

# CHAPTER 5

## INTRODUCTION TO MICAH 5

This chapter begins with a prophecy of the siege of Jerusalem, (<sup><310></sup>Micah 5:1); and then follows another concerning the place of the Messiah's birth, (<sup><312></sup>Micah 5:2); and of the case of the Jews, either before or after it, (<sup><313></sup>Micah 5:3); and of Christ's office as a shepherd, and of his grandeur in the world, (<sup><314></sup>Micah 5:4); and of his being a peacemaker, and protector of his people from their enemies, (<sup><315></sup>Micah 5:5,6); and of his people, the great increase of them, and their usefulness, and also of their courage, strength, and prowess, (<sup><316></sup>Micah 5:7-9); likewise that the Lord will remove from them their vain confidence, and all occasion of it, and whatsoever illicit arts and practices were found among them; and all idolatry, and the instruments of it, (<sup><317></sup>Micah 5:10-14); and the chapter is concluded with a threatening of vengeance to the Heathens, (<sup><318></sup>Micah 5:15).

**Ver. 1.** *Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops,* etc.] Not Jerusalem, full of people, called to draw out their forces, and fall upon the enemy besieging them, whether Chaldeans or Romans; but rather the Babylonians, whose armies were large, and their troops numerous; who are called upon by the people of God, encouraged by the foregoing prophecies, as well as by what follows, to come forth with all their forces, and muster up all their armies, and exert all the power and strength they had, thus suiting them; being assured, by the above promises, that in the issue they should prevail over all their enemies: unless the Romans should be intended, to whom this character of "daughter of troops" well agrees, of whose legions all have heard; and since the Babylonish attempt on Jerusalem, and the carrying the Jews captive into Babylon, are before predicted, with their deliverance from it, and what they should do in the times of the Maccabees; a prophecy of the Romans, or a representation of them, a gathering their troops and legions together to besiege Jerusalem, very naturally comes in here;

*he hath laid siege against us*; either Nebuchadnezzar, and the Chaldean army; or Vespasian with the Romans: this, according to the prophetic style, is spoken of as if actually done, because of the certainty of it;

*they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek*; that is, either they, the besiegers, the king of Babylon and his army, when they shall have taken Jerusalem, besieged by them, shall use Zedekiah the king of Judah, and judge of Israel, and his princes and nobles, very ill, signified by this phrase; yea, in a very cruel and barbarous manner; first slaying his sons and his princes before his eyes, then putting his eyes out, binding him in chains, and carrying him to Babylon, and there laying him in a prison, (<sup><2820></sup>Jeremiah 52:10,11); or else they, the besieged, would use the Messiah, the King, Judge, and Ruler in Israel, in such a spiteful and scandalous manner; and so the Messiah was to be used by them, who according to prophecy gave his cheek to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not his face from shame and spitting; and so Jesus, the true Messiah, was smitten, both with rods, and with the palms of men's hands, and buffeted and spit upon, (<sup><2816></sup>Isaiah 50:6 <sup><4166></sup>Matthew 26:67); and this is mentioned as a reason why Jerusalem would be encompassed with the Roman armies, and besieged by their troops and legions, and become desolate, even for their rejection and ill usage of the Messiah. Aben Ezra says, it is right in my eyes that the judge of Israel is the Messiah, or Zerubbabel; not the latter, who never was so used, but the former.

**Ver. 2.** *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah*, etc.] But though Jerusalem should be besieged and taken, and the land of Judea laid waste, yet, before all this should be, the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem, of which this is a prophecy, as is evident from (<sup><4014></sup>Matthew 2:4-6); the place is called by both the names it went by, to point it out the more distinctly, and with the greater certainty, (<sup><0359></sup>Genesis 35:19); the former signifies "the house of bread", and a proper place for Christ to be born in, who is the bread of life; and it has the name of the latter from its fruitfulness, being a place of pasture, and as we find it was at the time of our Lord's birth; for near it shepherds were then watching over their flocks; and it is here added, to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun, (<sup><0695></sup>Joshua 19:15); from which tribe the Messiah was not to come, but from the tribe of Judah; and in which this Bethlehem was, and therefore called, by Matthew, Bethlehem in the land of Judah; as it appears this was, from (<sup><8103></sup>Ruth 1:1,2); and from the Septuagint version of (<sup><0650></sup>Joshua 15:60), where, as Jerom observes, it was added by the Greek interpreters, or

erased out of the Hebrew text by the wickedness of the Jews: the former seems most correct;

*[though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah*; this supplement of ours is according to Kimchi's reading and sense of the words; which, in some measure, accounts for the difference between the prophet and the Evangelist Matthew, by whom this place is said to be "not the least", (<sup>4006</sup>Matthew 2:6), as it might, and yet be little; besides, it might be little at one time, in Micah's time, yet not little at another time; in Matthew's; it might be little with respect to some circumstances, as to pompous buildings, and number of inhabitants, and yet not little on account of its being the birth place of great men, as Jesse, David, and especially the Messiah: or the words may be rendered with an interrogation, "art thou little?" etc. <sup>f148</sup>; thou art not: or thus, it is a "little [thing] to be among the thousands of Judah"<sup>f149</sup>; a greater honour shall be put upon thee, by being the place of the Messiah's birth. Moreover, Mr. Pocock has shown out of R. Tanchum, both in his commentary on this place, and elsewhere <sup>f150</sup>, that the word *ry*[x] signifies both "little" and "great", or of great note and esteem. The tribes of Israel were divided into tens, hundreds, and thousands, over which there was a head or prince; hence, in Matthew, these are called "the princes of Judah", (<sup>4006</sup>Matthew 2:6);

*[yet] out of thee shall he come forth unto me [that is] to be ruler in Israel*; not Hezekiah, who very probably was now born at the time of this prophecy; nor was he born at Bethlehem, nor a ruler in Israel, only king of Judah: nor Zerubbabel, who was born in Babylon, as his name shows, was governor of Judah, but not of Israel; nor can it be said of him, or any mere man, what is said in the next clause: but the Messiah is intended, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi confess, and other Jewish writers. The Targum is,

“out of thee shall come forth before me the Messiah, that he may exercise dominion over Israel.”

Jarchi's note is,

“out of thee shall come forth unto me Messiah, the son of David;”

and so he says, “the stone which the builders refused”, etc. (<sup>4982</sup>Psalms 118:22); plainly suggesting that that passage also belongs to the Messiah, as it certainly does. Kimchi's paraphrase is,

“although thou art little among the thousands of Judah, of thee shall come forth unto me a Judge, to be ruler in Israel, and this is the King Messiah.”

And Abarbanel<sup>f151</sup>, mentioning those words in (~~3043~~ Micah 4:13); “arise, and thresh, O daughter of Zion”, observes,

“this speaks concerning the business of the King Messiah, who shall reign over them, and shall be the Prince of their army; and it is plain that he shall be of the house of David: and it is said, “O thou, Bethlehem Ephrath”, which was a small city, in the midst of the cities of Judah; and “although thou art little in the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall come forth unto me” a man, a ruler in Israel, “whose goings forth are from the days of old”; the meaning is, the goings forth of the family of that ruler are from the days of old; that is, from the seed of David, and a rod from the stem of Jesse, who was of Bethlehem Judah.”

So Abendana<sup>f152</sup>, a more modern Jew, paraphrases the words thus,

“out of thee shall come forth unto me a Judge, that is to be ruler in Israel, and this is the King Messiah; for because he is to be of the seed of David, from Bethlehem he will be.”

To which may be added R. Isaac<sup>f153</sup>, who, having cited this passage, observes, and, he, the ruler in Israel, is the King Messiah, who shall come forth from the seed of David the king; who was of Bethlehem Judah, as in (~~0972~~-1 Samuel 17:12). Wherefore Lyra, having quoted Jarchi, and given his sense of the passage, remarks, hence it is plain that some Catholics, explaining this Scripture of King Hezekiah, “judaize” more than the Hebrews. Though some of them object the application of it to Jesus, who they say ruled not over Israel, but Israel over him, and put him to death; which it is true they did; but God exalted him to be a Prince, as well as a Saviour, unto Israel, notwithstanding that, and declared him to be Lord and Christ; besides, previous to his death, and in the land of Israel, he gave abundant proof of his power and rule over universal nature, earth, air, and sea; over angels, good and bad; and over men and beasts: all creatures obeyed him; though indeed his kingdom is not of this world, but of a spiritual nature, and is over the spiritual Israel of God; and there is a time coming when he will be King over all the earth. Now out of Bethlehem was the King Messiah, the ruler in Israel, to come forth; that is, here he was to

be born, as the phrase signifies; (see <sup>f154</sup>Genesis 10:14); and here our Jesus, the true Messiah, was born, as appears from (<sup>f155</sup>Matthew 2:8,11 <sup>f156</sup>Luke 2:1-6,11,15,16); and this is not only certain from the evangelic history, but the Jews themselves acknowledge it. One of their chronologers <sup>f157</sup> affirms that Jesus the Nazarene was born at Bethlehem Judah, a parsa and a half from Jerusalem; that is, about six miles from it, which was the distance between them: and even the author of a blasphemous book <sup>f158</sup>, pretending to give the life of Jesus, owns that Bethlehem Judah was the place of his nativity: and it is clear not only that the Jews in the times of Jesus expected the Messiah to come from hence, even both the chief priests and scribes of the people, who, in answer to Herod's question about the place of the Messiah's birth, direct him to this, according to Micah's prophecy, (<sup>f159</sup>Matthew 2:4-6); and the common people, who thought to have confronted the Messiahship of Jesus with it, (<sup>f160</sup>John 7:41,42); but others also, at other times. The tower of Edar being a place near to Bethlehem Ephratah, (<sup>f161</sup>Genesis 35:19,21); Jonathan ben Uzziel, in his Targum of (<sup>f162</sup>Genesis 35:19), says of the tower of Edar, this is the place from whence the King Messiah shall be revealed in the end of days; nay, some of them say he is born already, and was born at Bethlehem. An Arabian, they say <sup>f163</sup>, told a Jew,

“the King Messiah is born; he replied to him, what is his name? he answered, Menachem (the Comforter) is his name; he asked him, what is his father's name? he replied, Hezekiah; he said to him, from whence is he? he answered, from the palace of the king of Bethlehem Judah.”

This same story is told elsewhere <sup>f164</sup>, with some little variation, thus, that the Arabian should say to the Jew,

“the Redeemer of the Jews is both; he said to him, what is his name? he replied, Menachem is his name; and what is his father's name? he answered, Hezekiah; and where do they dwell? (he and his father;) he replied, in Birath Arba, in Bethlehem Judah.”

These things show their sense of this prophecy, and the convictions of their minds as to the births of the Messiah, and the place of it. The words “unto me” are thought by some to be redundant and superfluous; but contain in them the glory and Gospel of the text, whether considered as the words of God the Father; and then the sense is, that Christ was to come forth in this place in human nature, or become incarnate, agreeably to the purpose

which God purposed in himself; to the covenant made with him, before the world was; to an order he had given him as Mediator, and to his promise concerning him; and he came forth to him, and answered to all these; as well as this was in order to do his will and work, by fulfilling the law; preaching the Gospel; doing miracles; performing the work of redemption and salvation; by becoming a sacrifice for sin, and suffering death; and likewise it was for the glorifying of all the divine perfections: or whether as the words of the prophet, in the name of the church and people of God, to and for whom he was born, or became incarnate; he came forth unto them, to be their Mediator in general; to be the Redeemer and Saviour of them in particular; to execute each of his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; and to answer and fill up all relations he stands in to them, of Father, Brother, Head, and Husband;

*whose goings forth [have been] of old, from everlasting*; which is said of him, not because his extraction was from David, who lived many ages before him; for admitting he was “in [him], in his loins”, as to his human nature, so long ago, yet his “goings forth” were not from thence: nor because he was prophesied of and promised very early, as he was from the beginning of the world; but neither a prophecy nor promise of him can be called his “going forth”; which was only foretold and spoken of, but not in actual being; nor because it was decreed from eternity that he should come forth from Bethlehem, or be born there in time; for this is saying no more than what might be said of everyone that was to be born in Bethlehem, and was born there: nor is this to be understood of his manifestations or appearances in a human form to the patriarchs, in the several ages of time; since to these, as to other of the above things, the phrase “from everlasting” cannot be ascribed: but either of his going forth in a way of grace towards his people, in acts of love to them, delighting in those sons of men before the world was; in applying to his Father on their account, asking them of him, and betrothing them to himself; in becoming their surety, entering into a covenant with his Father for them, and being the head of election to them, receiving all blessings and promises of grace for them: or else of his eternal generation and sonship, as commonly interpreted; who the only begotten of the Father, of the same nature with him, and a distinct person from him; the eternal Word that went forth from him, and was with him from eternity, and is truly God. The phrases are expressive of the eternity of his divine nature and person; Jarchi compares them with (~~כִּי~~ Psalm 72:17); “before the sun was, his name was Jinnon”;

that is, the Son, the Son of God; so as the former part of the text sets forth his human birth, this his divine generation; which, cause of the excellency and ineffableness of it, is expressed in the plural number, “goings forth”. So Eliezer<sup>f158</sup>, along with the above mentioned passage in the Psalms, produces this to prove the name of the Messiah before the world was, whose “goings forth [were] from everlasting”, when as yet the world was not created.

**Ver. 3.** *Therefore will he give them up*, etc.] Or “notwithstanding”, as this particle signifies; (see <sup><2124></sup>Hosea 2:14); though all this shall be, yet, previous to the birth of this person, the Lord would give up the Jews to trouble and distress, and into the hands of their enemies; and the time from this prophet to the birth of Christ was a time for the most part of great trouble to, the Jews; not only was their country invaded and their city besieged by Sennacherib in Hezekiah’s time, but, some years after that, they were wholly carried captive into Babylon: and when they returned it was troublesome times with them; they met with many enemies that disturbed them while they were rebuilding the city and temple; and after that they endured much tribulation, in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes, or of the Maccabees; nor were they long in any quiet, nor in any settled state, unto the coming of the Messiah. Or else this is to be understood of what should be after his coming; for though Jesus was born at Bethlehem, according to this plain prophecy, and had all the characters of the Messiah in him, yet the Jews rejected him, and would not have him to reign over them: wherefore he, the Messiah, as Japhet interprets it, gave them up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, and into the hands of their enemies the Romans; by whom they were destroyed or carried captive, and dispersed among the nations; in which condition they still remain, and will, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; so long will Jerusalem be trodden under foot, or the Jews be given up to their will, according to (<sup><2124></sup>Luke 21:24); or, as here expressed,

*until the time [that] she which travaileth hath brought forth*: that is, according to the first sense until the Virgin Mary travailed in birth with the Messiah, and brought forth him her firstborn, (<sup><4025></sup>Matthew 1:25); or according to the latter, until Zion, or, the church of God, travailed in prayer, in the ministry of the word, and brought forth many children to Christ, both among Jews and Gentiles; and the sense is, that the Jews shall be given up to distress and trouble, till the time of their conversion, (see <sup><2307></sup>Isaiah 66:7,8); The Jews have a tradition in their Talmud, that

“the son of David would not come until the kingdom spreads itself over the whole world for nine months; as it is said, “therefore will he give them up until the time that she that travaileth hath brought” forth; which is the time of a woman’s going with child.”

This both Jarchi and Kimchi take notice of. In one place<sup>f159</sup> it is called the kingdom of Aram or Syria; and in another<sup>f160</sup> a blank is left for Edom, that is, Rome; for by the kingdom is meant the Roman empire, and which did extend all over the world before the coming of the Messiah Jesus, as appears from (~~QIII~~ Luke 2:1); as well as from all profane history;

*then the remnant of his brethren shall return to the children of Israel*; that is, the brethren of the Messiah, as Kimchi and Abendana interpret it; who should return with the children of Israel, as both they and Jarchi explain it; to which the Targum agrees. Kimchi’s note is,

““the remnant of his brethren”; they are the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which remained when the ten tribes were carried captive; and the surnames, his brethren, relate to the Messiah.”

So Abendana<sup>f161</sup>,

“and “the remnant his brethren”; they are the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, they shall return with the children of Israel, who are the ten tribes; as if he should say, these and these shall return to their land, and King Messiah shall reign over them; and the surnames, his brethren, respect the Messiah.”

And to the same purpose R. Isaac<sup>f162</sup>,

“the remnant of the brethren of the Messiah, who are the children of Judah and Benjamin, that are left and remain of the calamities and persecutions of the captivities, shall return to their own land, together with the children of Israel, who are the ten tribes.”

Meaning either the remnant, according to the election of grace, among the Gentiles; who with those among the Jews should be converted to Christ in the first times of the Gospel, those immediately following the birth of Christ; the Gospel being preached both to the Jews and Gentiles, and some of both were called and converted, and whom Christ owned as his brethren, and were not ashamed of; (see ~~QIIII~~ Matthew 12:49,50) (~~QIII~~ Hebrews 2:11); or the Lord’s chosen people, and brethren of Christ,



those of, he two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and those of the ten tribes of Israel; who shall join and coalesce together in seeking the Messiah, embracing and professing him, and appointing him the one Head over them, when they will turn to the Lord, and all Israel shall be saved; (see <sup><5104></sup>Jeremiah 50:4 <sup><3011></sup>Hosea 1:11 <sup><5125></sup>Romans 11:25,26).

**Ver. 4.** *And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord*, etc.] The ruler in Israel, before described and prophesied of; the Messiah, as Kimchi himself interprets it, and other Jewish writers. Kimchi's note is,

“after the affliction, the King Messiah shall stand and feed Israel in the strength of the Lord;”

and so R. Isaac<sup>f163</sup> paraphrases the words exactly in the same way: wherefore, as another learned Jew<sup>f164</sup> observes, these expressions evince that the ruler here spoken of can be no other than the Messiah; not Zerubbabel, who never attained to this height and happiness. He is both King and Shepherd, and to each of these the act of feeding is ascribed. The same word, in the Greek language, signifies both to rule and to feed and is used by Matthew, (<sup><4116></sup>Matthew 2:6); and kings are often compared to shepherds. Christ feeds his people, his brethren, his flock, his sheep, and lambs all truly converted ones; and this takes in the whole office of a shepherd, and the care he has of his flock; he takes an exact account of them, goes before them, and leads them out into good pastures; sets under shepherds over them; protects them from, all their enemies; looks after what is lost or driven away; heals the sick, strengthens the weak, binds up the broken, and watches over his flock continually: he feeds them with, himself, the bread of life, with his flesh and blood, which are meat and drink indeed; with the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel; and which are found to be spiritual, savoury, strengthening, satisfying, and soul nourishing food: and he “stands” and does this, being raised from the dead, and possessed of all power in heaven and in earth; which designs not the position of his body, but the ministration of his office, and his alacrity and readiness to perform it, and his constancy in it: and all this “in the strength of the Lord”; in his own strength, as a divine Person, which is the same with the strength of Jehovah; and in the power and strength that is dispensed to him as Mediator; and with his Gospel, the rod of his strength, and in such manner as to defend his flock from all that would devour them:

*in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God*; Jehovah the Father is the God of Christ, as is Mediator; and his name is in him, even the majesty of

it; for, as a divine Person, he has the same nature and perfections with him; and as man, exalted at his right hand, has a name above every name in this world, or that to come; and it is by authority from him, in his office capacity, that he rules and feeds his people, having all judgment committed to him:

*and they shall abide*; that is, his people, his flock, his sheep fed and ruled by him; these shall continue and persevere under his care and keeping; in him, in whom they are chosen and preserved; in his love, from which they can never be separated; in his hands, out of which none can pluck them; in his church, where they shall ever remain; and so may be considered as a promise of the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness to the end: or, “they shall sit”<sup>f165</sup>; quietly and securely, being freed from persecution, with which the Christians were at, ended in the first three centuries: this began to be accomplished in the times of Constantius Chlorus, who helped the Christians in the times of Dioclesian, and with whom the persecutions ended, and peace and prosperity followed:

*for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth*; as, he was in the times of Constantine, and will be again. Christ is great in himself, in, his person and offices; and will appear to be so unto all men, even unto the ends of the earth, when his Gospel shall be preached and spread, everywhere; when his kingdom shall be enlarged, and be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; even then shall he appear to be a great King over all the earth, and, the great Shepherd of the sheep, the man, Jehovah’s fellow; and to have such a flock, and so large, as never any had; when there will be one fold, and one shepherd; for this prophecy respects the latter day glory. Kimchi’s gloss is,

“the name of the Messiah shall be magnified, after the judgment of the wicked.”

**Ver. 5.** *And this [man] shall be the peace*, etc.] The word man is not in the text, only this; and refers to the person before spoken of, who was to be born in Bethlehem, to be the ruler in Israel, that should stand and feed his people, and should be great to the ends of the earth; and is no other than the Messiah, as Kimchi, and other Jewish writers, own, Kimchi’s note is,

“this peace respects the Messiah; for he shall be the cause or author of peace; as it is said, “he shall speak peace unto the Heathen”, (~~390~~ Zechariah 9:10);”

and R. Isaac<sup>f166</sup> expresses his sense of the words in much the same language; and it is an observation the Jews sometimes make, and which they give as a sign of the Messiah's coming,

“when you see a Persian horse bound in the land of Israel, look for the feet of the Messiah;”

which is the sense of (<sup><3885</sup>Micah 5:5); “this shall be the peace, when the Assyrian comes into our land”<sup>f167</sup>, etc. so Jesus the true Messiah is called “our peace”, (<sup><4014</sup>Ephesians 2:14); and is the cause and author of peace, not only between Jew and Gentile, but between God and men; which he has made by the blood of his cross, and speaks and gives peace to men; and he is the author of peace in his churches, whose kingdom is a kingdom of peace, of which there will be an abundance in the latter day; for all which he would not be sufficient was he a mere man; though it was proper he should be a man, that he might have blood to shed, a body to offer up, and in it die to procure peace; and yet be more than a man, God also, to put virtue and efficacy into what he did and suffered to obtain it, as well as to secure and continue the peace of his people, and preserve them from all their enemies:

*when the Assyrian shall come into our land*; not Sennacherib king of Assyria; though by the invasion of Judea, and siege of Jerusalem, he might have lately been concerned in, and by reason of the terror which that had raised in the people; the Assyrian may be here put for any powerful enemy of the people of God in later times; or Satan, and his principalities and powers, even all the powers of darkness Christ our peacemaker engaged with, at the time he made peace by his sufferings and death; and perhaps may chiefly design the Turk, the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel, as Mr. Mede<sup>f168</sup> thinks, that will enter into the land of Judea, in order to take it out of the hands of the Jews, who will be possessed of it upon their conversion to Christ; but he by his instruments will secure to them the possession of it, and their peace and prosperity in it:

*and when he shall tread in our palaces*; the palaces of our princes, and nobles, and great men, at least attempt to do it:

*then shall we raise against him*; the Assyrian, or whatsoever enemy is meant by him: or, “with him”, that is, the Messiah, as Kimchi and others<sup>f169</sup> interpret it. The Targum is,

“then will we appoint over us;”

which sense the above writer wonders at, as being contrary to the Hebrew text:

*seven shepherds, and eight principal men*; that is, many, as the phrase is used in (<sup>2110B</sup>Ecclesiastes 11:2); to which passage Aben Ezra and Kimchi refer us; these are, as the last mentioned writer and others say<sup>f170</sup>, the princes of the Messiah; and, according to the ancient<sup>f171</sup> Jewish Rabbins, the seven shepherds are particularly these, David in the midst, Adam, Seth, Methuselah, on his right hand (Kimchi has it, Seth, Enoch, and Methuselah), and Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, on his left hand; and the eight principal men are, Jesse, Saul, Samuel, Amos, Zephaniah, Zedekiah (in Kimchi and Rabbot it is Hezekiah), Elijah, and the Messiah; but, as Aben Ezra, not fifteen persons are designed, at most but eight, according to this form of speech in (<sup>3105</sup>Proverbs 30:15,18,21,24,29 <sup>3106B</sup>Amos 1:3); etc. Calmet<sup>f172</sup> takes those seven or eight shepherds to be the seven princes confederate with Darius the son of Hystaspes, who killed Smerdis the Magian, who had possessed himself of the empire of the Persians, after the death of Cambyses; but Smerdis was not an Assyrian, nor is the kingdom of Persia here meant, but the land of Judea; and the prophecy respects the times of the Messiah, who should appear there, and where would be raised up men to support his interest: and if conjecture may be allowed, as this may be understood of the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel, the princes of the Messiah, who were raised up, at the prayer and request of the church, to oppose Satan and his emissaries, in the first times of the Gospel; by these may be meant the writers of the New Testament, the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Apostles Peter, James, and Jude, which make the seven shepherds; and if you add to these the Apostle Paul, they will make eight principal men; or rather I should think the seven angels are pointed at, that shall pour out the last plagues on the antichristian states; to which, if another angel is added, that will proclaim the fall of Babylon, the same number will be made up; (see <sup>660E</sup>Revelation 16:1 <sup>660E</sup>18:1); and who will assist the Jews against the Turks, when they shall attempt to dispossess them of their land, they shall again inherit.

**Ver. 6.** *And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword*, etc.] Or “feed<sup>f173</sup> upon it” with the sword, destroy the inhabitants of it; either spiritually subdue the nations of the world to the obedience of Christ, the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; the preaching of the Gospel, the ministry of the apostles, and others, in the Gentile world; (see <sup>470B</sup>2

Corinthians 10:3-5 <sup><4857></sup>Ephesians 6:17); or literally, meaning that the angels of the vials, the Christian princes, shall destroy the Ottoman empire with the sword:

*and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof*; the same with Babylon, the empire of which was first set up by Nimrod, the beginning of whose kingdom was Babel, (<sup><0101></sup>Genesis 10:11); the same with Nebrodas, a name of Bacchus, which is no other than Barchus the son of Chus, as Nimrod was the son of Cush, and Bacchus was a mighty hunter, as he was; all which Bochart <sup>f174</sup> has observed: now his country was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar, that is, the land of Babylon, as the Targum of Onkelos and Jerusalem in (<sup><0100></sup>Genesis 10:10), render it; though some think Nimrod extended his dominions into Assyria; and translate <sup>f175</sup> (<sup><3515></sup>Micah 5:11) “out of that land, he” (that is, Nimrod) “went forth into Assyria, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah”; and the Targum of Jonathan is very express for it, which paraphrases the words thus,

“out of that land went forth Nimrod, and he reigned in Assyria, because he would not be in the counsel of the generation of the division, and he left these four cities; and the Lord gave him a place (or Assyria), and he built four other cities, Nineveh, etc.”

hence some <sup>f176</sup> have thought that the land of Assyria and the land of Nimrod here design one and the same country; but Ashur, in the text in Genesis, seems rather to be the name of a man than of a place, even of the son of Shem so called, from whom the country of Assyria had its name; whereas, if had been so soon in the hands of Nimrod, and so many cities had been built by him in it, it would rather have been called by his name than Ashur’s; and it seems most reasonable to conclude that the cities of Nineveh, etc. were built by the latter, and not the former; and the two countries of Assyria and Nimrod, or Babylon, are very plainly in this text distinguished from one another; though they might at the time of this prophecy be united under Esarhaddon, who was both king of Assyria and Babylon; and at this present time they are both in the hands of the Turks, and in all probability will be until this prophecy is fulfilled in the destruction of them by the Christian princes: the same thing is meant as before; and the word rendered “in the entrances thereof” may as well be translated “with its sword” <sup>f177</sup>; or, as the margin of our Bibles, “with her own naked swords”; so Kimchi and Aben Ezra interpret it:

*thus shall he deliver [us] from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders;* that is, the King Messiah shall work this deliverance, as Kimchi and others<sup>f178</sup> explain it; Christ delivered his people from all their spiritual enemies when he made peace for them; and he will deliver them in the latter day from both Pope and Turk, when he will destroy the man of sin by the breath of his mouth, and dry up the river Euphrates, and cast both beast and false prophet into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; though all that is said in this verse and (<sup><385</sup>Micah 5:5) may have had its accomplishment already, at least in part, in the Saracens and their empire, which begun in the year 623, and who prevailed very much in Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Persia, Egypt, and Africa, and even penetrated into Spain and France, in all which places were Christian churches; and so may be called “our land”, as the churches therein “our palaces”, which these people entered into, trod upon, profaned, or destroyed; and the seven or eight principal men raised against them may be the Christian princes that fought with them, and drove them back, and destroyed their land; such as Hugh the great, brother to Philip king of France; Robert earl of Flanders; Robert earl of Normandy, brother to William the Conqueror, king of England; Stephen earl of Blois; Raymund earl of Tholouse; Godfrey duke of Lorraine, and his brothers Baldwin and Eustachius, and others. These beginning at Nice, where once a famous Christian council was held, and driving the army of Solyman from thence, in the space off our years subdued many provinces of Asia, Lycaonia, Cilicia, Syria, Mesopotamia, and Comagena; and at length having put to flight the Turks, and ejected the Saracens, took Jerusalem, and made Godfrey of Bullein king of it<sup>f179</sup>. Some<sup>f180</sup> have interpreted it of the emperor of Germany, and the seven electors in the empire (for formerly they were no more), happily and with success carrying on a war against the Turks, Tartars, and Saracens, when they broke into Europe; but the former sense seems better; and it is best of all to understand the prophecy of the destruction of the Turk or Ottoman empire in the latter day by the Christian princes.

**Ver. 7.** *And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people,* etc.] The Jews, who will be converted in the latter day, the remnant of them according to the election of grace, as well as all true Israelites, whether Jews or Gentiles, the Lord’s chosen and peculiar people; who, though but a small number in comparison of others, and mean and contemptible in the eyes of men, are such as God has made a reserve of for

himself; and these, though not of the world, yet are in the world, and will be in the several parts of it, but a distinct people from it, and of no account in it; nevertheless will be visible in it, and wonderfully preserved in the midst of it: and will be

*as a dew from the Lord*; both with respect to themselves, being like to dew for the generation of it, which is from above, from heaven, and of God, as their regeneration is; and which secretly and silently falls as the grace of God in regeneration does; and for the number of the drops of it, which are not to be reckoned; and so numerous are the people of God, at least they will be in the latter day, when Christ shall again have the dew of his youth; or such a number of converts, as will be like the drops of the morning dew; as also for the favour, grace, and blessings of God upon them, which are as the dew; and which he himself is as that unto them, so that they themselves are as dew from him, being indulged with his favour; which, as the dew is entirely free, very softening, cooling, and refreshing, as well as fructifying; and having the dews of his grace, or the blessings of it, falling upon them in plenty; (see <sup><3445></sup>Hosea 14:5,6); and with respect to others, among whom they are, and to whom they are as the dew, by their speech, their doctrine, the word ministered by them, which distils like the dew, (<sup><6326></sup>Deuteronomy 32:26); and by their good works, which are profitable unto men; and by their soft and gentle behaviour towards them; and by reason of the many outward blessings they enjoy through them, as Laban did for the sake of Jacob, and Potiphar on the account of Josiah:

*as the showers upon the grass*; which revive, refresh it, and cause it to grow and flourish; or they are like grass, on which the showers fall, and grow up as such in great numbers, and with great verdure and fruitfulness, (<sup><1926></sup>Psalm 72:16);

*that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men*; which seems to be connected with the dew, though it agrees with both dew and rain, which stay not for men's desires or deserts, but descend according to the will of God: and as this regards the people of God, either with respect to themselves; it shows that as they are, as the dew, or as showers and clouds full of rain, either of grace or doctrine compared thereunto; they are not of themselves so, or of men, but of God; and that their dependence is not upon the creature, but upon the Lord for support and supply; and with respect to others, to whom they are beneficial by their doctrine and works; that it is all from the Lord, and owing to his goodness, which makes them a



blessing round about unasked and undeserved; (see <sup>386</sup>Ezekiel 34:26). It may have respect to plenty of Gospel ministers, whose doctrine is as the dew; and which, being attended with the power and Spirit of God, waits not for anything in man, but operates at once secretly and powerfully.

**Ver. 8.** *And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many people*, etc.] The same persons are meant here as before; who are compared to dew and showers of rain, because numerous; and full of blessings in themselves, and useful and beneficial to others: and here are said to be

*as a lion among the beasts of the forest*; strong, mighty, powerful, and courageous, and superior to their enemies, as the lion is strongest among beasts, and keeps all others in awe of him. Some refer this to the times of the Maccabees; when Judas and his brethren behaved with great fortitude and courage, and were victorious, and prevailed over the armies of Antiochus, and others; but it seems rather to belong to the latter day, when the Jews shall be superior to their enemies the Turks, who would disturb them in the possession of their land: and shall be a terror to them,

*as a young lion among the flocks of sheep*; signifying that their enemies shall be no more to them, and no more able to oppose them, than a flock of sheep are to a young lion, or they to resist him The design of the metaphor is; not to signify the harmlessness and innocence of their enemies, but their weakness, and the strength and courage of them;

*who, if he go through*; the flock: on whatsoever he seizes,

*both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver*; brings it to the ground at once, tramples upon it, and tears it in pieces as its prey; and none in the flock, or to whom it belongs, can deliver out of his hand. This will be the case when the Jews shall turn to the Lord, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah shall be at the head of them; though some interpret this of the first times of the Gospel, and take it to be fulfilled in the apostles and first ministers of the word, who were Jews; and who were valiant defenders of truth, and conquerors over the devil and the world, and were the instruments of bringing many into subjection to Christ; but it seems best to apply it to the last times, and not to the converted Jews only, though in the first place; but to all the, spiritual Israel of God, the whole Christian church, which will then be in such happy circumstances.



**Ver. 9.** *Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries,* etc.] O remnant of Jacob or Israel, as the Targum; the church of God; now will be the time that it shall prevail over all the antichristian states; now will the Christian princes pour out the vials of God's wrath upon them; and they shall feel the strength and weight of their hand; which will fall heavy upon them, even to their utter destruction: or thine hand, O Messiah, the ruler in Israel, the man the peace that shall deliver from the Assyrian; and who will be at the head of his church and people, the remnant of Jacob, and destroy their enemies with the sword that proceeds out of his mouth:

*and all thine enemies shall be cut off;* all the enemies of Christ and his church; all the kings of the earth that shall gather against them, the beast and false prophet, with all their followers; (see <sup><699></sup>Revelation 19:19,20).

**Ver. 10.** *And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord,* etc.] When the above things shall be accomplished, even in the Gospel day, made so by the rising of the sun of righteousness; the Gospel dispensation, the latter part of it:

*that I will cut off thy horses out of the midst of thee, and I will destroy thy chariots;* which some take to be an apostrophe to literal Babylon, and to be fulfilled when Cyrus took possession of it; but rather it respects mystical Babylon, and the destruction of that by Christ; but it is best of all to interpret it of the church of Christ, all whose carnal confidences and dependences shall be cut off, and shall trust alone in Christ for salvation; particularly the Jews now converted, who have been used to put their trust in the flesh, and in such things as are here mentioned; but now shall be made to see the folly and vanity of such things, and shall renounce and disclaim them; (see <sup><848></sup>Hosea 14:3); or the sense is, there shall be no more war; horses and chariots shall be no more used in a hostile way; but there shall be perfect peace, all enemies being destroyed, which agrees with (<sup><318></sup>Micah 2:3) (<sup><890></sup>Zechariah 9:10). The Targum is,

“I will cut off the horses of the people from the midst of thee, and destroy their chariots?”

**Ver. 11.** *And I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down all thy strong holds.*] The meaning is, they should not dwell in fortified cities and walled towns; they should have none of these to trust to, nor should they stand in any need of them to defend them, their enemies being subdued; and besides, the Lord would be their strong hold and place of defence, a

wall of fire round about them, but the glory in the midst of them, The phrases are expressive of the greatest tranquillity and safety, and of living in an open air, free and undisturbed; (see <sup><681></sup>Zechariah 2:4,5). The Targum is,

“I will cut off the cities of the people out of thy land, and destroy all their strong fortresses;”

these shall dwell no more there, and be no more offensive and troublesome.

**Ver. 12.** *And I will cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand*, etc.] Such as were formerly practised among the Jews, though forbidden them, and in mystical Babylon, or the antichristian church, whose sorceries are mentioned, (<sup><682></sup>Revelation 9:21 <sup><683></sup>18:23); but nothing of this kind will be found in the Christian church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, in the latter day; all unlawful arts, cheating and juggling in religious matters, will cease, and be no more:

*and thou shalt have no [more] soothsayers*; or diviners, that cast a mist over people’s eyes, and deceived them with false appearances of things; that pretended to know times and seasons, when it was or was not a good day to go abroad, or to make merchandise; that judged by the clouds, and by the position of the heavens, what would come to pass hereafter; and though such sort of men were formerly indulged, connived at, and caressed among the Jews, they should be so no more; nor should they apply to such persons for advice and counsel; nor would they need it, nor should they use it; (see <sup><680></sup>Deuteronomy 18:10,11).

**Ver. 13.** *Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee*, etc.] The former were such as were made of wood or stone; the latter statues, such as were molten or cast, and made of gold, silver, or brass; Such as the Jews sometimes worshipped, and are now found in the apostate church of Rome; but will have no place in the Christian churches, or those so called, in the latter day. The Jews indeed have had no idols or idolatrous worship among them since the Babylonish captivity; and the prophet here speaks, not of what would be found among them, and removed at their conversion; but of what was in his time, or had been, or would be again, but should not be in future time, when they should turn to the Lord, and be like dew among the people; and so we are to understand some following passages. The Targum is,

“I will cut off the images of the people, and their statues:”

*and thou shalt no more worship the work of thine hands*; as not to fall down to idols and worship them, so neither to trust in carnal privileges, ceremonial rites, observances of the traditions of the elders, or any works of righteousness done by them, which they had been prone unto.

**Ver. 14.** *And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee*, etc.]

Planted for idolatrous worship, and which the Jews in the reigns of some of their kings raised, and made use of for such purposes; (see <sup><1163></sup>1 Kings 15:13 <sup><1163></sup>16:33 <sup><1189></sup>18:19); though contrary to the law of God, (<sup><1612></sup>Deuteronomy 16:21); but now there should be nothing of this kind, all idolatry being rooted out of the world. The Targum is,

“I will root out the plantations of the people out of the midst of thee:”

*so will I destroy thy cities*; which some understand of cities given to idolatry; or rather it is to be understood in the same sense as in (<sup><3051></sup>Micah 5:11); though by reason of that, and as something distinct from it, it is better to render the words with the Targum,

“I will destroy thine enemies<sup>f181</sup>.”

**Ver. 15.** *And I will execute vengeance in anger, and fury upon the Heathen*, etc.] Or “nations”<sup>f182</sup>; not the Pagan nations only, but the Papal and Mahometan ones, even all that are enemies to Christ, and his church and people:

*such as they have not heard*; such terrible judgments, and dreadful expressions of divine wrath and fury, by earthquakes, hailstones, etc. as were never known or heard of in the world before; (see <sup><1618></sup>Revelation 16:18-21); or, “which have not heard”<sup>f183</sup>; the people that have not heard and hearkened to the word of God, to the voice of Christ in the Gospel, but have turned a deaf ear to it, and despised it. So the Targum,

“who have not received the doctrine of the law;”

but it is much more agreeable to understand it of the doctrine of the Gospel disobeyed by men, and therefore justly punished; (see <sup><3008></sup>2 Thessalonians 1:8,9).