and genuine sense of the words, and other senses weak and impertinent; as when they are made to refer to the heroic spirit in some women superior to men; to the unusual practice of women suing to men for marriage; and to the people of Israel returning to the Lord from their apostasy. So the Targum,

“for, behold, the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth and the people of the house of Israel have given themselves up to the law.”

And very foreign are the senses which some Christian interpreters give of this passage; as when they interpret it of the Jews conquering and oppressing their enemies; or of the Jewish church seeking after God, her husband, when separated from him; or of the Christian church, though weak, resisting her mighty persecutors by her confession of faith, and overcoming them; or of the church under the New Testament embracing Christ; which indeed is preferable to the other, and especially to that Popish one of the eucharist containing the body of Christ<sup>f606</sup>; but the true sense is what is before given: and even some of the Jewish doctors themselves have acknowledged, that the Messiah is here intended. In an ancient<sup>f607</sup> book of theirs, on mention of these words, it is added,

“this shall be in the time of the Messiah, which will be on the sixth day;”

that is, the sixth millennium And elsewhere<sup>f608</sup> “a woman shall compass a man”; says R. Hona, in the name of R. Ame, this is the King Messiah. So says R. Joshua ben Levi<sup>f609</sup>,

“he, that is, God, heals with the same he wounds; so will you find in Israel, they sinned by a virgin, and were punished in virgins, (~~3231~~ Ezekiel 23:1-49 ~~2511~~ Lamentations 5:1-22); so he comforts them by a virgin, according to (~~2412~~ Jeremiah 31:21,22); “turn again, O virgin of Israel”, etc. “a woman shall compass a man”. R Huna, in the name of R. Idi and R. Joshua, said, that this man is the King Messiah, of whom it is said, (~~3017~~ Psalm 2:7), “this day have I begotten thee”<sup>f610</sup>.”

**Ver. 23.** *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel*, etc.] The Governor of the whole world, the Lord of armies above and below; and yet has a peculiar regard to Israel, his spiritual Israel, whose covenant God and Father he is; and is to be believed in what he after says, the fulfilment of which may be depended on:

*as yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah, and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity*; not the Babylonish captivity, but their present one; for, upon their return from Babylon, though there was a reformation among them, by means of Ezra, and Nehemiah, and others, yet not so great an one as is here suggested; when, by way of salutation and prayer, the following words will be said by all that know them, and wish well to them, as had been heretofore:

*the Lord bless thee, O habitation of justice, [and] mountain of holiness*; for now Jerusalem will be the habitation of righteous men, and every pot or person in it, and in “Judah, shall be holiness to the Lord”, (~~3812~~ Zechariah 14:21); and so shall be blessed of God, and pronounced blessed by men, by all good men, among the Gentiles, who will rejoice at their conversion, restoration, and reformation.

**Ver. 24.** *And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together*, etc.] In peace and unity, in great concord and harmony:

*husbandmen, and those [that] go forth with flocks*; husbandmen and shepherds; meaning such not merely in a temporal sense, but in a spiritual one; ministers of the Gospel, labourers with God, and under him, in the husbandry of his church; pastors after his own heart, to feed his people, his flocks, his sheep and lambs, with knowledge and understanding; who shall



agree in their ministry, teaching the same doctrines, and administering the same ordinances, according to the rule of the word.

**Ver. 25.** *For I have satiated the weary soul*, etc.] As sinners are at first awakenings and convictions; when sin is made exceeding sinful and loathsome to them, and becomes an uneasiness, and they a burden to themselves on account of it; when they labour, till they are weary, to get food for their famishing souls; weary in seeking for righteousness to cover them, in working for life to save them, and inquiring after rest; but cannot find neither food, nor righteousness, nor life, nor rest, till they come to Christ; and as all the saints are weary of a body of sin and death, with mourning over it, and groaning under it; weary of Satan's temptations and buffetings; weary of the world, and the men of it, and with afflictive dispensations of Providence in it; and are as weary travellers passing through a waste howling wilderness; these the Lord "satiates", refreshes, and even "inebrates"<sup>f611</sup>, as the word used signifies, with his love; which is very reviving and refreshing, and is a feast of itself; and is very satisfying when it is shed abroad in the heart; when souls have a delightful sense of it, and see their interest in it; particularly satiates with his pardoning grace and mercy, and with food, and fulness of it, in Christ; with righteousness, life, and salvation by him; and with rest, peace, joy, and comfort in him: and this, though a promise and prophecy of what would be, yet, because of the certainty of it, is represented as if it had been done already; as also what follows:

*and I have replenished every sorrowful soul*; that is sorry for sin after a godly sort, and mourns for it after an evangelical manner; is troubled for want of the divine presence, and is pressed with afflictions inward and outward: these the Lord "replenishes" or "fills"<sup>f612</sup>; that is, with all good, as the Targum adds, and fills them to satisfaction; with Christ, and all good things by him; with peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation; with the Spirit, his gifts and graces; with Gospel provisions, the goodness and fatness of his house; with all spiritual blessings now, and with glory and happiness hereafter. The Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions, instead of "weary" and "sorrowful", render the words "thirsty and hungry"; and such as hunger and thirst after righteousness; after the discoveries of pardoning grace; after Christ, and salvation by him; after more knowledge of him, and communion with him; are, sooner or later, filled with those things they are hungering and thirsting after; (see <sup>4186</sup>Matthew 5:6).

**Ver. 26.** *Upon this I awakened, and beheld,* etc.] When or after he beheld or had seen the vision and prophecy concerning the incarnation of Christ, and the glory and happiness of his church and people in the latter day, he awoke; for it seems the prophecy contained in this and the preceding chapter was delivered to Jeremiah in a dream; who, when he had seen the vision, and upon the last words being spoken to him, awoke out of it:

*and my sleep was sweet unto me;* as it must needs be, to have so many gracious promises, and glorious prophecies, delivered to him in it. Some understand the words, that when he awoke out of sleep, he saw and considered with pleasure what had been made known to him; and then fell into a sweet sleep again, which was not usual with him. To which the Targum inclines,

“the prophet said, because of this good news of the days of consolation (that is, the days of the Messiah) that should come, I was raised up, and saw; again I slept, and my sleep was profitable to me.”

So Kimchi. Some interpret the words of Christ, and of his sleep in the grave.

**Ver. 27.** *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,* etc.] Or, “are coming”<sup>f613</sup>; and will be here shortly:

*that I will sow the house of Israel, and the house of Judah, with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast;* that is, will multiply both man and beast, so that there shall be a great increase; whereas, through war, famine, pestilence, and captivity, their number was greatly reduced. The allusion is to the sowing of a field with seed, which in due time springs up, and produces a large increase. Some understand this of the spiritual blessing of regeneration; but that is not of corruptible seed, such as is here mentioned, but of incorruptible seed, by the word of God: though this may be a type of the fruitfulness of the church in Gospel times; since afterwards an account is given of the new covenant, which should take place in those times.

**Ver. 28.** *And it shall come to pass, [that] like as I have watched over them,* etc.] In providence; looked upon them with an eye of vindictive justice; observed all their actions and motions; diligently attended to everything that passed, and took the first and most fitting opportunity:

*to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict*; which words, as they have an elegance and an agreeableness in their sound, in the original; so they are expressive of the utter overthrow of the city, temple, and nation of the Jews, and of the several troubles and calamities they should be afflicted with:

*so will I watch over them*; be as careful and diligent, as intent, earnest, and early:

*to build, and to plant, saith the Lord*; to build their city and temple, and to plant them in their own land. So the church of God is his building, whose foundation he lays, the superstructure of which he rears up, and will complete it in his own time; and it is his plantation, into which he puts his pleasant plants, his plants of renown; which he waters with his Spirit and grace, by the ministry of the word, that they may grow, and become fruitful.

**Ver. 29.** *In those days they shall say no more*, etc.] The following proverb or byword; they should have no occasion to use it, nor should they choose to use it; since they would understand themselves, and the dispensations of Providence towards them, better than to use it:

*the fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge*; that is, the fathers have sinned, and the children are punished for their sins. So the Targum,

“the fathers have sinned, and the children are smitten.”

This was in some sense true; they were punished for their fathers' sins in the captivity, particularly for Manasseh's; nor was it unusual with God to visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children; nor at all unjust, since they were a part of their parents, and especially since they were guilty of the same sins; nor is it thought unjust among men to punish children for the treason of their parents, as every sin is treason against God. But this was not all that was meant by this proverb; the sense of those that used it was, that they themselves were quite clear and innocent, and that they only suffered for their fathers' faults; which was false, of which they should be convinced, and use the proverb no more, as charging God with injustice.

**Ver. 30.** *But everyone shall die for his own iniquity*, etc.] His own personal iniquity; and not a corporeal death only, but an eternal one, which is the just wages of sin. It seems to intimate, that, after the Babylonish

captivity, no public calamity should come upon them for the sins of their fathers and their own jointly, but for their own iniquities singly; so their last destruction by the Romans was for their personal disbelief and rejection of the Messiah; (see ~~RB3~~ John 8:24); and the calamities upon them ever since have been for the same reason. Indeed, they imprecated his blood upon them, and upon their children, and so it is; but then, their children are under the power of the same sin of unbelief, and will remain so, until the veil is taken away, and they turn to the Lord; after which it will still be a more clear case that everyone shall die for his own iniquity;

*every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge*; sin, though it may be esteemed a sweet morsel, is a sour grape, and will prove so in the issue; and will give a man as much trouble and disquietude, when he is convinced of the evil of it, or suffers the punishment of it, as when a man's "teeth are set on edge"; and indeed the consequence of it will be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

**Ver. 31.** *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,* etc.] This refers to Gospel times, as is clear from the quotation and application by the apostle, (~~SB3~~ Hebrews 8:8-12); and it is owned by a modern Jew<sup>f614</sup> to belong to the times of the Messiah. It is introduced with a "behold", as a note of attention, pointing to something of moment, and very agreeable and desirable, as the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises, are; and as a note of admiration, it being justly to be wondered at that God should make a covenant with such sinful and unworthy creatures as he has;

*that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house Judah*; by this "covenant" is meant the covenant of called new, not because newly made, for it was with the elect in Christ from everlasting; so early was Christ set up as the Mediator of it; and so early were promises made, and blessings given, to them in him: nor because newly revealed; for it was made known to all the saints, more or less, under the former dispensation, particularly to David, to Abraham, yea, to our first parents immediately after the fall, though more clearly manifested under the Gospel dispensation; but because of its new mode of exhibition; not by types, and shadows, and sacrifices, as formerly; but by the ministry of the word, and the administration of Gospel ordinances; and in distinction from the former covenant, which is done away, as to the mode of it; and because it is a famous covenant, an excellent one, a better covenant, best of all; better than the covenant of works, and even better than the covenant of grace,

under the former administration; in the clear manifestation and extensive application of it; and in the ratification of it by the blood of Christ; besides, it provides and promises new things, as a new heart, and a new spirit; to which may be added, that it may be called new, because it is always new; it continues, it stands firm, as Kimchi observes, and shall not be made void; it will never be succeeded nor antiquated by any other covenant, or any other mode of administration of it. The persons with whom this covenant is said to be made are “the house of Israel and of Judah”; which was literally true of them in the first times of the Gospel, to whom the Gospel was first preached, and many of them were called by grace, and had an application of covenant blessings made to them; and is mystically to be understood of God’s elect, whether Jews or Gentiles; the Israel after the spirit; Israelites indeed, Jews inwardly, even all that are fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, the middle wall of partition being broken down: and this “making” of a covenant with them intends no other than a making it known unto them; showing it to them, and their interest in it; in God, as their covenant God; and in Christ, as the Mediator of it; and an application of the blessings and promises of it to them.

**Ver. 32.** *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers,* etc.] Meaning not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but the ancestors of the Jews that came out of Egypt, as appears by what follows. This was the covenant made at Sinai, which is here referred to; but the above covenant was not according to that; for, though it was not properly a covenant of works, but a typical one; yet it was in some sense faulty and deficient; or, however, the persons under it were faulty, and did not keep it; and besides, it was made with the Israelites; whereas this new covenant belongs both to Jews and Gentiles. That the Sinai covenant is intended is clear by the following circumstances:

*in the day [that] I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt;* that is, immediately after their being brought out of Egypt, the covenant was made with them; (see <sup>(1290)</sup>Exodus 19:1-8 24:7,8); at which time of their bringing out, the Lord took them by the hand, as being unable to deliver themselves, and to go out of themselves; which is expressive, as of their weakness, so of his power and goodness, kindness and tenderness to them; and is an aggravation of their ingratitude to him in breaking the covenant, made with them at such a time by the Lord, who was so kind and indulgent to them; and which is still more fully expressed in the following clause:

*which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord*; they promised fair, but did not perform; their hearts were not right with God, nor were they steadfast in his covenant; though it was such a solemn transaction, and had the nature of a matrimonial contract; it was the day of their espousal; they were betrothed to the Lord, and he acted the part of a husband to them in nourishing and cherishing them in providing food and raiment for them; manna that continued with them, and clothes that waxed not old; and in protecting them from their enemies, and bringing them to a good settlement in the land of Canaan. The Septuagint version renders it, “and I regarded them not”; and so the apostle, (<sup><3889></sup>Hebrews 8:9); for the reconciliation of which to the Hebrew text.

**Ver. 33.** *But this [shall be] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, etc.*] The several articles or branches of the covenant next follow, which show it to be different from the former:

*I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*; not the ceremonial law, which was abolished when this covenant was made; but rather the moral law still in force, which is a transcript of the nature and will of God; was inscribed on Adam’s heart in innocence; is greatly obliterated by sin; a contrary disposition to it is in man; this is reinscribed in regeneration; and hence a regard is had to it by regenerate persons, in which lies part of their conformity to Christ: or else, since the word here used signifies doctrine or instruction, the Gospel and the truths of it may be meant; (see <sup><3890></sup>Isaiah 2:2 42:4) (<sup><3891></sup>Romans 3:27); which have a place and dwell in the hearts of renewed ones. The Septuagint version reads it in the plural number, “laws”; and so does the apostle, (<sup><3892></sup>Hebrews 8:10); and may design the ordinances of the Gospel, and the commandments of Christ; which such, who are called by grace, have at heart to keep, and are made willing to be subject to; besides, the principle of grace in the soul is called “the law of the mind”; (<sup><3893></sup>Romans 7:23); it has the force of a law; is a reigning, governing, principle; and which is implanted in the genre by the spirit and power of God; the tables on which this law or laws are written are not tables of stone, but the fleshly tables of the heart; the heart is the proper seat, both of the law of God and Gospel of Christ, as well as of the grace of God in all regenerate persons: and the “putting” of those things there denotes knowledge of them, as of the spirituality of the law, and its perfection; that there is no righteousness by it, and is only fulfilled by Christ; and that it is a rule of walk and conversation; and also of the

doctrines of the Gospel, in the power and savour of them, and of the ordinances of it, so as to practise them, and walk in them; and an experience of the truth and reality of internal grace: and “writing” them here may denote affection for, and subjection to, the above things; and a clear work of grace upon the soul, so as to be legible, and appear to be the epistle of Christ, written not with the ink of nature’s power, but by the Spirit of the living God; (see ~~HRB~~ 2 Corinthians 3:3). This passage is applied to future times, the times of the Messiah, by the Jews<sup>f615</sup>:

*and will be their God, and they shall be my people*; God is the God of his covenant ones; not as the God of nature and providence only, but as the God of grace, and as their God and Father in Christ; which is preferable to everything else; all things are theirs; nor can they want any good thing; they need fear no enemy; they may depend upon the love of God, and be secure of his power; they may expect all blessings here and hereafter; for this covenant interest will always continue: and they are his people in such sense as others are not; a distinct, special, and peculiar people; a people near unto the Lord; high in his favour, and greatly blessed by him; all which is made to appear in their effectual calling; (see ~~HRB~~ 1 Peter 2:9,10).

**Ver. 34.** *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother*, etc.] Which is not to be understood of the outward ministry of the word; in heaven indeed there will be no need of it, nor in the New Jerusalem state; but in every period of time before it. In the first times of the Gospel, persons were appointed and qualified by Christ to be pastors and teachers; and in the latter day men shall run to and fro, and increase knowledge; besides, the saints in the present state stand in need of teaching; since they know but in part, and there is room for a growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ: nor does this contradict brotherly teaching, or the private instructions of saints in religious conversation and Christian conference, which are very useful; but is rather opposed to pretended revelations of private men; or to the magisterial dictates of persons in public office; the word of God being the only rule of instruction in righteousness: or this may be not absolutely, but comparatively said; setting forth the abundance of knowledge under the Gospel dispensation, that, in comparison of former times, there would be no need of the means of further knowledge:

*saying, know the Lord*: not naturally, or as by the light of nature; but spiritually; nor in a general way, as the God of nature and providence, as a

Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor; but in a special manner, as the God of grace, as the God and Father of Christ, and his people in him; not legally, but evangelically; not speculatively, but practically, and in a saving way and manner: this kind of knowledge now under the Gospel dispensation is greater than under the former; as the knowledge of God in his persons, in his perfections, in his titles and characters, and in his Son; and as to the manner of it, clearly, with open face as in a glass; and as to the persons to whom it is communicated, not to Judah only, but to men of all nations; all which is owing to a greater effusion of the spirit, as it follows:

*for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord:* not all mankind; but all the house of Israel, all the family of God, all the children of God being taught by him; not all alike, but all with the same kind of knowledge. This is frequently applied to the times of the Messiah by the Jews<sup>f616</sup>:

*for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more;* there was forgiveness of sin under the former covenant, but the blood of Christ was not then actually shed for it; it was held forth under types; and there was a remembrance of sin made every year; and saints had not such a clear and comfortable sight of pardon in common as now; and it was known and applied but to a few. This is the staple blessing of the covenant, and the evidence of all the rest.

**Ver. 35.** *Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day,* etc.] As he did at first, and still continues it; and which is a wonderful gift of nature he bestows on men, unworthy of such a favour, (<sup><4056</sup>Matthew 5:45);

*[and] the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night;* which have a settled regular order and course, in which they move; and whereby they impart the light they borrow from the sun, to enlighten the world by night; which is another favour to the inhabitants of it; (see <sup><0016</sup>Genesis 1:16);

*which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar;* some refer this, as Kimchi, to the dividing of the Red sea for the Israelites to pass over; but it rather respects an action more frequently done; and should be rendered, which “stilleth”, or “maketh the sea quiet”,<sup>f617</sup>; which best agrees with what follows; when it is tumultuous, and threatens the loss of ships and men’s lives, and attempts to pass its bounds, he “rebukes it”; so the Targum; and



makes it a calm; he stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, (<sup><13817></sup>Psalm 65:7);

*the Lord of hosts [is] his name*; that has all the armies of heaven and earth at his command, and can do whatever he pleases; he, and he only, can do the above things, and does them; and he that can do them, is able to make good the covenant he has made with the house of Israel, and fulfil the promises of it, of which there is an assurance; as well as he is able to secure an interest and a church for himself unto the end of the world, as the following words show.

**Ver. 36.** *If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord*, etc.] Of the sun, moon, and stars; should these leave their proper course, and not perform their several functions, or do the service appointed for them; should they desert their master, or disobey his orders, turn away from him, and pay no regard to the laws and rules he has set them:

*[then] the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before me for ever*; but, as the former is impossible, so is the latter, The Jews ceased not from being a nation through their captivity in Babylon, nor through their destruction by the Romans; they continue a distinct nation and people to this day, though scattered throughout the nations of the world: though this rather refers to the spiritual Israel, the holy nation and peculiar people; Christ will have a seed to serve him as long as the sun and moon endure; his church shall continue to the end of the world; it is built on a rock; and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it.

**Ver. 37.** *Thus saith the Lord, if heaven above can be measured*, etc.] Either the space between the highest heavens and the earth; or the extent of the heavens, from one end of them to the other, which cannot be done by man; so the Targum,

“as it is impossible that man should know the measure of the heavens above;”

otherwise it is measured by the Lord, for he hath “meted out heaven with a span”, (<sup><2412></sup>Isaiah 40:12);

*and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath*: so as to be known what they are, or on what they are fastened, since the earth is hung upon nothing, (<sup><13816></sup>Job 38:6 26:7);

*I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord*; as the former cannot be, so neither the latter; when there was a very great rejection of the Jews for their disbelief of the Messiah, they were not all cast off; the Apostle Paul was an instance to the contrary, and so were others: “the remnant according to the election of grace”; and there is a time coming when all Israel shall be saved, (<sup>610</sup>Romans 11:5,25,26); nor shall any of the spiritual Israel be cast off by him, or cast away from him, so as to perish; the Israel, whom God foreknew, is chosen, redeemed, and whom he calls by his grace; no, not for all the sins and transgressions they have been guilty of, however they may deserve it. The reasons are, because of his unchangeable love to them; his unalterable covenant with them; the satisfaction his son has made for them; and the free and full pardon of their sins, which he has granted to them.

**Ver. 38.** *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord*, etc.] The word come is not in the text; it is read, but not written. The vowel points are in the text, but not the letters; which those, who are against the antiquity of the points, would do well to consider; since the Jews never suffered any additions to the Bible. Jarchi says this prophecy refers to future times in the latter redemption, and never was fulfilled in the second temple; and indeed, under the figure of rebuilding Jerusalem, seems to be intended the building of the Gospel church, which was to continue to the end of time; for both holiness and perpetuity are ascribed to it:

*that the city shall be built to the Lord*; the city of Jerusalem; which was to be rebuilt upon the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, as by the order, and under the direction and protection of the Lord, so for his service and worship; the temple in it should be built up again, and divine worship restored; and both that and the city, with the inhabitants of it, be devoted to his service; a type of the Gospel church, built up an habitation for God, where he is worshipped, feared, and glorified:

*from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner*; of the tower of Hananeel mention is made in (<sup>400</sup>Nehemiah 3:1 12:39 <sup>340</sup>Zechariah 14:10). The Targum calls it the tower of Pikkus. Lightfoot places it on the south side of the city, bending to the east; but most place it on the east side of it: here probably the building of the city began in Nehemiah’s time, and proceeded to the gate of the corner, which lay northeast; of which (see <sup>243</sup>2 Kings 14:13 <sup>400</sup>2 Chronicles 26:9); Jerom interprets the tower of Hananeel the tower of obedience, or of the grace and gifts of God, which

latter is not much amiss; since the word “Hansheel” may be interpreted “God gives grace”; and the spiritual building of the church proceeds from the grace of God, upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ being the chief corner stone, (<sup>4121</sup>Ephesians 2:20).

**Ver. 39.** *And the measuring line shall yet go forth over against it*, etc.] Or, “before it”<sup>f618</sup>; the gate proceeding right on from it; of the length of the measuring line, or reed; (see <sup>2305</sup>Ezekiel 40:5); though some render it, “before him”<sup>f619</sup>; before the Lord, under whose direction and powerful providence the work went on; so the city gates and walls of the New Jerusalem are said to be measured with a reed, (<sup>4615</sup>Revelation 21:15);

*upon the hill Gareb*; which signifies a “scab”, so called, as is supposed, from scabby and leprous persons sent here to dwell, which was a “lazaretto” for them. Lightfoot, following Lyra, takes it to be the same with Mount Calvary: it was on the north side of the city, bending to the west; and, if the same with Calvary, it was on the west side. The Targum renders it,

“the hill which was near to Gareb:”

*and shall compass about to Goath*; so called perhaps from the difficulty of its ascent, it being a laborious work to go up to it, enough to make a man breathe. Lyra takes it to be Golgotha, which is not very likely; it seems to be at some distance from the former; since from that there was a round about, a compass fetched to this: it is supposed to lie on the west side of the city, towards the south. The Targum renders it the calves’ pool, or the round pool; it is thought by some more likely to be the hill Josephus<sup>f620</sup> speaks of, that hung over the valley of Siloam.

**Ver. 40.** *And the whole valley of the dead bodies, and of the ashes*, etc.] The Targum paraphrases it,

“where the carcasses of the Assyrian army fell;”

Sennacherib’s army, destroyed by an angel; and so Jarchi and Kimchi; which latter observes, that the word for “ashes” signifies “fat”; and so may describe the persons then destroyed, who were fat and lusty men: others think, more probably, that the valley of Tophet or Hinnom is here meant; so called, either from the persons that were burnt and sacrificed to Moloch; or from the carcasses of malefactors interred here; and from the ashes of the sacrifices which were brought from the temple, and laid here. This

valley lay southwest of the city; it was a ditch at the foot of the mount of Calvary; where, as Monsieur Thevenot<sup>f621</sup> says, now stands the chapel of the invention of the cross:

*and all the fields unto the brook of Kidron*; such as the potters and fullers' fields, which lay to the south of the city, or more to the east, where Kidron was situated:

*unto the corner of the horse gate towards the east*; and so the compass is fetched round the city to the eastern part of it, from whence it began, even to the tower of Hananeel, which was on the east of this horse gate; (see <2116>2 Kings 11:16 <1638>Nehemiah 3:28). The Targum renders it,

“to the corner of the gate of the house of the king’s course;”

supposed to be the gate at which the king’s horses went in and out, when led to be watered or exercised:

*[shall be] holy unto the Lord*; that is, the whole city in its utmost compass thus rebuilt, yea, even the out parts of it, and those that were defiled with the carcasses of men, and ashes of the burnt offerings. It seems to respect the extensive holiness of the church of God in the latter day; compare with it (<3840>Zechariah 14:10,20,21);

*it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever*; which, if understood literally of the city of Jerusalem, can only signify, that it should not be destroyed soon, but should continue a long time; for certain it is, that after it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, it was plucked up, and thrown down by the Romans, and particularly by Hadrian, who ploughed it up, and built another city, and called it by his own name; but this figuratively rather intends the church of Christ, which is built on him the Rock, and so is immovable; and, like Mount Zion, shall abide for ever.