

CHAPTER 32

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 32

This chapter contains an account of Jeremiah's imprisonment, and the cause of it; of his buying a field of his uncle's son, and the design of it; of his prayer to God, and of the answer returned to him. The time of his imprisonment, the place where, and the reasons of it, are observed in (²⁴³¹Jeremiah 32:1-5); that his uncle's son would come and offer the sale of a field to him was told him by the Lord, which he did accordingly, (²⁴³⁵Jeremiah 32:6,7); of whom he bought the field, paid the money, had the purchase confirmed in a legal way, before witnesses, (²⁴³⁸Jeremiah 32:8-12); and the writings of it he committed to Baruch, to put in an earthen vessel, where they were to continue some time as a pledge of houses, fields, and vineyards, being possessed again after the captivity, (²⁴³³Jeremiah 32:13-15); then follows a prayer of his to the Lord, in which he addresses him as the Maker of all things; as the Lord God omnipotent; as a God of great grace and mercy, as well as strict justice; as a God of wisdom, counsel, and might, and an omniscient and righteous Being, (²⁴³⁶Jeremiah 32:16-19); and recounts the wonderful things he had done for the people of Israel, (²⁴³⁷Jeremiah 32:20-22); and observes the ingratitude and disobedience of that people, which were the cause of the present siege of the city, which should surely be delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans, (²⁴²³Jeremiah 32:23-25); to which prayer an answer is returned, (²⁴²⁶Jeremiah 32:26); in which the Lord describes himself as the God of all flesh, and as able to do what he pleases, (²⁴²⁷Jeremiah 32:27); and confirms the delivery of the city of Jerusalem unto the Chaldeans, (²⁴²⁸Jeremiah 32:28,29); and assigns the causes of it, the backslidings, disobedience, and dreadful idolatry of the people, (²⁴³⁰Jeremiah 32:30-35); and, notwithstanding, promises a restoration of them to their own land again, (²⁴²⁵Jeremiah 32:36,37); when an opportunity is taken to insert the covenant of grace, and the special articles and peculiar promises of it, for the comfort of the spiritual Israel of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, (²⁴²⁸Jeremiah 32:38-40); and the chapter is concluded with a fresh assurance of the return of the captivity, and of the punctual performance of

the promise of it; when fields should be bought in every part of the land, in like manner as Jeremiah had bought his, (^{2434b}Jeremiah 32:41-44).

Ver. 1. *The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord*, etc.] The word of prophecy, as the Targum, concerning Jeremiah's buying the field of his uncle's son, (^{2435b}Jeremiah 32:6); and concerning the delivery of the city of Jerusalem into the hands of the Chaldeans, (^{2435b}Jeremiah 32:26); and the return of the captivity, (^{2435b}Jeremiah 32:36);

in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which [was] the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar; the same with Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a year before the taking of the city by him; for that was in the eleventh of Zedekiah, and the nineteenth of Nebuchadnezzar; (see ^{2435b}Jeremiah 52:1,5,12).

Ver. 2. *For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem*, etc.] And had done so for some time; for the siege began in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, (^{2435b}Jeremiah 52:4);

and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which [was] in the king of Judah's house; which showed great stupidity and hardness of heart in the king, and his courtiers, and in the people, to imprison a prophet of the Lord, when surrounded by an enemy's army, and that according to the prediction of the prophet; by which it appeared that he was a true prophet; and they might reasonably expect that the rest of his predictions, which related to the taking of their city, and carrying them captive, would be fulfilled. It is true, indeed, he was in a better prison than before, more honourable, being within the limits of the king's house; and, besides, was not closely confined, but allowed to walk in the court of the prison; and so had a free air to breathe in, and more company to converse with, and could exercise himself by walking about; perhaps he was placed here to keep him from prophesying to the people to their discouragement, and the more to awe him, as he was under the eye of the king and his ministry. Of this prison and its court mention is made in (^{4425b}Nehemiah 3:25); it seems to have been for state prisoners.

Ver. 3. *For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up*, etc.] In prison, at least in the court of the prison; he had given orders for his imprisonment, which were executed, and it was the same as if he had done it himself; the reason of which was, as follows:

saying, wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, thus saith the Lord, behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it? meaning the city of Jerusalem, now besieged by the king of Babylon. This prophecy stands in (²⁸⁰Jeremiah 34:1-3); the prophecies of this book not being put together in proper order of time.

Ver. 4. *And Zedekiah king of Judah shall not escape out of the hand of the Chaldeans,* etc.] This is a continuation of the prophecy of Jeremiah, repeated by the king to him, and which concerns himself more especially; who, upon the taking of the city, would endeavour to make his escape, as he did; but should not be able, (²⁸¹Jeremiah 52:8);

but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon; not only into the hands of his army, and of his generals, but into his own hand personally; since it follows:

and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes; converse together face to face, eye to eye; but no doubt with different tones and looks; the king of Babylon upbraiding the king of Judah with perjury and ingratitude, and looking upon him with indignation and contempt; the other speaking faintly, and looking down with grief, shame, and confusion; moreover, the eyes of the king of Babylon beheld the eyes of Zedekiah, and ordered them to be put out, as they were, (¹²³¹2 Kings 25:7 ²⁸²Jeremiah 39:7 52:11).

Ver. 5. *And he shall lead Zedekiah to Babylon,* etc.] As he did in chains, from Riblah, where he was brought unto him after he was taken, endeavouring to make his escape, (²⁸³Jeremiah 52:8,9,11);

and there shall he be until I visit him, saith the Lord; in taking him away by death; for he continued in Babylon to the time of his death, which was not violent, but natural; and, considering his circumstances, his captivity, imprisonment, and loss of sight, might be reckoned a visitation in mercy: though some understand this of God's visiting the people at the return of them from their seventy years' captivity; if Zedekiah lived till then, he must be a very old man; but of this we have no account, nor is it probable:

though ye fight with the Chaldeans, ye shall not prosper; though they should sally out upon them, in order to beat them out of their trenches, and drive them from the walls of the city, yet without success.

Ver. 6. *And Jeremiah said, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying.*] Not that he said this to Zedekiah; but the prophet, after the above preface, returns to declare what the word of the Lord was, which came to him at the time before mentioned.

Ver. 7. *Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee,* etc.] Hilkiah, the father of Jeremiah, and this Shallum, were own brothers; so that Jeremiah and Hanameel were brothers' sons, or own cousins: this coming of Hanameel to Jeremiah being a contingent event, with respect to second causes, and yet foretold as what would certainly be, shows that such events are foreknown by the Lord, and are sure to him:

saying, buy thee my field that [is] in Anathoth; the place from whence Jeremiah came, and was but about two or three miles from Jerusalem, and therefore must be now in the possession of the Chaldean army; wherefore it may seem very strange in Hanameel to propose it to sale, and stranger still in Jeremiah to buy it: though something of this kind was done at Rome, while Hannibal was besieging it; the field where Hannibal pitched his camp was offered to sale at Rome, and found a buyer^{f622}; but then he that bought it was in high spirits, and in a strong belief that the city would not be taken, and that the enemy would be obliged to quit the siege; but Jeremiah knew, and firmly believed, on the other hand, that the city of Jerusalem, and all the country round it, would fall into the hands of the king of Babylon. Moreover, Anathoth was a city of the priests, and the fields adjoining to it belonged to them; as some of them did to Abiathar the priest in his time, (¹⁰²⁵1 Kings 2:26); and such fields as belonged to the priests and Levites were not to be sold, according to the law in (^{1025b}Leviticus 25:34); to which it is answered, that this was not arable land, which the Levites might not possess; but some meadow, orchard, or garden, in the suburbs of the city, which though it might not be sold to strangers, yet might be sold among themselves; though it is more probable that this was a field that came from, in some of his ancestors by his mother's or grandmother's side, and so might be disposed of; as it seems certain to be lawfully done, not only as it was the will of God, who could indeed dispense with his own law, was that in the way, but since it was a matter of right, and incumbent on him, as follows:

for the right of redemption [is] thine to buy [it]; that is, had it been sold to another, it would have lain upon him to have redeemed it, as being next of kin, that so it might not pass to another tribe and family.

Ver. 8. *So Hanameel mine uncle's son came unto me*, etc.] Freely and voluntarily, of his own accord; though it was determined he should, as it was predicted he would; for God's decrees do not infringe the liberty of the will: this man came from Anathoth, very probably, to Jerusalem, to the place where the prophet was:

in the court of the prison, according to the word of the Lord; which had been made known before to Jeremiah:

and said unto me, buy my field, I pray thee, that [is] in Anathoth, which [is] in the country of Benjamin; it belonged to that tribe:

for the right of inheritance [is] thine; the reversion of this field; it would come to him after the death of his cousin, as being next heir:

and the redemption [is] thine; buy [it] for thyself; since, if it was sold to another, he, according to law, was obliged to redeem it; and therefore it was much better to buy it at once for himself:

then I knew that this [was] the word of the Lord; that it was the word of the Lord which came to him before, and that it was the will of the Lord that he should make this purchase; since there was such an exact agreement between the prophecy and the event.

Ver. 9. *And I bought the field of Hanameel mine uncle's son; that [was] in Anathoth*, etc.] The prophet agreed with his cousin to take his field of him, at a certain price hereafter mentioned; which may seem strange in one that was a poor prophet, now a prisoner, and the land just going to be subject to the Chaldeans: but the design of this was to show that there would be a return from captivity, when houses and fields should be bought and sold again, of which this was a pledge:

and weighed him the money; agreed upon, which was reckoned not by tale, but by weight:

[even] seventeen shekels of silver; which, reckoning a shekel at half a crown, were no more than two pounds, two shillings, and sixpence; a small sum of money to make a purchase of a field with; though this may be accounted for by the scarcity of money, the field in the hand of the enemy, there being only his kinsman's life in it, the prophet bought the reversion, being his of right; and, besides, it might be only an orchard or garden that is so called. In the Hebrew text it is, "seven shekels and ten [pieces of]

silver”: and Kimchi and Ben Melech say, that by “shekels” are meant minas or pounds; and by “pieces of silver”, selahs or shekels: and so the Targum renders it,

“seven minas, and ten shekels of silver.”

Now a minah or maneh, according to (^{365D}Ezekiel 45:12); was equal to sixty shekels, and so of the value of seven pounds, ten shillings; seven of these made fifty two pounds, ten shillings; and the other ten shekels being one pound, five shillings, the whole amounted to fifty three pounds, fifteen shillings, which would purchase a considerable field.

Ver. 10. *And I subscribed the evidence*, etc.] Or, “wrote in a book”^{f623}; the instrument or bill of sale, the deed of purchase; which described the field sold, and expressed the condition on which the purchase was made; and by subscribing it he agreed to it, and laid himself under obligation to perform it:

and sealed [it]; for the further confirmation of it:

and took witnesses; to be present at the payment of the money, and to sign the deed likewise:

and weighed [him] the money in the balances; this he did a second time; he weighed it first before Hanameel himself, and then before the witnesses; everything was done fairly, and with great exactness.

Ver. 11. *So I took the evidence of the purchase*, etc.] The deed of purchase, the book or bill of sale, the instrument of the bargain, as before mentioned:

[both] that which is sealed, [according] to the law and custom; which was both sealed by the buyer and seller, and was sealed up, and not to be looked into by everyone, only when there might be a necessity; this was the original copy:

and that which was open; the counter part or copy of the former, which though signed and sealed as the other, yet not sealed up, but was open and exposed to view; either for the relations to see what was done, as some; or for the judges, as others, to ratify and make authentic: or, as is most probable, this copy was laid up in some public register, to have recourse unto upon any occasion; however it was, it was according to the laws and customs of those times, which Jeremiah carefully attended to: or, as others,

it lay open for the witnesses to sign; so there are three distinct things; first the written contract; then that as signed and sealed by buyer and seller, according to law; and then as signed, but not sealed, by the witnesses.

Ver. 12. *And I gave the evidence of the purchase*, etc.] Both that which was sealed and that which was open; both the original and the copy; or the whole, as signed, sealed, and witnessed:

unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah; this Baruch, as appears from other places in this book, was one that attended on Jeremiah, was his scribe or amanuensis, and did business for him of one kind or another, and is described here by his pedigree; and it was the more necessary now to make use of him in this affair, because the prophet was confined, and could not go out of the court of the prison; to him he gave the above deed:

in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's [son]; of whom the purchase was made: the word "son" is not in the text, which has led some to think that both were present at this bargain, both the uncle and the uncle's son; or that Hanameel was both uncle and uncle's son to Jeremiah, as Jarchi; but there is no need to suppose that; the word "son" may easily be supplied from what is before said:

and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase; the same that the prophet subscribed; so that the book the witnesses subscribed was not a separate book, as some have thought; for there was but one book or deed in all, besides the copy that was taken of it:

before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison; where Jeremiah was; and who probably came to visit him, and to hear the word of the Lord from his mouth; unless we can suppose that these were fellow prisoners, or were set as spies upon him, to watch him what he said and did.

Ver. 13. *And I charged Baruch before them*, etc.] Before his kinsman, the witnesses of the deed, and the Jews that were in the court:

saying, as follows:

Ver. 14. *Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel*, etc.] The order to do the following is ushered in in this solemn manner, partly that Baruch might more strictly observe it, and act according to it; and partly that the persons

before whom it was given might take the greater notice of it, and believe that there was something intended by it of moment and importance:

take these evidences; or “books”^{f624}; the deeds of purchase:

this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; both the original and the copy:

and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days; it seems, though it is not said, that this earthen vessel, with these deeds in it, were to be put under ground, and very probably in some part of the field that was bought: had these writings been laid up in a chest or box, they might have been stolen and destroyed; and had they been laid in the earth by themselves, they would have rotted and consumed; but being put into a dry earthen vessel, they might be preserved from the injury of the air and the moistness of the earth; and so might continue many days, even many years, to the end of the captivity, as it was designed they should; when Jeremiah’s heirs, having some of them where they were deposited, might take them up and claim the estate; though something more useful and instructive than this was designed by it, as appears by the following words:

Ver. 15. *For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel*, etc.] Who is the Lord God Almighty, and can do what he pleases; and is the covenant God of his people, and therefore will do them good by all his providences in the issue of things:

houses, and fields, and vineyards, shall be possessed in this land; or “bought”^{f625} in it; of which the prophet’s buying this field was a pledge and earnest; signifying, that though the city now besieged should be taken, and the people carried captive, yet they should return to their own land, and purchase and enjoy houses, fields, and vineyards again, as at the present time.

Ver. 16. *Now when I had delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah*, etc.] When he had finished his worldly business, and which yet was by a divine order, and to answer a divine purpose, then he betook himself to prayer; and it is proper we should be quite free from worldly cares and concerns when we enter upon religious duties, particularly prayer to God; when the soul ought to be separated from the world and the things of it, and wholly devoted to God:

I prayed unto the Lord; either for further information in this matter, of the use and design of buying the field; and how this part of the prophecy, signified by it, concerning the Jews buying and possessing houses and fields, can be made to agree with the other prophecy, that the city should be delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans; or, at least, that he might be able to answer the cavils and objections made by the Jews to it: that he was in some puzzle, perplexity, and distress, appears by his prayer, which begins,

saying, as follows:

Ver. 17. *Ah Lord God!* etc.] Which the Vulgate Latin version repeats three times, “Ah, ah, ah”, as being greatly distressed with the trouble that was coming upon his people; and, it may be, not without some doubts and temptations about their deliverance; or, at least, was pressed in his mind with the difficulties and objections started by the Jews that were with him in the court:

behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm; with great propriety is the making of the heaven and the earth ascribed to the mighty power of God; for nothing short of almighty power could have produced such a stupendous work as the heavens, with all the host of them, sun, moon, and stars, the terraqueous globe, the earth and sea, with all that in them are; and all this produced out of nothing, by the sole command and word of God: and with great pertinency does the prophet begin his prayer with such a description of God; both to encourage and strengthen his faith in him touching the fulfilment of the above prophecy, and to stop the mouths of the Jews, who objected the impossibility of it: wherefore it follows,

[and] there is nothing too hard for thee; or “hidden from thee”^{f626}; so the Targum; which his wisdom and knowledge did not reach, or his power could not effect: or which is “too wonderful for thee”^{f627}; there is nothing that has so much of the wonderful in it, as to be above the compass of his understanding, and out of the reach of his power, as such things be, which are beyond the power and skill of men; but there is no such thing with God, whose understanding is unsearchable, and his power irresistible; with him nothing is impossible; and who can think there is that observes that the heaven and earth are made by him?

Ver. 18. *Thou showest lovingkindness unto thousands*, etc.] Not to thousands of persons only, but to a thousand generations, even such that love, fear, and serve him; (see ^{<1216>}Exodus 20:6 ^{<1438>}Psalms 105:8); this is very properly added, for the further strengthening of faith; for though the omnipotence of God assures us that there is nothing but what he can do, yet it gives us no certain encouragement he will do this, or that, or the other, in a favourable and gracious manner; but this his loving kindness, experienced by a multitude of persons in all ages, gives reason to hope for:

and recompensest the iniquities of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them; it is added in the decalogue, from whence these words are taken, “of them that hate me”, (^{<1216>}Exodus 20:5); and here the Targum adds,

“when they go on to sin after them;”

when they imitate their fathers in their wickedness, and commit the same sins they have done, and continue in them; wherefore, having tilled up the measure of their fathers’ sins, they receive a just and full recompence of them into their bosom; which denotes both the certainty of it and the fulness of it: the prophet formed in his mind just notions and ideas of the divine Being, as being not only gracious and merciful, but holy, just, and righteous; and it may be he strikes at the Jews, who might complain of God, as they sometimes did, for being punished for their fathers’ sins, as if they themselves were innocent and guiltless:

the Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of hosts [is] his name: “great” in all the perfections of his nature, and greatly to be praised, loved, and feared; “mighty” to do whatsoever he pleases; and who, agreeably to his name, has all the hosts and armies of heaven and earth at his command; and what is it that he cannot do?

Ver. 19. *Great in counsel, and mighty in word*, etc.] Counsel belongs to him, and he does all things after the counsel of his will, all things in nature, providence, and grace; and such a display of his wisdom is there in all, that show him to be excellent in counsel; to excel all others; not only to be great, but to be the greatest in counsel; and who regularly and perfectly performs all that he has wisely contrived; his wisdom and his power are equal to each other; he forms the scheme of all that he does with the greatest wisdom, and accomplishes by his power all that he has purposed in his eternal mind; (see ^{<2309>}Isaiah 28:29);

for thine eyes [are] open upon all the ways of the sons of men; all their thoughts, schemes, devices, and purposes; all their words and actions, every step they take, whether good or bad, they are all before him, and manifest to him; he is God omniscient as well as God omnipotent; and he does not look upon men, and their ways and works, as an idle spectator or indifferent person, as unconcerned at what they do, letting them pass without calling them to an account for them, or without passing any judgment on them, or sentence concerning them; no, he is the Judge of all the earth, and he sits in the heavens and observes what is done on earth:

to give everyone according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings: good things to good men for Christ's sake; and evil things to evil men, according to the just demerit of their sins and transgressions.

Ver. 20. *Which hast set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, [even] unto this day,* etc.] The prophet here descends to particular instances of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God; and begins with the miracles wrought in Egypt, the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians for refusing to let Israel go; these were set among them, they were true and real things, and obvious to everyone's view; there was no deception in them, they were plain to the senses of men; and the remembrance of them continued among the Egyptians to the times of the prophet; the tradition of what was done was handed down among them to that age: for that any marks of these things remained is not to be supposed; the tracks of Pharaoh's chariot wheels to be still seen in the Red sea must be rejected as fabulous, though Orosius relates it:

and in Israel, and amongst [other] men: that is, signs and wonders were set among the Israelites, or wrought for them; such as bringing them out of Egypt; leading them through the Red sea as on dry land; feeding them in the wilderness with manna and quails; subduing their enemies, and settling them in the land of Canaan; and in other nations very wonderful things have been done in one age or another: or else the meaning is, that the miracles done in Egypt were not only remembered there to this time, but also by the Israelites, and by other men, to whom the knowledge of these things came; on account of which God was more or less everywhere glorified, as follows:

and hast made thee a name as at this day; that is, got praise, honour, and glory, in Egypt, in Israel, and in other nations.

Ver. 21. *And hast brought forth thy people Israel of the land of Egypt,* etc.] As he promised Abraham, some hundreds of years before, that they should come out from thence; and where they had been as bondsmen, though they were the Lord's peculiar people, whom he had chose for himself above all people, and therefore he brought them out of their state of bondage; and this was his own doing, they could not deliver themselves; the enemy would not let them go till he was obliged to it by the superior power of God:

with signs and with wonders; which he wrought for them at the time of their deliverance, slaying the firstborn; and at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, after he brought them out of Egypt, and before their settlement in the land of Canaan; and so these may be considered as distinct from the signs and wonders in the land of Egypt before mentioned:

and with a strong hand, and with a stretched out arm; with great power, and so delivered the Israelites from them that were stronger than they; with a mighty hand, that protected his people; and with a long arm, that reached their enemies, and destroyed them:

and with great terror; with great reverence in the Israelites, who saw the power and majesty of God; and with great terror to Pharaoh and his host, when they saw the waters return and overwhelm them; and to all the nations round about, when they heard of it; (see [†]Deuteronomy 4:34). The Targum is,

“with great vision;”

so a spectacle, as the Syriac version; openly, before the eyes of all.

Ver. 22. *And hast given them this land, which thou didst swear to their fathers to give them,* etc.] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; so that God was faithful to his word, kept his covenant and oath; and the faithfulness of God is observed and acknowledged by the prophet, along with other perfections of God before taken notice of. The land of Canaan was a land of promise, confirmed by an oath, and was the pure gift of God to the Israelites, and not any merit of theirs; it was given them by him who had a right to dispose of it, and could make them a good title to it, and which they had; though before in the possession of others, who for their wickedness were driven out:

a land flowing with milk and honey: abounding with plenty of all good things, for the sustenance and comfort of human life; a very frequent description of the land of Canaan, and is expressive of the great kindness and goodness of God to this people.

Ver. 23. *And they came in and possessed it*, etc.] After forty years travel in the wilderness; they entered into it with Joshua at the head of them, and the Lord with them; giving victory over the Canaanites, who were soon subdued; and the Israelites with little trouble settled in their land, which was divided to them by lot, and possessed as their inheritance:

but they obeyed not thy voice; though they promised at Sinai they would, and though they were so much obliged by the goodness of God to them; this shows great ingratitude in them:

neither walked in thy law; moral, ceremonial, and judicial, given at Harsh as the rule of their obedience; but they walked not according to it:

they have done nothing of all that thou commandedst them to do; they were not only deficient in some things, but in everything; they not only broke some of the laws of God, but all of them; there was not one law, one command, observed by them as it ought to have been; and yet these people were always prone to establish their own righteousness, and seek for justification by it:

therefore thou hast caused all this evil to come upon them; the Chaldean army, now besieging them; and the famine and pestilence among them; which, the prophet serves, were but the righteous judgments of God upon them for their sins.

Ver. 24. *Behold, the mounds, they are come unto the city, to take it*, etc.] These were ramparts or batteries, that were erected against the city, the more easily to annoy it: some take them to be engines from which they cast out stones; and others suppose them to be battering rams, used to break down the walls of the city; be they what they will, they were now brought near the city to make way for the Chaldeans to enter into it, and take it:

and the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans that fight against it; not only it the purpose of God that it should be, but it was plain case that he had withdrawn his protection from it, and that the city was indefensible; and that, humanly speaking, it was impossible it should hold out long, for the reasons following:

because of the sword, and of the famine, and of the pestilence: the sword of the Chaldeans, without, destroyed those that sallied out upon them, or endeavoured to make their escape; and the famine and pestilence, within, made such ravages, and so much weakened them, that they would never be able to stand it out against the enemy long, but must surrender:

and what thou hast spoken is come to pass; what was foretold by the prophets, and by himself, was now fulfilling:

and, behold, thou seest [it]; and therefore he had no need to observe it to him, or dwell any longer on this subject; only he hints what follows, as having some difficulty in it on his own account.

Ver. 25. *And thou hast said to me, O Lord God,* etc.] Or, “O Lord God, yet thou hast said to me”^{f628}; notwithstanding this is the case, the country all around is in the hand of the enemy, and the city is as good as delivered up to them, yet thou hast given me such orders, as follows:

buy thee a field for money, and take witnesses; for though these words were not expressly said to him by the Lord; yet inasmuch as he told him that his uncle’s son would come to him, and propose the selling of his field to him; and accordingly did come, agreeably to the word of the Lord; Jeremiah understood it as the will of the Lord, that he should buy it before witnesses; which he did, as before related:

for the city is given into the hand of the Chaldeans; or rather, “though the city is given”^{f629}, etc. yet thou hast said so: now by this the prophet suggests, that though he had obeyed the divine order, as he ought to have done, yet there was some difficulty upon his mind; or there were some objections started, by the Jews that were with him, how these things could be reconciled; that he should be ordered to buy a field at such a time as this, and thereby signify that fields and vineyards should be bought and possessed in the land, and yet the city just going to be surrendered into the hands of the Chaldeans.

Ver. 26. *Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah,* etc.] This is an answer to the prophet’s prayer, and particularly to the latter part of it; showing the consistency of the destruction of the city with his purchase of a field, and with God’s promise of fields and vineyards being purchased and possessed again; and how each of these would be brought about:

saying; as follows:

Ver. 27. *Behold, I [am] the Lord, the God of all flesh*, etc.] Jehovah, the self-existent Being, that gives being to all creatures; and is particularly the God of all men, the Maker and Preserver of them, and that provides for them; who are called “flesh”, to denote their weakness and corruption, how unworthy of the divine favour, and how unable to resist his will, or hinder the execution of his purposes: and which is introduced with a “behold”, to excite attention, to take notice of what was said; to encourage faith, and remove doubts and difficulties; for if God is Jehovah, the Being of beings; if he is the God and Governor of the world, and all men in it, what is it he cannot do? as follows:

is there anything too hard for me? suggesting, that though the city of Jerusalem should be destroyed, and the inhabitants carried captive, yet he could return them again to their own land; where they should purchase fields and vineyards, and possess them as heretofore: or, “is there anything hidden from me?”^{f630} so the Targum and Syriac version; can anything unforeseen arise to hinder the fulfilment of promises and prophecies? nothing can; since all things are in one view before the Lord continually; or, “is there anything too wonderful for me?”^{f631} that which is too wonderful for men, beyond their comprehension, and so their faith; yet it is not so with God.

Ver. 28. *Therefore thus saith the Lord, behold, I will give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans*, etc.] As he had foretold by the prophet, and was just now going to be fulfilled. Here the Lord repeats and confirms the first of the two things which seemed contradictory; the destruction of the city by the Chaldeans, who were now besieging it, and into whose hands it would certainly come:

and into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; who was now before it with his army:

and he shall take it; and become master of it: or, “I will give [it to him], that he may take it”^{f632}; which he could not do, notwithstanding his powerful army, had not the Lord delivered it into his hands.

Ver. 29. *And the Chaldeans, that fight against this city, shall come*, etc.] Or rather “shall enter”, as Aquila renders it; for they were come to it already, and were fighting against it, battering the walls, and throwing in their arrows, and putting to the sword such as came out, or were within their reach:

and set fire on this city; as they did, (²⁸⁰⁸Jeremiah 39:8);

and burn it, with the houses, upon whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal; or “especially the houses”^{f633}, or “even the houses”; the houses particularly mentioned in the history of the destruction as burnt; and which, very probably, are here intended; besides the Lord’s house, and all the houses in Jerusalem, were the king’s house, and the houses of the great men or princes; and which, Kimchi thinks, were higher than others; on which therefore they burnt incense to Baal; wherefore it was a just retaliation, upon them that they should be burnt with fire:

and poured out drink offerings unto other gods, to provoke me to anger; to other gods besides the true God; to strange gods, and to other gods besides Baal; which was done as if they really designed to provoke the Lord; as if they had it in view to affront him; and, if they had, they could not have taken a more effectual method; though this is to be understood, not intentionally, but eventually; not what was their design, though it looked like it, but what was the effect of their idolatry.

Ver. 30. *For the children of Israel and the children of Judah*, etc.] The former are mentioned, as well as the latter, though they had been carried captive some years ago, to justify the dealings of God with them; and besides, there were some of the ten tribes that remained, and were mingled with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin: of all which it is said, that they

have only done evil before me from their youth; from their infancy, being conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; and so being destitute of the grace of God, did nothing else but sin all their days, as is said of the men of the old world, (⁴⁰⁰⁸Genesis 6:5 8:21). Some understand this, from the time of their becoming a people, a body politic; or from the time of their coming out of Egypt, and being in the wilderness, when their idolatry began, they brought out of Egypt; or from the time of the judges:

for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the Lord; with their idols, made by their own hands; these they worshipped instead of their Creator and Benefactor; which must be very provoking indeed!

Ver. 31. *For this city hath been tame [as] a provocation of mine anger and of my fury*, etc.] Or, “upon mine anger, and upon my fury this city was to me”^{f634}; that is, it was upon his heart, and in his mind and purpose, being provoked to anger and wrath by their sins, to have destroyed it long ago,

though he had deferred it to this time; the inhabitants of this city had been always a provoking people to him; and he had thought to have poured out his wrath and fury upon them:

from the day they built it, even unto this day: when built and inhabited by the idolatrous Canaanites; possessed by the Jebusites; rebuilt by David; beautified with the temple and other stately buildings by Solomon, who was drawn it, to idolatry by his wives. It is a tradition of the Jews, mentioned both by Jarchi and Kimchi, that the same day that the foundation of the temple was laid, Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter; and which was the foundation of his idolatry; and which was more or less practised in every reign afterwards, to this time; and which so provoked the Lord, that he took up this resolution early, though he did not put it in execution; expressed as follows:

that I should remove it from before my face; as a man does that which is nauseous and abominable to him; meaning the removing the inhabitants of it into other lands, or causing them to go into captivity; so the Targum.

Ver. 32. *Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah*, etc.] His anger and fury were because of their sins, and so his carrying them captive:

which they have done to provoke me to anger; which was done, as if they had done it on purpose to provoke him; and which was done, not by a few, but by them all; not by the lower people only, but by men of every rank and order; as follows:

they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets; that is, their false prophets, as the Targum; yea, all the inhabitants of the land, both in city and country:

and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: the "metropolis" of the nation; the seat of the kings of Judah; and where the temple was, the priests ministered, and the prophets taught, and the people came up to worship.

Ver. 33. *And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face*, etc.] When he reproved them for their sins; called them to repentance; instructed them in their duty; and warned them of the dangers they exposed themselves to; instead of turning the face to him, as scholars to their masters, and as subjects to their prince, to listen to what was said to them;

they turned their backs or necks, the hinder part of them; expressive of contempt, and showing great rudeness and irreverence:

though I taught them, rising up early, and teaching [them]; by his prophets, as the Targum; whom he sent to them early in the morning; or in the early time of their life; or when they first began to practise idolatry; so careful was the Lord of them; so diligent to instruct them, and prevent their ruin:

yet have not hearkened, to receive instruction; or “correction”^{f635}; so as to repent of their sins, reform and amend; (see ^{-247B}Jeremiah 7:13,25,26).

Ver. 34. *But they set their abominations,* etc.] Their idols, which were abominable to the Lord, and ought to have been so to them: these they placed

in the house (which is called by my name), to defile it; in the temple; as by Ahaz, Manasseh, and others: (see ^{-247B}Jeremiah 7:30).

Ver. 35. *And they built the high places of Baal, which [are] in the valley of the son of Hinnom,* etc.] Or “the high places of that Baal^{f636}”, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom”; to distinguish him from other Baalim; and who seems to be the same with Molech after mentioned; and the signification of their names agree; the one is lord or master; the other king:

to cause their sons and their daughters to pass [through the fire] unto Molech: the phrase, “through the fire”, is not in the text; but is well enough supplied from other places, where it is. Some think that their infants were not burnt to death with fire, but only were held over the flame by way of lustration; or were made to pass between two fires, and so were purified and dedicated to the idol:

which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind that they should do this abomination; (see Gill on “^{-247B}Jeremiah 7:31”);

to cause Judah to sin; which Abarbinel understands of the children of Israel, who first began this practice, and seduced and drew the children of Judah into it; but rather it seems to intend the kings, princes, priests, prophets, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, who, by their example, led the people of the Lord into the same practice.

Ver. 36. *And now therefore thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city,* etc.] Here begins the confirmation of the other part of

the prophecy concerning the return of the Jews to their city and country, when they should again buy and possess fields and vineyards; which was thought impossible, supposing the destruction of the city; or however not easily reconcilable with it; but this is as strongly affirmed as the former; for though they had sinned so heinously, and had provoked the wrath of God to such a degree, that the destruction of their city was inevitable, of which they were now sensible themselves; “yet now, notwithstanding”^{f637}, for so it is ushered in; and thus the words may be rendered, “thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel”; who is Jehovah, with whom nothing is impossible; and continues the covenant God of his own people, his spiritual Israel; for whose sake he does great and wonderful things; he says, “concerning this city”, the city of Jerusalem, now besieged by the Chaldeans:

whereof ye say, it shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; for, by these things, by the consumption that was made by them, they saw their case was desperate; and that there was no avoiding falling into the hands of the Chaldeans; wherefore, for the comfort of the Lord’s own people among them, the following things are said; most of which respect the Gospel dispensation, either the beginning or latter end of it.

Ver. 37. *Behold, I will gather them out of all countries,* etc.] At the end of the seventy years’ captivity; and which will have a greater accomplishment in the latter day, when the Jews shall be converted, and gathered from their present dispersion all over the earth:

whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath: or “whither I shall drive them”, or “shall have driven them”^{f638}; for as yet they were not thus driven and dispersed. A heap of words is made use of to express the greatness of the Lord’s indignation at them for their sins, the cause of their expulsion out of the land:

and I will bring them again unto this place; the city of Jerusalem; as they were at the end of the seventy years’ captivity; and when the promise was fulfilled, that they should purchase and possess fields and vineyards; and as they will likewise at the time of their conversion in the latter day:

and I will cause them to dwell safely; which yet they did not for any continuance after their return from Babylon; being, as Jerom observes, often molested by the Persians, Macedonians, and Egyptians; and at last destroyed by the Romans: their troubles in the times of the Maccabees are

very notorious; so that this refers either to the first times of the Gospel, and to the Jews that then believed in Christ; or rather to times yet to come, and which are prophesied of at (~~2483~~Jeremiah 32:37-43).

Ver. 38. *And they shall be my people, and I will be their God.*] A comprehensive summary of the covenant of grace, which shall be made known to the Jews at the time of their conversion, and the blessings of it applied to them, and bestowed on them; though now a “loammi”, (~~2409~~Hosea 1:9), is written upon them; (see ~~2482~~Jeremiah 30:21 31:1,33).

Ver. 39. *And I will give them one heart and one way,* etc.] “One” and the same heart; the same heart to one as to another; gracious souls, truly converted persons, be they Jews or Gentiles, have the same experience; they have all, more or less, a sight and sense of sin, and the evil of it; are brought off of their own righteousness; are led to Christ alone for life and salvation; are made partakers of precious promises; and all have their temptations, afflictions, and trials, and can sympathize with one another: and they have the same things put into their hearts; the laws of God are written there; the doctrines of the Gospel have a place there; Christ is formed in them; the graces of the Spirit are implanted, faith, hope, love, fear, humility, and other graces. Their heart, given them at conversion, is a sincere and upright heart, not a double one; they become Israelites indeed; their faith is unfeigned; their hope is devoid of hypocrisy; their love is without dissimulation; their repentance is genuine; and they serve God uprightly with true hearts. It is also single and alone for God; he has the whole of it; their understandings are enlightened with the knowledge of him; their affections and desires are towards him: their wills are subject to him; their eye is single to his glory; their hearts are not divided between him and another object of worship; and they are also one towards another, as the first Christians were of one heart and of one soul, (~~4482~~Acts 4:32); and such a heart is a new heart, and the gift of God: “one way” is also promised: one way of salvation, which is Christ; the one and only way of access to God; of acceptance with him; of justification before him; and of forgiveness of sin; the only true way into a Gospel church state, and to eternal glory and happiness; and which is the more excellent way; the good old way; the new and living one: one way of worship may also be intended; one Lord is to be obeyed and worshipped; one doctrine and scheme of faith to be received; one baptism to be administered, in one and the same way, to one and the same subjects, and in one and the same name; one true spiritual manner of worship, all shall come into in the latter day; and there

will be no more parties among those that are called Christians; the Jews, when converted, will have no divisions nor different denominations among them; (see ^{<400>}Ephesians 4:4) (^{<314>}Zechariah 14:9);

that they may fear me for ever; both internally and externally; the one heart will be given them to fear and reverence him inwardly; and the one way of worship to fear or serve him outwardly, and in which they shall always continue; there will be no apostasy from the true grace of God, and no defection from his worship to superstition and idolatry:

for the good of them, and of their children after them; unity of heart; sincerity and uprightness of soul; a walking in the way of the Lord; having his fear before their eyes, and on their hearts, will issue in their spiritual good here, and in their eternal happiness hereafter; and even their posterity will reap some advantage by their good instructions and example.

Ver. 40. *And I will make an everlasting covenant with them*, etc.] Which is made known and manifest at conversion; when the grace of it is applied; the blessings of it bestowed; and the promises of it made good; and therefore said to be made; for otherwise the covenant of grace here spoken of was made from all eternity with Christ, and his people in him; as appears from his being set up as the Mediator so early, and from the blessings and promises of it being of such a date. It is founded on the everlasting love of God, and is according to his eternal purpose; and is no other than an eternal transaction between the Father and the Son concerning the salvation of his elect; and which will last for ever, and never be antiquated, as the covenant under the former dispensation was; and which shows that this respects Gospel times:

that I will not turn away from them to do them good; he may withdraw his gracious presence for a while; but he never turns from his love and affections to his people; nor from his gracious purposes concerning them; nor from his promises to them; nor from his gifts bestowed on them; or so as to utterly leave them and forsake them, or cease to do them good: he has laid up goodness for them; he has bestowed much on them whom he has called by his grace; he has given himself to them as their God and portion; his Son as their Saviour and Redeemer, and all good things with him; his Spirit as their Sanctifier, with his gifts and graces; and he has wrought a good work in them; and he will continue to do them good, by fresh discoveries of his love; by granting his gracious presence; by carrying

on his work of grace; by supplying their wants, and making all things work together for their good. The Targum is,

“my Word shall not turn away, etc.”

but I will put my fear in their hearts; which is not naturally in the hearts of then; and, where it is, it is put there by the grace of God, and as a blessing of the covenant; it appears in those who are brought to a true sight of sin, in their humble sense of themselves, and dependence on the Lord; and in a reverent affection for him: and in a true and spiritual worship of him; and which is a security from a final and total apostasy from him, as follows:

that they shall not depart from me; not but that they may and do sin against God; and there may be a partial departure from him in those that truly fear him; but not a wicked, final, and total one: the fear of God influences them to cleave close unto him; and the power of God keeps them from departing from him, from his doctrines, worship, and ordinances, from his people, and a profession of his name.

Ver. 41. *Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good*, etc.] His covenant people, to whom he gives one heart and one way, and who have his fear implanted in them, and shall never depart from him, but persevere to the end: these he loves with a love of complacency and delight; he rejoices over them, not as considered in themselves, but as in Christ; he rejoices over them, as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride; and which does not merely lie in expression, but appears in fact; he does them good, and with the utmost joy and pleasure; he delights in showing mercy to them, beautifies them with salvation, and takes pleasure in their prosperity; he has taken up good thoughts and resolutions concerning them in his heart; has promised good things to them in his covenant; has provided good things for them in his Son, and bestows them on them in regeneration; and constantly supplies them with his grace, and will withhold no good thing from them, till he has brought them to glory; all which he does cheerfully and with the utmost delight The Targum is,

“my Word shall rejoice over them;”

the essential Word, Christ; he was rejoicing in them, and his delights were with them from eternity; he rejoices over them, as his lost sheep found at conversion; and they shall be his joy and crown of rejoicing to all eternity; and it was for the joy of having them with him that he endured so much for them in the redemption of them:

and I will plant them in this land assuredly; or “in truth”, or “in stability and firmness”^{f639}; for it does not seem so much to relate to the truth of the promise, and the assurance that may be had of the fulfilment of that, as to the reality and constancy of the blessing itself. A Gospel church state was first planted in Judea, and from thence has been spread into other parts, and has never been rooted out of the world since; and when the Jews, upon their conversion, are settled in their own land again, they will never more be removed:

with my whole heart and with my whole soul. Grotius thinks these clauses are to be connected with the former part of the verse, that God will rejoice over them to do them good with all his heart and soul; but this the accents will not admit of; but the meaning is, that he will do this particular good for them, as well as all others, in the most cordial and respectable manner, even planting and establishing them in their own land. The Targum is,

“by my Word, and by my will.”

Ver. 42. *For thus saith the Lord, like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people*, etc.] The Chaldean army now besieging them, the famine and pestilence among them, as well as their captivity, which was just at hand and certain:

so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them; in the preceding verses; as being their God, and they his people; giving them one heart, and one way; putting his fear into them; causing them to persevere to the end: rejoicing over them to do them good; and planting them in the land. God is as faithful to his promises as to his threatenings; and those who have seen the fulfilment of the one need not doubt of the accomplishment of the other; for if he has done all the evil things he threatened to do, which are his acts of justice, his strange acts, much more will he do the good things he has promised, which are his acts of grace and mercy, in which he delights.

Ver. 43. *And fields shall be bought in this land*, etc.] After the return from the Babylonish captivity, which this respects; and of which the prophet’s purchasing a field of his uncle’s son was a pledge and token; in doing which, as a right thing, he is confirmed; as well as the cavils and objections of the Jews removed, who thought the destruction of the city, and such a practice, irreconcilable; and, moreover, this is mentioned as a pledge, earnest, and confirmation of the fulfilment of the above spiritual promises

in Gospel times; for the people being returned at the end of the seventy years' captivity, and purchasing fields and vineyards, as was predicted, it might be strongly concluded, that since those temporal blessings promised were made good, spiritual ones would certainly be fulfilled; though some understand these words, in a spiritual sense, of the field of the church; for it is in the singular number, "a field shall be bought"^{f640}; yea, "that field", emphatically, which was bought by the blood of Christ, and first planted in the land of Judea, as in (²⁹³⁴Jeremiah 32:41);

whereof ye say, [it is] desolate without man or beast; so wasted and destroyed by the enemy, that neither man nor beast are left, but both carried off by him; and therefore no hope of what is above promised:

it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans; they are become the possessors of it, and therefore it is all over with us as to buying and possessing fields and vineyards; but notwithstanding this diffidence and despair in the present view of things, it follows:

Ver. 44. *Men shall buy fields for money*, etc.] They shall have plenty of money, and they shall lay it out in land, and carry on husbandry, cultivate the ground, which had lain long untilled, but now should be manured for public as well as private good. This some understand of particular churches planted in Judea, and out of it, throughout the whole world; and of men's gathering and joining themselves to them by a profession of that faith which is more precious than gold or silver:

and subscribe evidences, and seal [them], and take witnesses; as Jeremiah had done before, when he bought the field of his uncle's son, (²⁸²⁰Jeremiah 32:10). This is spiritually understood by some of the word of God laid hold on by faith; of the sealing of the Spirit, and of the ordinances of the Gospel:

in the land of Benjamin; where Anathoth was, and Jeremiah's field lay; and where the same should be done by others as was done by him:

and in the places about Jerusalem; in the suburbs of it, and in the villages round about it:

and in the cities of Judah; throughout the whole country, divided into the three following parts:

and in the cities of the mountains; in the hilly country of Judea, where was Hebron, and other cities, (⁴⁰¹⁹Luke 1:39,65);

and in the cities of the valley. The Septuagint retains the Hebrew word “sephela”, or the plain, in which were Emmaus, Lydda, Sharon, places mentioned in the New Testament:

and in the cities of the south; or Nagab, the south part of Judea, which led to Gaza, (~~418b~~ Acts 8:26). This division of Judea into the mountains, valley, and south, exactly agrees with the account of it in (~~165b~~ Joshua 15:21,33,48). Some understand this of the Gospel going out of Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost, not only to the places near that city, but to Samaria, and the cities of the south towards Egypt, and so into all the world:

for I will cause their captivity to return, saith the Lord; their temporal captivity from Babylon, and their spiritual captivity from sin, Satan, and the law.