

CHAPTER 51

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 51

The former part of this chapter is a continuation of the prophecy of the preceding chapter, concerning the destruction of Babylon, (~~250~~ Jeremiah 51:1-58); the latter part of it contains a prophecy of Jeremiah sent to the captives in Babylon by the hand of Seraiah, with the copy of the above prophecy against Babylon, and an order to fasten a stone to it, and cast it into the river Euphrates, as a sign, confirming the utter and irreparable ruin of Babylon, (~~251~~ Jeremiah 51:59-64).

Ver. 1. *Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will raise up against Babylon, etc.]* This is not a new prophecy, but a continuation of the former, and an enlargement of it. The Babylonians being the last and most notorious enemies of the Jews, their destruction is the longer dwelt upon; and as they were against the Lord's people the Lord was against them, and threatens to raise up instruments of his vengeance against them:

and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me; that dwell in Babylon, the metropolis of the Chaldeans, the seat and centre of the enemies of God and his people. It is a periphrasis of the Chaldeans; and, so the Targum renders it,

“against the inhabitants of the land of the Chaldeans;”

and so the Septuagint version, against the Chaldeans; and Jarchi and Kimchi observe that according to “athbash”, a rule of interpretation with the Jews, the letters in “leb kame”, rendered “the midst of them that rise up against me”, answer to “Cashdim” or the Chaldeans; however they are no doubt designed; for they rose up against God, by setting up idols of their own; and against his people, by taking and carrying them captive: and now the Lord says he would raise up against them

a destroying wind; a northern one, the army of the Modes and Persians, which should sweep away all before it. The Targum is,

“people that are slayers; whose hearts are lifted up, and are beautiful in stature, and their spirit destroying.”

Ver. 2. *And I will send unto Babylon farmers, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land,* etc.] Or, “strangers that shall fan her”^{f1012}; meaning the Medes and Persians, who should be like a strong wind upon the mountains, where corn, having been threshed, was fanned, and the chaff carried away by the wind; and such would the Chaldeans be in the hand of the Persians, scattered and dispersed among the nations as chaff with the wind, and their cities be emptied of inhabitants, and of their wealth and riches. The Targum is,

“I will send against Babylon spoilers, that shall spoil and exhaust the land:”

for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about; in the time of the siege they shall surround her on all sides, so that none might escape; as Babylon had been a fanner of the Lord’s people, now she should be fanned herself, and stripped of all she had; (see ^{<2457>}Jeremiah 15:7).

Ver. 3. *Against [him that] bendeth let the archer bend his bow,* etc.]

These are either the words of the Lord to the Medes and Persians, to the archers among them, to bend their bows and level their arrows against the Chaldeans, who had bent their bows and shot their arrows against others; or of the Medes and Persians stirring up one another to draw their bows, and fight manfully against the enemy:

and against [him that] lifteth up himself in his brigandine; or coat of mail; that swaggers about in it, proud of it, and putting his confidence in it, as if out of all danger. The sense is, that they should direct their arrows both against those that were more lightly or more heavily armed; since by them they might do execution among the one and the other:

and spare ye not her young men; because of their youth, beauty, and strength:

destroy ye utterly all her host; her whole army, whether officers or common soldiers; or let them be accoutred in what manner they will. The Targum is,

“consume all her substance.”

Ver. 4. *Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans*, etc.] By the sword, or by the arrows and darts of the Medes and Persians:

and [they that are] thrust through in her streets; either by the one or by the other, especially the latter, since they only are mentioned; (see Gill on ^{<ref>Jeremiah 50:30</ref>}).

Ver. 5. *For Israel [hath] not [been] forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts*, etc.] That is, not totally and finally; for though they might seem to be forsaken, when carried captive by their enemies, yet they were not in such sense as a woman is deprived of her husband when dead, and she is become a widow, as the word ^{f1013} used may signify; or when divorced from him; or as children are deprived of their parents, and become orphans; but so it was not with Israel; for though they were under the frowns of Providence, and the resentment of God they had sinned against, yet the relation between them still subsisted; he was their covenant God and Father, their husband and protector, and who would vindicate them, and avenge them on their enemies:

though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel; which was the reason why they were carried captive, and so seemed to be forsaken of God; or though their land was filled with punishment, with devastation and destruction, yet nevertheless God would appear for them, and restore that and them unto it; or rather this is to be understood of the land of the Chaldeans, as it is by Jarchi and Kimchi; and be rendered, “for their land is filled with [punishment] for sin, from”, or “by”, or “because of the Holy One of Israel”^{f1014}; by which it appears, that the people of God were not forsaken by him, and were not without a patron and defender of them; since it was a plain case that the land of the Chaldeans was filled with the punishment of the sword and other calamities by the Holy One of Israel, because of the sins they had committed against him, and the injuries they had done to his people. So the Targum,

“for their land is filled with, (punishment for) the sins of murder, by the word of the Holy One of Israel.”

Ver. 6. *Flee out of the midst of Babylon*, etc.] This is said either to such as were there of other nations upon trade and business, as Kimchi, to get out of it as fast as they could, that they might not be consumed; or to the Israelites, as Jarchi, the Jews that were captives there. This is applied to the people of God in mystical Babylon, (^{<ref>Revelation 18:4</ref>});

and deliver every man his soul; or “life”; from the destruction coming on the city, and the inhabitants of it;

be not cut off in her iniquity; or, “that he be not cut off”^{f1015}; with her, in the punishment inflicted upon her for her iniquities; which is the same as partaking of her plagues, (⁶⁶⁸⁰⁴Revelation 18:4);

for this [is] the time, of the Lord’s vengeance; the time fixed by him to take vengeance on Babylon for her sins against him, and the wrongs done to his people:

he will render unto her a recompence; the just demerit of their sins; a recompence or reward by way of punishment for them; (see ⁶⁶⁸⁰⁶Revelation 18:6).

Ver. 7. *Babylon [hath been] a golden cup in the hand of the Lord*, etc.] Either so called from the liquor in it, being of a yellow colour, or pure as gold, as the Jewish commentators generally; or from the matter of it, being made of gold, denoting the grandeur, splendour, and riches of the Babylonian empire; which, for the same reason, is called the head of gold, (²⁰²⁸Daniel 2:38); this was in the hand of the Lord, under his direction, and at his dispose; an instrument he make use of to dispense the cup of his wrath and vengeance to other nations, or to inflict punishment on them for their sins; (see ²²⁵⁵Jeremiah 25:15-26); or else the sense is, that, by the permission of God, Babylon had by various specious pretences drawn the nations of the earth into idolatry, and other sins, which were as poison in a golden cup, by which they had been deceived; and this suits best with the use of the phrase in (⁶⁶⁷⁰⁴Revelation 17:4);

that made all the earth drunken; either disturbed them with wars, so that they were like a drunken man that reels to and fro, and falls, as they did, into ruin and destruction; or made them drunk with the wine of her fornication, with idolatry, so that they were intoxicated with it, as the whore of Rome, mystical Babylon, is said to do, (⁶⁶⁷⁰²Revelation 17:2);

the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad: they drank of the wine of God’s wrath by her means, being engaged in wars, which proved their ruin, and deprived them of their riches, strength, and substance, as mad men are of their reason; or they drank in her errors, and partook of her idolatry, and ran mad upon her idols, as she did, (²⁴⁸⁸Jeremiah 50:38); (see ⁶⁶⁸⁰³Revelation 18:3).

Ver. 8. *Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed*, etc.] Or “broken”^{f1016}; even into shivers, as a cup is; for when it had been used to answer the purposes designed by the Lord, he let it fall out of his hands at once, and it was broken; or rather he dashed it in pieces, as a potter’s vessel. The destruction of Babylon was brought about in a very short time, considering the strength of it; and was unexpected by the inhabitants of it, and by the nations round about; but, when it was come, it was irreparable: so the destruction of mystical Babylon will be in one hour, and it will be an utter and entire destruction, (~~f688~~ Revelation 18:8);

howl for her; as the inhabitants of Babylon, and her friends and allies that loved her, did no doubt; and as the kings and merchants of the earth, and others, will howl for spiritual Babylon, (~~f689~~ Revelation 18:9-19);

take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed: or balsam; (see ~~f461~~ Jeremiah 46:11); which is said by way of derision and mockery, as Kimchi and Abarbinel observe; or in an ironical and sarcastic manner; suggesting, that, let what means soever be made use of, her wound was incurable, her ruin inevitable, and her case irrecoverable.

Ver. 9. *We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed*, etc.] These are either the words of the friends of Babylon of her auxiliaries and allies, who did all they could to defend her against the Persians, but to no purpose; it was not in their power to help her; the time of her destruction was come, and there was no avoiding it; or of the prophets and good people of the Jews that were in Babylon, that took pains to convince, the inhabitants of Babylon of their idolatries and other sins, and reform them, that so they might not be their ruin; but all instructions and admonitions were in vain; in like manner many worthy reformers have laboured much to reclaim mystical Babylon, or the church of Rome, from her errors and idolatries; but still she retains them; wherefore it follows:

forsake her, and let us go everyone into his own country; so said the auxiliary troops that were in the service of the king of Babylon; since we can do him no good, and are ourselves posed to danger, let us desert him, and provide for our safety by hastening to our own country as fast as we can; this was really the case after the first battle of Cyrus with the Babylonians, in which their king Neriglissar was slain: Croesus and the rest of the allies, seeing their case so distressed and helpless, left them to shift for themselves, and fled by night^{f1017}: or so might the Jews say when the city was taken, and they were delivered out of the hands of their

oppressors; and so will the people of God say, who shall be called out of mystical Babylon just before its ruin, (^{<66184>}Revelation 18:4);

for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up [even] to the skies: that is, her sins were so many, that they reached even to heaven; and were taken notice of by God that dwelleth there; and were the cause of judgment or punishment being from thence inflicted on her, which was unavoidable, being the decree of heaven, and the just demerit of her sin; and therefore no help could be afforded her; nor was there any safety by being in her; (see ^{<66185>}Revelation 18:5).

Ver. 10. *The Lord hath brought forth our righteousness,* etc.] Or “righteousnesses”^{f1018} this, as Kimchi observes, is spoken in the person of the Israelites; not as though the Jews had done no iniquity, for which they were carried captive; they had committed much, and were far from being righteous in themselves, but were so in comparison of the Chaldeans; and who had gone beyond their commission, and had greatly oppressed them, and used them cruelly; and now the Lord, by bringing destruction upon them, vindicated the cause of his people, and showed it to be a righteous one; and that the religion they professed was true, and which the Chaldeans had derided and reproached: this righteousness, not of their persons, but of their cause, and the truth of their holy religion, the Lord brought forth to the light, and made it manifest, by taking their parts, and destroying their enemies:

come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the Lord our God; the Jews encourage one another to return into their own land, rebuild their temple, and set up the worship of God in it; and there declare the wondrous work of God in the destruction of Babylon, and their deliverance from thence; giving him the praise and glory of it; and exciting others to join with them in it, it being the Lord’s work, and marvellous in their eyes; and so, when mystical Babylon is destroyed, voices will be heard in heaven, in the church, ascribing salvation, honour, and glory, to God, (^{<66192>}Revelation 19:1,2). All this is true, in an evangelic sense, of such as are redeemed by Christ, and brought out of mystical Babylon, and are effectually called by the grace of God; to these the Lord brings forth the righteousness of Christ, which he makes their own, by imputing it to them; and he brings it near to them, and puts it upon them; it is revealed unto them from faith to faith; it is applied to them by the Spirit of God, and put into their hands to plead with God, as their justifying righteousness; and which is brought

forth by him on all occasions, to free them from all charges exhibited against them by law or justice, by the world, Satan, or their own hearts, (~~483~~ Romans 8:33); and it becomes such persons to declare in Zion, in the church of God, the works of the Lord; not their own, which will not bear the light, nor bear speaking of; but the works of God, of creation and providence; but more especially of grace, as the great work of redemption by Jesus Christ; and particularly the Spirit's work of grace upon their hearts, which is not the work of men, but of God; being a new creation work; a regeneration; a resurrection from the dead; and requiring almighty power, to which man is unfit and unequal: this lies in the quickening of men dead in trespasses and sins; in enlightening such as are darkness itself; in an implantation of the principles of grace and holiness in them; in giving them new hearts and new spirits; and in bringing them off of their own righteousness, to depend on Christ alone for salvation; and which work, as it is begun, will be carried on, and performed in them, until the day of Christ; and, wherever it is, should not be concealed, but should be declared in the gates of Zion, publicly, freely, and fitly and faithfully, to the glory of the grace of God, and for the comfort of his people, to whom every such declaration is matter of joy and pleasure; (see ~~486~~ Psalm 66:16 ~~489~~ Mark 5:19).

Ver. 11. *Make bright the arrows*, etc.] Which were covered with rust; scour them of it; anoint them with oil, as armour were wont to be; make them neat, clean, and bright, that they may pierce the deeper; hence we read of a "polished shaft", or arrow, one made bright and pure, (~~234~~ Isaiah 49:2); agreeably to this some render the word "sharpen the arrows"^{f1019}; so the Targum. The word has the signification of "choosing"; but, as Gussetius observes^{f1020}, whether the direction be to choose the best arrows, or to scour clean and polish them, the end is the same; namely, to have such as are most fit for use. Joseph Kimchi derives the word from another, which signifies a feather; and so renders it, "feather the arrows"^{f1021}; that they may fly the swifter. These and what follow are either the words of God, or of the prophet; or, as some think, of the Jews about to return to Judea, whose words are continued, exhorting the Medes and Persians to go on with the war against the Chaldeans; but they rather seem to be addressed to the Chaldeans themselves, putting them upon doing these things; and suggesting, that when they had done all they could, it would be to no purpose:

gather the shields; which lay scattered about and neglected in time of peace: or, “fill” them; fill the hands with them; or bring in a full or sufficient number; since there would be now occasion for them, to defend them against the enemy. The Targum, and several versions, render it, “fill the quivers”^{f1022}; that is, with arrows; and so Jarchi: or, “fill the shields”^{f1023}; that is, with oil; anoint them, as in (²³⁰¹⁶Isaiah 21:5);

the Lord hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes; of Cyaxares, or Darius the Mede, and of Cyrus, who succeeded his uncle as king of Media; and indeed the army that came against Babylon was an army of Medes joined by the Persians, Cyrus being employed as general of it by his uncle. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read it, “the spirit of the king of the Medes”; with which the following clause seems to agree:

for his device [is] against Babylon, to destroy it; the device of the king of the Medes, Darius; or rather the device of the Lord, who stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes; put it into their hearts to fulfil his will; and gave them wisdom and skill, courage and resolution, to do it; and as he will to the kings of the earth against mystical Babylon, (⁶⁹⁷¹⁶Revelation 17:16,17);

because it [is] the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple; his vengeance on Babylon, for the destruction of his temple, and the profanation of it; (see ²⁴¹¹⁸Jeremiah 50:28).

Ver. 12. *Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon*, etc.] This is not said to the Medes and Persians, to put up a flag on the walls of Babylon, as a sign of victory, as Kimchi, Abarbinel, and others think; for as yet the city is not supposed to be taken by what follows; but rather to the Babylonians, to set up an ensign on their walls, to gather the inhabitants together, to defend their city, and the bulwarks of it; which, with what follows, is ironically spoken:

make the watch strong; to guard the city; observe the motions of the enemy, and give proper and timely notice; increase and double it:

set up watchmen; meaning the keepers of the walls; place them upon them, to keep a good look out, that they might not be surprised: this seems to respect the great carelessness and security the whole city was in the night it was taken; being wholly engaged in feasting and revelling, in rioting and drunkenness, having no fear of danger, or concern for their safety; with which they are tacitly upbraided:

prepare the ambushes; or, “liers in wait”^{f1024}; to second or relieve those on the walls upon occasion; or seize unawares the besiegers, should they attempt to scale the walls, and enter the city:

for the Lord hath devised and done that which he spoke against the inhabitants of Babylon; or as he hath devised, so hath he done, or will do: his purposes cannot be frustrated, his counsel shall stand; and therefore had the Babylonians been ever so industrious in their own defence, they could never have prevented their ruin and destruction, which was resolved upon, and accordingly effected.

Ver. 13. *O thou that dwellest upon many waters*, etc.] Here Babylon is addressed, either by the Lord, or by the prophet, or the godly Jews; who is described by her, situation, which was by the great river Euphrates; which being branched out into several canals or rivers, both ran through it, and encompassed it; hence mention is made of the rivers of Babylon, (^{1010}Psalm 137:1); and a fit emblem this city was of mystical Babylon, which is also said to sit on many waters, interpreted of people and nations, (^{670}Revelation 17:1,15); and which Kimchi here interprets of an affluence of good things, though he admits of the literal sense of the words:

abundant in treasures: of corn, and of the fruits of the earth, and so in condition to hold out a siege, as well as strongly fortified by art and nature, before described; and of gold and silver, the sinews of war, which she had got together, partly by commerce, and partly by the spoil of other nations; and yet neither her situation nor her affluence could secure her from ruin:

thine end is come, [and] the measure of thy covetousness; this flourishing city was now near its end, and with it the whole Babylonish monarchy; the time fixed by the Lord, for the duration of one and the other, was now come; and whereas her covetousness was insatiable, and would have known no bounds, for the enlargement of her dominions, and for the accumulation of more wealth and riches; God set a limit to it, beyond which it should not go; which measure was now filled up, and the time for it expired. The Targum is,

“the day of thy destruction is come, and the time of the visitation of thy wickedness,”

Ver. 14. *The Lord hath sworn by himself, [saying]*, etc.] Or, “by his soul” or “life”^{f1025}; which is himself, than which he cannot swear by a greater, (^{363}Hebrews 6:13); and the certain performance of what he swears unto

need not be doubted of; and indeed the design of the oath is to assure of the truth of the thing, about which, after this, there ought to be no hesitation:

surely I fill thee with men as with caterpillars; or “locusts”^{f1026}; march in vast numbers, and make sad desolation where they come; and to which a numerous army may fitly be compared; and which are here meant, even the army of Cyrus, that should enter Babylon, and fill it, as it did. So the Targum,

“the Lord of hosts hath sworn by his word, if I fill them with armies of many people as locusts:”

and they shall lift up a shout against thee; as soldiers, when they make the onset in battle; or as besiegers, when they make their attack on a city; or as when grape gatherers bring in their vintage, or tread out their wine, to which the allusion is: it signifies that her enemies should get an entire victory, and triumph over her.

Ver. 15. *He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding.*] The Targum prefaces the words thus,

“these things saith he who hath made the earth, etc.”

The verses (²⁵¹⁶Jeremiah 51:16-19) are the same with (²⁴⁰²Jeremiah 10:12-16). God is described by his sovereignty, power, and wisdom; and the stupidity of men that trust in idols, and the vanity of them, are exposed, to convince the Babylonians that the Lord, who had determined on their destruction, would surely effect it, and that it would not be in the power of their idols to prevent it. (See Gill on “²⁴⁰²Jeremiah 10:12”).

Ver. 16. *When he uttereth [his] voice, [there is] a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.*] (See Gill on “²⁴⁰³Jeremiah 10:13”).

Ver. 17. *Every man is brutish by [his] knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image [is] falsehood, and [there is] no breath in them.*] (See Gill on “²⁴⁰⁴Jeremiah 10:14”).

Ver. 18. *They [are] vanity, the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish.*] (See Gill on “²⁴⁰⁵Jeremiah 10:15”).

Ver. 19. *The portion of Jacob [is] not like them; for he [is] the former of all things: and [Israel is] the rod of his inheritance: the Lord of hosts [is] his name.*] (See Gill on “²⁴⁰⁶Jeremiah 10:16”).

Ver. 20. *Thou [art] my battle axe [and] weapons of war,* etc.] This is said by the Lord, either to Cyrus, as some, to which our version inclines, whom God made use of as an instrument to subdue nations and kingdoms, and destroy them; (see ²³⁸¹Isaiah 45:1); or rather Babylon, and the king of it, who had been the hammer of the earth, (²⁴²³Jeremiah 50:23); as it may be rendered here, “thou [art] my hammer”^{f1027}; or, “hast been”; an instrument in his hands, of beating the nations to pieces, as stones by a hammer, and of destroying them, as by weapons of war: this, and what follows, are observed to show, that though Babylon had been used by the Lord for the destruction of others, it should not be secure from it itself, but should share the same fate; unless this is to be understood of the church of God, and kingdom of Christ, which in the latter day will break in pieces all the kingdoms of the earth, (²⁴¹⁴Daniel 2:44); which sense seems to have some countenance and confirmation from (²⁵²⁴Jeremiah 51:24) “in your sight”. The Targum is,

“thou art a scatterer before me, a city in which are warlike arms;”

which seems to refer to Babylon:

for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms; or, “with thee I have broke in pieces, [and] have destroyed”; the future instead of the past^{f1028}; as the nations and kingdoms of Judea, Egypt, Edom, Moab, Ammon, and others: or, “that I may break in pieces”^{f1029}, etc. and so it expresses the end for which he was a hammer, as well as the use he had been or would be of.

Ver. 21. *And with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider,* etc.] Or, “have broken”: meaning the cavalry of an army, wherein lies its chief strength:

and with thee will I break in pieces the chariot and his rider; which were also used in war.

Ver. 22. *And with thee also will I break in pieces man and woman*, etc.] Or, “have broken”; having no respect to any sex, and to the propagation of posterity:

and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; not sparing men of any age, however useful they might be, the one for their wisdom, the other for their strength:

and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid; who by procreation of children might fill and strengthen commonwealths.

Ver. 23. *And I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock*, etc.] Or, have broken; which Abarbinel thinks respects the Arabians particularly, who were shepherds, and dwelt in tents; but it rather signifies shepherds and their flocks in general; who were killed or scattered wherever his armies came, which spared none, even the most innocent and useful, and though unarmed:

and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; with which he ploughed his ground: signifying by this, as well as the former, that those were not spared, by which kingdoms were supported and maintained, as shepherds and husbandmen:

and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers; by whom kingdoms and states are governed and protected.

Ver. 24. *And I will render unto Babylon, and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea*, etc.] Or, “but I will render”^{f1030}, etc. though I have made this use of Babylon, she shall not be spared, but receive her just recompense of reward; not the city of Babylon only, but the whole land of Chaldea, and all the inhabitants of it:

all their evil that they have done in Zion, in your sight, saith the Lord; the sense is, that for all the evil the Chaldeans had done in Judea; the ravages they had made there, the blood they had shed, and the desolation they had made; and particularly for what they had done in Jerusalem, and especially in the temple, burning, spoiling, and profaning that, God would now righteously punish them, and retaliate all this evil on them; and which should be done publicly, before all the nations of the world, and particularly in the sight of God’s own people: for this phrase, “in your sight”, does not refer to the evils done in Zion, but to the recompense that should be made for them.

Ver. 25. *Behold, I [am] against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth*, etc.] Babylon is called a mountain, though situated in a plain, because of its high walls, lofty towers, and hanging gardens, which made it look at a distance like a high mountain, as Lebanon, and others: or because it was a strong fortified city; so the Targum renders it, O destroying city: or because of its power and grandeur as a monarchy, it being usual to compare monarchies to mountains; (see ^{<31P>}Isaiah 2:2 ^{<30U>}Zechariah 4:7); here called a “destroying” one for a reason given, because it destroyed all the earth, all the nations and kingdoms of it: the same character is given of mystical Babylon and its inhabitants, (^{<611B>}Revelation 11:18):

and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee: in a way of vindictive wrath, pouring it out upon her, and inflicting his judgments on her; laying hold on and seizing her in a furious manner, as a man does his enemy, when he has found him:

and roll them down from the rocks; towers and fortresses in Babylon, which looked like rocks, but should be now demolished:

and will make thee a burnt mountain: reduced to cinders and ashes by the conflagration of it: or, “a burning mountain”: like Etna and Vesuvius; we never read of the burning of literal Babylon, but we do of mystical Babylon: (see ^{<68B>}Revelation 18:8); and with this compare (^{<68B>}Revelation 8:8). The Targum renders it, a burnt city.

Ver. 26. *And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations*, etc.] Signifying that it should be so utterly consumed by fire, that there should not be a stone left fit to be put into any new building, especially to be a corner or a foundation stone. The Targum understands it figuratively,

“and they shall not take of thee a king for a kingdom, and a ruler for government:”

but thou shall be desolate for ever, saith the Lord; (see ^{<25B>}Jeremiah 50:39,40).

Ver. 27. *Set ye up a standard in the land*, etc.] Not in Chaldea, but rather in any land; or in all the countries which belonged to Media and Persia; where Cyrus’s standard is ordered to be set up, to gather soldiers together,

and enlist in his service, in order to go with him in his expedition against Babylon:

blow the trumpet among the nations; for the same purpose, to call them to arms, to join the forces of Cyrus, and go with him into the land of Chaldea:

prepare the nations against her: animate them, stir up their spirits against her, and furnish them with armour to engage with her: or, “sanctify”^{f1031} them; select a certain number out of them fit for such work:

call together the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; the two former are generally thought to intend Armenia the greater, and the lesser; and the latter Ascania, a country in Phrygia; and certain it is that Cyrus first conquered these countries, and had many Armenians, Phrygians, and Cappadocians, in his army he brought against Babylon, as Xenophon^{f1032} relates. The Targum is, declare

“against her to the kingdoms of the land of Kardu, the army of Armenia and Hadeb,”

or Adiabene:

appoint a captain against her; over all these forces thus collected: Cyrus seems to be intended; unless the singular is put for the plural, and so intends a sufficient number of general officers of the army:

cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars; or “locusts”^{f1033}; which though generally smooth, yet some fire hairy and rough; to which the horses in Cyrus’s army are compared, for their multitude, the shape of their heads, long manes, and manner of going, leaping, and prancing. So the Targum,

“they shall cause the horses to come up, leaping like the shining locust;”

that is of a yellow colour, and shines like gold. So the word the Targum here uses is used by Jonathan in (~~
~~Leviticus 13:32); of hair yellow as gold, and here to be understood of hairy locusts: and, as Aelianus^{f1034} says, there were locusts of a golden colour in Arabia. And such may be meant here by the Chaldee paraphrase, which well expresses their motion by leaping; (see ~~
~~Joel 2:5); and which agrees with that of horses. The word rendered “rough” has the signification of horror in it, such as makes the hair to stand upright; (see ~~
~~Job 4:15); and so some^{f1035} render it here.

And Bochart^{f1036}, from Alcamus, an Arabic writer, observes, that there is a sort of locusts which have two hairs upon their head, which are called their horn, which when erected may answer to this sense of the word; and he brings in the poet Claudian^{f1037}, as describing the locust by the top of its head, as very horrible and terrible; and that some locusts? have hair upon their heads seems manifest from (~~cf1038~~ Revelation 9:8); though it may be, the reason why they are here represented as so dreadful and frightful may not be so much on account of their form, as for the terror they strike men with, when they come in great numbers, and make such terrible havoc of the fruits of the earth as they do; wherefore the above learned writer proposes to render the words, “as the horrible locusts”^{f1038}.

Ver. 28. *Prepare against her the nations, with the kings of the Medes,* etc.] At the head of them, Darius and Cyrus. The Syriac version has it in the singular number, the king of the Modes:

the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominions; that is, the inhabitants of it, the common people, with their princes, nobles, governors, as captains of them, under Cyrus, their generalissimo.

Ver. 29. *And the land shall tremble and sorrow,* etc.] The land of Chaldea, the inhabitants of it, should tremble, when they heard of this powerful army invading their land, and besieging their metropolis; and should sorrow, and be in pain as a woman in travail, as the word^{f1039} signifies:

for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon; or, “shall stand”^{f1040}; be certainly fulfilled; for his purposes are firm and not frustratable:

to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant; this the Lord purposed, and threatened to do; (see ~~cf1041~~ Jeremiah 50:39,40) (~~cf1042~~ Isaiah 13:19,20).

Ver. 30. *The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight,* etc.] Or, “ceased from fighting”^{f1041} for it seems, upon Cyrus’s first coming, the king of Babylon and his army gave him battle; but being overthrown, they retired to the city^{f1042}, and dared never fight more:

they have remained in [their] holds; in the towers and fortresses of Babylon, never daring to sally out of the city, or appear in the field of

battle any more; even though Cyrus sent the king of Babylon a personal challenge, to end the quarrel by a single combat^{f1043}:

their might hath failed; their courage sunk and was gone; they had no heart to face their enemy:

they became as women; as weak as they, as the Targum; timorous and fearful, having no courage left in them, and behaved more like women than men:

they have burnt her dwelling places; that is, the enemy burnt their houses, when they entered into the city, to inject terror into them:

her bars are broken; the bars of the gates of the city, or of the palaces of the king and nobles, and of the houses of the people, by the soldiers, to get the plunder; (see ^{285B}Isaiah 45:1,2).

Ver. 31. *One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another*, etc.] That is, one post should be after another, and one messenger after another, post upon post, and messenger upon messenger, as fast as they could run; when one had been with his message, and delivered it, and returned, he meets another; or they met one another, coming from different places:

to show the king of Babylon his city is taken at [one] end; or, “at the end”^{f1044}; we render it “one end”, as Kimchi does; at the end where Cyrus’s army first landed, when they came up the channel of the river Euphrates they had drained. And so Herodotus^{f1045} says, that when the Babylonians, which inhabited the “extreme parts” of the city, were taken, they that were in the middle of it were not sensible of it, because of the greatness of the city; and the rather, because they were engaged that night in feasting and dancing. Nay, Aristotle^{f1046} says, it was reported that one part of the city was taken three days before the other end knew it, it being more like a country than a city; which does not seem credible, nor is it consistent with the Scripture account of it; however, it was taken by surprise, and some parts of it before the king was aware of it; who very probably had his palace in the middle of it, whither these messengers ran one after another, or from different parts, to acquaint him with it.

Ver. 32. *And that the passages are stopped*, etc.] Or “taken”, or “seized”^{f1047}; where Cyrus placed soldiers to keep them; these were the passages leading from the river Euphrates to the city, the keys of it; the

little gates, that Herodotus^{f1048} speaks of, leading to the river, which were left open that night. Kimchi thinks the towers built by the river side, to keep the enemy out, that should attempt to enter, are meant; these were now in his hands;

and the reeds they have burnt with fire; which grew upon the banks of the river, and in the marshes adjoining to it. Some render it, “the marshes”^{f1049}; that is, the reeds and bulrushes in them, which usually grow in such places. And Herodotus^{f1050} makes mention of a marsh Cyrus came to; the reeds in it he burnt, having many torches, with which he might set fire to them; as he proposed with them to burn the houses, doors, and porches^{f1051}; either to make way for his army, which might hinder the march of it; or to give light, that they might see their way into the city the better: though some think it was to terrify the inhabitants; which seems not so likely, since he marched up to the royal palace with great secrecy. This circumstance is mentioned, to show the certainty of the enemy’s entrance, and the taking of part of the city. R. Jonah, from the Arabic language, in which the word^{f1052} here used signifies “fortresses”, so renders it here;

and the men of war are affrighted; and so fled, and left the passes, towers, and fortresses, which fell into the hands of Cyrus, as soon as they perceived his army was come up the channel and was landed, and the reeds were burnt.

Ver. 33. *For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel*, etc.] “The Lord of hosts”, the Lord God omnipotent, and can do all things; “the God of Israel”, and therefore will plead their cause, and take vengeance on Babylon:

the daughter of Babylon [is] like a threshing floor; on which the nations of the earth had been threshed, or punished and destroyed; and now she was like a threshing floor, unto which should be gathered, and on which should be laid, her king, princes, and the people of the land, and be there beat and crushed to pieces. The Targum renders it the congregation of Babylon; and the Septuagint the houses of the king of Babylon; so the Arabic version:

[it is] time to thresh her; not the floor, but the sheaves on it: or, “it is the time to tread her”^{f1053}; as corn was trodden out by the oxen; or rather as threshing floors, being new laid with earth, were trodden, and so made hard and even, and by that means prepared for threshing against the

harvest; when the corn would be ripe, cut down, and gathered in, and laid up, as follows:

yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come; when she would be ripe for ruin, and God would, by his instruments, put in the sickle of his wrath, and cut her down, her king, her princes, her cities, and her people; (see ^{f1045}Revelation 14:15,16). The Targum is,

“and yet a very little while, and spoilers shall come to her.”

Ver. 34. *Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me*, etc.] Or “us”^{f1054}; everyone of us: these are the words of Zion and Jerusalem, as appears from (^{f1055}Jeremiah 51:35); complaining of the injuries done them by the king of Babylon, who had eaten them up; spoiled their substance, as the Targum; took their cities, plundered them of their riches, and carried them away captive:

he hath crushed me; to the earth; or “bruised” or “broken”, even all her bones; (see ^{f1056}Jeremiah 50:17);

he hath made me an empty vessel; emptied the land of its inhabitants and riches, and left nothing valuable in it:

he hath swallowed me up like a dragon; or “whale”, or any large fish, which swallow the lesser ones whole. The allusion is to the large swallow of dragons, which is sometimes represented as almost beyond all belief; for not only Pliny^{f1055} from Megasthenes reports, that, in India, serpents, that is, dragons, grow to such a bulk, that they will swallow whole deer, and even bulls; but Posidonius^{f1056} relates, that in Coelesyria was one, whose gaping jaws would admit of a horse and his rider: and Onesicritus^{f1057} speaks of two dragons in the country of Abisarus in India; the one was fourscore and the other a hundred and forty cubits long;

he hath filled his belly with my delicates; with the treasures of the king and his nobles; with the vessels of the temple, and the riches of the people, which he loaded himself with to his full satisfaction. So the Targum,

“he filled his treasury with the good of my land;”

he hath cast me out; out of my land, and carried me captive; so the Targum.

Ver. 35. *The violence done to me, and to my flesh, [be] upon Babylon,* etc.] That is, let the injuries done to Zion and her children, be avenged on Babylon; the hurt done to their persons and families, and the spoiling of their goods, and destruction of their cities, houses, and substance:

shall the inhabitant of Zion say; by way of imprecation:

and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say; let the guilt of it be charged upon them, and punishment for it be inflicted on them. The Targum is,

“the sin of the innocent blood which is shed in me;”

let that be imputed to them, and vengeance come upon them for it.

Ver. 36. *Therefore thus saith the Lord,* etc.] In answer to the prayers of the inhabitants of Zion and Jerusalem, imprecating divine vengeance on Babylon:

behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; not by words only, but by deeds, inflicting punishment on their enemies:

and I will dry up her sea; the confluence of waters about Babylon; the river Euphrates, the channel of which was drained by Cyrus, by which means he took the city; and this may figuratively design the abundance of riches and affluence of good things in Babylon, which should now be taken from her:

and make her springs dry; deprive her of all the necessaries of life; and stop up all the avenues by which she was supplied with them; and cut off all communication of good things to her.

Ver. 37. *And Babylon shall become heaps,* etc.] The houses should be demolished, and the stones lie in heaps one upon another, and become mere rubbish:

a dwelling place for dragons; and other wild and savage creatures. Dragons, as Aelianus^{f1058} observes, love to live in desert places, and such now Babylon is; it lies in ruins; and even its palace is so full of scorpions and serpents, as Benjamin of Tudela^{f1059} says it was in his time, that men durst not enter into it; (see ^{<241B>}Jeremiah 50:39 ^{<241C>}Isaiah 13:21,22);

an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant; an astonishment to neighbouring nations, and to all that pass by; who shall hiss at the

destruction of it, and rejoice, there being not so much as a single inhabitant in it; which is its case to this day; (see ^{<2813>}Jeremiah 50:13,39).

Ver. 38. *They shall roar together like lions*, etc.] Some understand this of the Medes and Persians, and the shouts they made at the attacking and taking of Babylon; but this does not so well agree with that, which seems to have been done in a secret and silent manner; rather according to the context the Chaldeans are meant, who are represented as roaring, not through fear of the enemy, and distress by him; for such a roaring would not be fitly compared to the roaring of a lion; but either this is expressive of their roaring and revelling at their feast afterwards mentioned, and at which time their city was taken; or else of the high spirits and rage they were in, and the fierceness and readiness they showed to give battle to Cyrus, when he first came with his army against them; and they did unite together, and met him, and roared like lions at him, and fought with him; but being overcome, their courage cooled; they retired to their city, and dared not appear more; (see Gill on ^{<2610>}Jeremiah 51:30”);

they shall yell as lions' whelps. Jarchi and other Rabbins interpret the word of the braying of an ass; it signifies to “shake”; and the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “they shall shake [their] hair”; as lions do their manes; and young lions their shaggy hair; and as blustering bravadoes shake theirs; and so might the Babylonians behave in such a swaggering way when the Medes and Persians first attacked them.

Ver. 39. *In their heat I will make their feasts*, etc.] I will order it that their feasts shall be in the time of heat, that so they may be made drunk; so Jarchi: or when they are hot with feasting, I will disturb their feast by a handwriting on the wall; so Kimchi; (see ^{<2701>}Daniel 5:1-6); to which he directs: or when they are inflamed with wine, I will put something into their banquets, into their cups; I will mingle their potions with the wine of my wrath; and, while they are feasting, ruin shall come upon them; and so it was, according to Herodotus and Xenophon, that the city of Babylon was taken, while the inhabitants were feasting; and this account agrees with (^{<2811>}Daniel 5:1,30). This text is quoted in the Talmud^{f1060}, where the gloss on it says,

“this is said concerning Belshazzar and his company, when they returned from a battle with Darius and Cyrus, who besieged Babylon, and Belshazzar overcame that day; and they were weary

and hot, and sat down to drink, and were drunken, and on that day he was slain;”

and the Targum is,

“I will bring tribulation upon them:”

and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice; in a riotous and revelling way; or that they may be mad and tremble, as R. Jonah, from the use of the word ^{f1061} in the Arabic language, interprets it; so drunken men are oftentimes like mad men, deprived of their senses, and their limbs tremble through the strength of liquor; and here it signifies, that the Chaldeans should be so intoxicated with the cup of divine wrath and vengeance, that they should be at their wits’ end; in the utmost horror and trembling; not able to stand, or defend themselves; and so the Targum,

“they shall be like drunken men, that they may not be strong;”

but as weak as they:

and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord; not only fall asleep as drunken men do, and awake again; but sleep, and never awake more; or die, and not live again, until the resurrection morn; no doubt many of the Chaldeans, being in a literal sense drunk and asleep when the city was taken, were slain in their sleep, and never waked again. The Targum is,

“and die the second death, and not live in the world to come;”

(see ~~6218~~ Revelation 21:8).

Ver. 40. *I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter,* etc.] To the place of slaughter; who shall be able to make no more resistance than lambs. This explains what is meant by being made drunk, and sleeping a perpetual sleep, even destruction and death:

like rams with he goats; denoting the promiscuous destruction of the prince and common people together.

Ver. 41. *How is Sheshach taken!* etc.] Not the city Shushan, as Sir John Marsham thinks ^{f1062}; but Babylon, as is plain from a following clause; and so the Targum,

“how is Babylon subdued!”

called Sheshach, by a position and commutation of letters the Jews call “athbash”; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel account for it; or else from their idol Shach, the same with Bel, which was worshipped here, and had a temple erected for it; and where an annual feast was kept in honour of it, called the Sacchean feast; and which was observing the very time the city was taken; and may be the true reason of its having this name given it now; (see Gill on “~~253~~ Jeremiah 25:26”); the taking of which was very wonderful; and therefore this question is put by way of admiration; it being so well fortified and provided to hold out a long siege:

and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised? for it was taken by stratagem and surprise, before the king and his guards, the army, and the inhabitants of it, were aware; that city, which was matter and occasion of praise to all the world, and went through it; for the compass of it, and height and strength of its walls; the river Euphrates that ran through it, and flowed about it; the temple, palaces, and gardens in it:

how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations! or, “a desolation”; and indeed its being a desolation was the reason of its being an astonishment among the nations; who were amazed to see so strong, rich, and splendid a city brought to ruin in a very short time.

Ver. 42. *The sea is come up upon Babylon*, etc.] A vast army, comparable to the great sea for the multitude thereof, even the army of the Medes and Persians under Cyrus; so the Targum,

“a king with his armies, which are numerous like the waters of the sea, is come up against Babylon:”

she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof; being surrounded, besieged, surprised, and seized upon by the multitude of soldiers in that army, which poured in upon it unawares. Some think here is a beautiful antithesis, between the inundation of Cyrus’s army and the draining of the river Euphrates, by which means he poured in his forces into Babylon.

Ver. 43. *Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness*, etc.] Which some understand of Babylon itself, divided into two parts by the river Euphrates running in the midst of it, called by Berossus^{f1063} the inward and outward cities; though rather these design the rest of the cities in Chaldea, of which Babylon was the metropolis, the mother city, and the other her daughters, which should share the same fate with herself; be

demolished, and the ground on which they stood become a dry, barren, uncultivated, and desert land:

a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth [any] son of man pass thereby; having neither inhabitant nor traveller; see (²⁸¹²Jeremiah 50:12,39).

Ver. 44. *And I will punish Bel in Babylon*, etc.] The idol of the Babylonians, who had a temple in Babylon, where he was worshipped: the same is called Belus by Aelianus^{f1064}, Curtius^{f1065}, and Pausanias^{f1066}; perhaps the same Herodian^{f1067} calls Belis, and says some take him to be Apollo; for more of him, (see Gill on "²³⁴⁰Isaiah 46:1"); and (see Gill on "²⁸¹²Jeremiah 50:2"); who was punished when his temple was demolished, and plundered of its wealth; this golden image of Belus was broke to pieces, and the gold of it carried away. The Targum is,

“I will visit or punish them that worship Bel in Babylon:”

and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up; the rich offerings made to him when victories were obtained; all success being ascribed to him; and the spoils of conquered enemies, which were brought and laid up in his temple, particularly the vessels of the sanctuary at Jerusalem, which were deposited there; (see ⁴⁴³⁷2 Chronicles 36:7,18 ²⁰⁰²Daniel 1:2); and which were restored by Cyrus, (²⁵⁰⁷Ezra 1:7,8); which restoration of them greatly fulfilled this prophecy; and was a refunding of what was lodged with him, or a vomiting what he had swallowed up; compare with this the story of “Bel and the dragon”:

and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him; either to worship him, or bring their presents to him, to ingratiate themselves with the king of Babylon:

yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall; which Bel was not able to defend; and therefore should be deserted by his worshippers. The Targum renders it in the plural, the walls of Babylon; of which, (see Gill on "²⁵¹⁸Jeremiah 51:58"). Some think that not the wall of the city is here meant: but the temple of Bel, which was as a wall or fortress to the city; but now should fall, and be so no more; since it is not easy to give a reason why mention here should be made of the fall of the walls of the city; and seeing express mention is made of this afterwards.

Ver. 45. *My people, go ye out of the midst of her*, etc.] This is a call of the Jews to go out of Babylon, not before the taking of the city by Cyrus; but when he should issue out a proclamation, giving them liberty to return to their own land; which many of them, being well settled in Babylon, would not be ready to accept of, but choose to continue there; wherefore they are urged to depart from thence, because of the danger they would be exposed unto; for though the city was not destroyed by Cyrus upon his taking it, yet it was by Darius Hystaspes some time after. The same call is given to the people of God to come out of mystical Babylon, (⁶⁶⁸⁰⁴ Revelation 18:4);

and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord; shown in the destruction of Babylon; (see Gill on "²⁵¹⁶Jeremiah 51:6").

Ver. 46. *And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land*, etc.] The rumour of war in the land of Chaldea; the report of the Medes and Persians preparing to invade it, and besiege Babylon, in the peace of which city the Jews had peace; and therefore might fear they should suffer in the calamities of it; but, lest they should, they are ordered to go cut of it, and accept the liberty that should be granted by the conqueror, who would do them no hurt, but good; and had therefore nothing to fear from him; and, as a token, assuring them of this, the following things are declared; which, when they should observe, they need not be troubled, being forewarned; yea, might take encouragement from it, and believe that their redemption drew nigh:

a rumour shall both come [one] year and after that in [another] year [shall come] a rumour; in one year there was a rumour of the great preparation Cyrus was making to invade Chaldea, and besiege Babylon; in another year, that is, the following, as the Targum rightly renders it, there was a second rumour of his coming; and who actually did come into Assyria, but was stopped at the river Gyndes, not being able to pass it for want of boats; and, being enraged at the loss of a favourite horse in it, resolved upon the draining it; which he accomplished, by cutting many sluices and rivulets; in doing which he spent the whole summer; and the spring following came to Babylon, as Herodotus^{f1068} relates; when what is after predicted followed:

and violence in the land, ruler against ruler; the king of Babylon came out with his forces to meet Cyrus, as the same historian says; when a battle ensued, in which the former was beat, and obliged to retire into the city, which then Cyrus besieged; and thus violence and devastations were made

in the land by the army of the Medes and Persians; and ruler was against ruler; Cyrus against Belshazzar, and Belshazzar against him. Some read it, “ruler upon ruler”^{f1069}; that is, one after another, in a very short time; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel; thus two before Belshazzar, then Darius, and, after Darius, Cyrus.

Ver. 47. *Therefore, behold, the days come that I will do judgment on the graven images of Babylon*, etc.] Because of the connection of these words, some understand (²⁵¹⁴⁶Jeremiah 51:46) of the report of the deliverance of the Jews time after time; and yet nothing came of it, which disheartened them; and they were used more cruelly, and with greater violence, by the Chaldeans and their kings, one after another; and “therefore” the following things are said; but the particle may be rendered “moreover”^{f1070}, as some observe; or “surely”, certainly, of a truth, as in (²⁴¹⁸²Jeremiah 5:2); the time is hastening on, the above things being done, when judgment shall be executed, not only upon Bel the chief idol, (²⁵¹⁴⁴Jeremiah 51:44); but upon all the idols of the Chaldeans; which should be broke to pieces, and stripped of everything about them that was valuable; the Medes and Persians having no regard to images in their worship; though Dr. Prideaux^{f1071} thinks that what is here said, and in (²⁵¹⁴⁴Jeremiah 51:44); were fulfilled by Xerxes, when he destroyed and pillaged the Babylonian temples:

and her whole land shall be confounded; the inhabitants of it, when they see their images destroyed, in which they trusted for their safety:

and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her; in the midst of Babylon; where the king and his army were shut up, and dared not move out; and where they were slain when the army of Cyrus entered.

Ver. 48. *Then the heaven and the earth, and all that [is] therein, shall sing for Babylon*, etc.] At the destruction of her, rejoicing at it; not at the ruin of fellow creatures, simply considered; but relatively, at the righteousness of God in it, and the glory of his justice, and the deliverance of many by it from tyranny and bondage. This seems to be a figurative expression often used, in which the heavens and the earth are brought in as witnesses, approvers, and applauders, of what is done by the Lord. Some indeed interpret it of the angels, the inhabitants of the heavens, and of the Jews, dwellers on earth; and others of the church of God, in heaven and in earth; which, of the two, seems best; the like will be done at the fall of mystical Babylon, (⁶¹⁸²⁰Revelation 18:20);

for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith the Lord; the Medes and Persians that should and did spoil and plunder Babylon; and who came from countries that lay north to it.

Ver. 49. *As Babylon [hath caused] the slain of Israel,* etc.] In Jerusalem, when that city was taken the Chaldeans, and destroyed:

so at Babylon shall all the slain of all the earth; or “land”; that is, the land of Chaldea; the inhabitants of which fled to Babylon upon the invasion of the Medes and Persians, both for their own safety, and the defence of that city; and where, being slain, they fell; and this was a just retaliation of them for what they had done to Israel. These words may be considered, as they are by some, as the song of the inhabitants of heaven and earth, observing and applauding the justice and equity of divine Providence in this affair; (see ~~437~~ Revelation 13:7,10).

Ver. 50. *Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still,* etc.] The Jews, who had escaped the sword of the Chaldeans when Jerusalem was taken, and were carried captive into Babylon, where they had remained to this time; and had also escaped the sword of the Medes and Persians, when Babylon was taken; these are bid to go away from Babylon, and go into their land, and not stay in Babylon, or linger there, as Lot in Sodom; or stop on the road, but make the best of their way to the land of Judea:

remember the Lord afar off; the worship of the Lord, as the Targum interprets it; the worship of the Lord in the sanctuary at Jerusalem, from which they were afar off at Babylon; and had been a long time, even seventy years, deprived of it, as Kimchi explains it:

and let Jerusalem come into your mind; that once famous city, the metropolis of the nation, that now lay in ruins; the temple that once stood in it, and the service of God there; that upon the remembrance of, and calling these to mind, they might be quickened and stirred up to hasten thither, and rebuild the city and temple, and restore the worship of God. It is not easy to say whose words these are, whether the words of the prophet, or of the Lord by him; or of the inhabitants of the heavens and earth, whose song may be here continued, and in it thus address the Jews.

Ver. 51. *We are confounded, because we have heard reproach,* etc.] These are the words of the Jews, either objecting to their return to their land; or lamenting the desolation of it; and complaining of the reproach it

lay under, being destitute of inhabitants; the land in general lying waste and uncultivated; the city of Jerusalem and temple in ruins; and the worship of God ceased; and the enemy insulting and reproaching; suggesting, that their God could not protect and save them; and, under these discouragements, they could not bear the thoughts of returning to it:

shame hath covered our faces; they knew not which way to look when they heard the report of the state of their country, and the reproach of the enemy, and through shame covered their faces:

for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of the Lord's house; the oracle, or the holy of holies; the temple, or the holy place, and the porch or court; so Kimchi and Abarbinel; into which the Chaldeans, strangers to God and the commonwealth of Israel, had entered, to the profanation of them, and had destroyed them.

Ver. 52. *Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will do judgment upon her graven images*, etc.] Destroy their gods, who have reproached the God of Israel, and profaned his sanctuaries; and for that reason; (see Gill on “⁻²⁵⁴⁷⁻Jeremiah 51:47”); it is an answer to the objection and complaint of the Jews, and is designed for their comfort and encouragement:

and through all her land the wounded shall groan; because of their wounds and pain; and which their idols could not cure, ease, or prevent.

Ver. 53. *Though Babylon should mount up to heaven*, etc.] Could the walls of it, which were very high, two hundred cubits high, as Herodotus^{f1072} says, be carried up as high as heaven; or the towers of it, which were exceeding high, ten foot higher than the walls, as Curtius^{f1073} says, likewise be raised to the same height:

and though she should fortify the height of her strength: make her walls and towers as strong as they were high; unless this is to be understood particularly of the temple of Bel, in which was a solid tower, in length and thickness about six hundred and sixty feet; and upon this tower another; and so on to the number of eight, towers; and in the last of them a large temple, as the above historian^{f1074} relates: but if these towers could have been piled up in a greater number, even so as to reach to heaven, it would have availed nothing against the God of heaven, to secure from his vengeance. The Targum is,

“if Babylon should be built with buildings as high as heaven, and should fortify the strong holds on high:”

[yet] from me shall spoilers come, saith the Lord; the Medes and Persians, sent and commissioned by him, who would pull down and destroy her walls and towers, be they ever so high and strong.

Ver. 54. *A sound of a cry [cometh] from Babylon,* etc.] Of the inhabitants of it upon its being taken; which is said to denote the certainty of it, which was as sure as if the cry of the distressed was then heard:

and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans; that is, the report of a great destruction there, was, or would be, carried from thence, and spread all over the world.

Ver. 55. *Because the Lord hath spoiled Babylon,* etc.] By means of the Merits and Persians; these were his instruments he made use of; to these he gave commission, power, and strength to spoil Babylon; and therefore it is ascribed to him:

and destroyed out of her the great voice; the noise of people, which is very great in populous cities, where people are passing to and fro in great numbers upon business; which ceases when any calamity comes, as pestilence, famine, or sword, which sweep away the inhabitants; this last was the case of Babylon. The Targum is,

“and hath destroyed out of her many armies:”

or it may design the great voice of the roaring revelling company in it at their feast time; which was the time of the destruction of the city, as often observed: or the voice of triumphs for victories obtained, which should be no more in it: or the voice of joy and gladness in common, as will be also the case of mystical Babylon, (²⁵¹⁸²Revelation 18:22); this “great voice” may not unfitly be applied to the voice of antichrist, that mouth speaking blasphemies, which are long shall be destroyed out of Babylon, (²⁵¹³⁵Revelation 13:5,6);

when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered; that is, when her enemies come up against her like the waves of the sea: a loud shout will be made by them, which will be very terrible, and silence the noise of mirth and jollity among the Babylonians; (see ²⁵¹⁴²Jeremiah 51:42); though some understand this of the change that should be made

among the Chaldeans; that, instead of the voice of joy and triumph, there would be the voice of howling and lamentation; and even among their high and mighty ones, who would be troubled and distressed, as great waters are, when moved by tempests. The Targum is,

“and the armies of many people shall be gathered against them, and shall lift up their voice with a tumult.”

Ver. 56. *Because the spoiler is come upon her, [even] upon Babylon, etc.]* That is, Cyrus, with his army:

and her mighty men are taken; unawares, by surprise:

everyone of their bows is broken; they had no strength to withstand the enemy, and were obliged to yield at once; lay down their arms, and submit:

for the Lord God of recompences shall surely requite; that God to whom vengeance belongs, and will recompense it; who is a God of justice and equity, the Judge of all the earth; he will render tribulation to them that trouble his; and requite his enemies and the enemies of his people, in a righteous manner, for all the evil they have done, as literal, so mystical Babylon; (see ^{668B}Revelation 18:6-8).

Ver. 57. *And I will make drunk her princes,* etc.] With the wine of divine wrath; that is, slay them; though there may be an allusion to their being drunk with wine at the feast Belshazzar made for his thousand lords; who are the princes here intended, together with the king and his royal family, (^{271B}Daniel 5:1,4);

and her wise [men], her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: the counsellors of state, priests, magicians, and astrologers; officers in the army, superior and inferior ones; and the soldiers and warriors, whom Cyrus and his men slew; when they entered the city; compare with this (^{669B}Revelation 19:18);

and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake; be all asleep in their drunken fits, and be slain therein; and so never wake, or live more. The Targum is,

“and they shall die the second death, and not come into the world to come;”

(see Gill on “^{281B}Jeremiah 51:39”);

saith the king, whose name [is] the Lord of hosts; the King of kings and Lord of lords; the Lord of armies in heaven and earth; and can do, and does, what he pleases in both worlds.

Ver. 58. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts*, etc.] Because what follows might seem incredible ever to be effected; it is introduced with this preface, expressed by him who is the God of truth, and the Lord God omnipotent:

the broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken; or rased up; the foundations of them, and the ground on which they stood made naked and bare, and open to public view; everyone of the walls, the inward and the outward, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it. Curtius says^{f1075} the wall of Babylon was thirty two feet broad, and that carriages might pass by each other without any danger. Herodotus^{f1076} says it was fifty royal cubits broad, which were three fingers larger than the common measure; and both Strabo^{f1077} and Diodorus Siculus^{f1078} affirm, that two chariots drawn with four horses abreast might meet each other, and pass easily; and, according to Ctesias^{f1079}, the breadth of the wall was large enough for six chariots: or the words may be read, “the walls of broad Babylon”^{f1080}; for Babylon was very large in circumference; more like a country than a city, as Aristotle^{f1081} says. Historians differ much about the compass of its wall; but all agree it was very large; the best account, which is that of Curtius^{f1082}, makes it to be three hundred and fifty eight furlongs (about forty five miles); with Ctesias it was three hundred and sixty; and with Clitarchus three hundred and sixty five, as they are both quoted by Diodorus Siculus^{f1083}; according to Strabo^{f1084} it was three hundred and eighty five; and according to Dion Cassius^{f1085} four hundred; by Philostratus^{f1086} it is said to be four hundred and eighty; as also by Herodotus; and by Julian^{f1087} the emperor almost five hundred. Pliny^{f1088} reckons it sixty miles:

and her high gates shall be burnt with fire; there were a hundred of them, all of brass, with their posts and hinges, as Herodotus^{f1089} affirms:

and the people shall labour in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary; which some understand of the builders of the walls, gates, and city of Babylon, whose labour in the issue was in vain, since the end of them was to be broken and burned; but rather it designs the Chaldeans, who laboured in the fire to extinguish and save the city and its gates, but to no purpose.

Ver. 59. *The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah, etc.]*

This word is no other than the above prophecy concerning the destruction of Babylon, contained in this and the preceding chapter; or rather the order the prophet gave this prince to take a copy of it with him to Babylon, and there read it, and their cast it into the river Euphrates, with a stone bound it. Of this Seraiah we read nowhere else: he is further described as

the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah into Babylon, in the fourth year of his reign; the Jews say^{f1090} that Zedekiah, in the fourth year of his reign, went to Babylon, to reconcile himself to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and took Seraiah with him, and returned and came to his kingdom in Jerusalem; but we have no account in Scripture of any such journey he took. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, “when he went from Zedekiah”; as this particle is sometimes^{f1091} elsewhere rendered, (~~<0041>~~ Genesis 4:1 ~~<1235>~~ 2 Kings 23:35); and so the Targum explains it,

“when he went on an embassy of Zedekiah;”

and Abarbinel, by the command of the king; it seems he was ambassador from the king of Judah to the king of Babylon upon some business or another; and Jeremiah took this opportunity of sending a copy of the above prophecy by him, for the ends before mentioned: this was in the fourth year of Zedekiah’s reign, seven years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and sixty years before the taking of Babylon; so long before was it prophesied of. The Syriac version wrongly reads it “in the eleventh year”; the year of Jerusalem’s destruction; supposing that Seraiah’s going with Zedekiah to Babylon was his going with him into captivity:

and [this] Seraiah [was] a quiet prince; one of a peaceable disposition, that did not love war, or persecution of good men; and so a fit person for Zedekiah to send upon an embassy of peace; and for Jeremiah to employ in such service as he did; for, had he been a hot and haughty prince, he would have despised his orders and commands. Some render it, “prince of Menuchah”^{f1092}; taking it to be the proper name of a place of which he was governor; thought to be the same with Manahath, (~~<1386>~~ 1 Chronicles 8:6). The Targum and Septuagint version call him “the prince of gifts”: one by whom such were introduced into the king’s presence that brought treasure, gifts, or presents to him, as Jarchi interprets it; according to Kimchi, he was the king’s familiar favourite, with whom he used to converse and delight himself when he was at rest and at leisure from business. Some take

him to be the lord of the bedchamber, or lord chamberlain; and others lord chief justice of peace. The first sense seems most agreeable.

Ver. 60. *So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon*, etc.] The evil of punishment predicted and threatened: this he delivered, not by word of mouth to Seraiah to relate when he came to Babylon; but he wrote it in a book for him reread; and he wrote it himself; Baruch, his amanuensis, not being now with him:

[even] all these words that are written against Babylon; in this and the preceding chapter: this book written by Jeremiah was a copy of them.

Ver. 61. *And Jeremiah said to Seraiah*, etc.] At the time he delivered the copy to him:

when thou comest to Babylon; or art come to Babylon, to the city of Babylon, and to the captive Jews there:

and shalt see them; the captives; or rather the great and populous city of Babylon, its high walls, gates, and towers, whose destruction is foretold in this book, and which might seem incredible. Abarbinel interprets it of his looking into the book given him; which he thinks was not to be opened and looked into till he came to Babylon:

and shalt read all these words; not before the king of Babylon and his princes, and yet not privately to himself; but in some proper place, in the presence of the captive Jews, or the chief of them, convened for that purpose.

Ver. 62. *Then shall thou say, O Lord*, etc.] Acknowledging this prophecy to be of God; believing the accomplishment of it; and praying over it, and for it, like a good man, as doubtless he was:

thou hast spoken against this place; the city of Babylon, where Seraiah is now supposed to be:

to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever; this is the substance of the whole prophecy, that the destruction of Babylon should be an utter and a perpetual one; and which is expressed in the same words that are here used, (²⁵¹³Jeremiah 50:3,13,26,40).

Ver. 63. *And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book*, etc.] To the captive Jews; and having also said the above words by way of prayer and approbation:

[that] thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates; a river by which Babylon was situated. The book, being read, was to be rolled up again, and then a stone tied to it, and cast into the middle of the river, where the waters were deepest, and from whence it could not be taken up; and this was a sign confirming the above prophecy; compare with this what was done by a mighty angel concerning mystical Babylon, in which there is an allusion to this, (⁶⁶⁸²Revelation 18:21).

Ver. 64. *And thou shall say*, etc.] Not only use the above sign and ceremony, but explain the meaning of it to those of his friends who might accompany him; and what he said was in the name of the Lord, as the form and manner in which the following words are delivered show:

thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her; as this book, with the stone bound to it, does, and shall no more rise than that can; the evil of punishment brought on Babylon will sink her to such a degree, that she will never be able to bear up under it; but be so depressed by it as never to rise to her former state and grandeur any more:

and they shall be weary; the inhabitants of it, and have no strength to resist their enemies; or, rather, shall be so weak as not to be able to stand up under the weight and pressure upon them, but shall sink under it; or shall weary themselves in vain to preserve their city from ruin, or restore it when ruined; (see ²⁵¹³Jeremiah 51:58);

thus far [are] the words of Jeremiah; that is, concerning the destruction of Babylon, as is said concerning Moab, (²⁴⁸⁷Jeremiah 48:47); for what Maimonides ^{f1093}says, that though Jeremiah lived some time after, yet ceased to prophesy; or that, when he had finished his prophecy concerning Babylon, he prophesied no more, is not true; for it is certain that many of his prophecies were delivered out after the date of this, though this is recorded last: or the sense may be, thus far are the prophetic words of Jeremiah; and so the Targum,

“hitherto is the prophecy of the words of Jeremiah;”

what follows in the next chapter being historical; for there is no necessity to conclude from hence that that was wrote by any other hand; either, as

many have thought, by Ezra; or by the men of the great synagogue, as Abarbinel.