



The Baptist Standard Bearer, Inc.

NUMBER ONE IRON OAKS DRIVE • PARIS, ARKANSAS 72855

COMMENTARIES

EXPOSITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

JOEL

by John Gill

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth*
— Psalm 60:4

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INTRODUCTION TO JOEL

In some Hebrew Bibles this prophecy is called “Sepher Joel”, the Book of Joel; in the Vulgate Latin version, the Prophecy of Joel; and in the Syriac version, the Prophecy of the Prophet Joel; and the Arabic version, the Prophet Joel; and so the Apostle Peter quotes him, (^{<4216>}Acts 2:16). His name, according to Hillerus ^{F1}, signifies “the Lord is God”; but others derive it from **l ay**, which in “Hiphil” is **l yawh**, and signifies “he willed, acquiesced, or is well pleased, so Abarbinei; and hence Schmidt thinks it answers to Desiderius or Erasmus. According to Isidorus ^{F2}, he was born at Bethoron, in the tribe of Reuben, and died and was buried there; and so says Pseudo-Epiphanius ^{F3}. In what age he lived is not easy to say. Aben Ezra expressly affirms there is no way to know it; and so R. David Ganz ^{F4} says, his time we know not; and likewise Abarbinel. Some think he prophesied about the same time Hoses did, after whom he is next placed; and so Mr. Whiston ^{F5} and, Mr. Bedford ^{F6} make him to prophesy much about the same time with Isaiah and Hoses, about eight hundred years before Christ; but, in the Septuagint version, this book is in the fourth order, and not Hoses, but Amos and Micah, are placed before him; and so the author of Juchasin ^{F7} puts the prophets in this order, first Hoses, then Amos, next Isaiah, then Micah, and after him Joel. Some of the Jewish writers, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abendana relate, make Joel contemporary with Elisha, and say he prophesied in the days of Jehoram the son of Ahab, when the seven years’ famine called for came upon the land, (^{<1281>}2 Kings 8:1). Both in Seder Olam Rabba and Zuta ^{F8} he is placed in the reign of Manasseh; and so in Hilchot Gedolot, as Jarchi observes. And it seems indeed as if he prophesied after the ten tribes were carried captive, which was in the sixth year of Hezekiah’s reign, since no mention is made of Israel but with respect to future times, only of Judah and Jerusalem, But, be it when it will that he prophesied, there is no doubt to be made of the authenticity of this book, which is confirmed by the quotations of two apostles out of two: Peter and Paul, (^{<4216>}Acts 2:16 ^{<5013>}Romans 10:13).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO JOEL 1

This chapter describes a dreadful calamity upon the people of the Jews, by locusts and, caterpillars, and drought. After the title of the book, (²⁰⁰¹ Joel 1:1); old men are called upon to observe this sore judgment to their children, that it might be transmitted to the latest posterity, as that the like to which had not been seen and heard of, (²⁰⁰² Joel 1:2-4); and drunkards to awake and weep, because the vines were destroyed, and no wine could be made for them, (²⁰⁰³ Joel 1:5-7); and not only husbandmen and vinedressers, but the priests of the Lord, are called to mourn, because such destruction, was made in the fields and vineyards, that there were no meat nor drink offering brought into the house of the Lord, (²⁰⁰⁴ Joel 1:8-13); wherefore a general and solemn fast is required throughout the land, because of the distress of man and beast, (²⁰⁰⁵ Joel 1:14-18); and the chapter is concluded with the resolution of the prophet to cry unto the Lord, on account of this calamity, (²⁰⁰⁶ Joel 1:19,20).

Ver. 1. *The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel.*] Who this Pethuel was is not known; Jarchi takes him to be the same with Samuel the prophet, who had a son of this name, (²⁰⁰⁷ 1 Samuel 8:2); and gives this reason for his being called Pethuel, because in his prayer he persuaded God; but the long span of time will by no means admit of this, nor the character of Samuel's son agree with Joel; and therefore is rightly denied by Aben Ezra, who observes, however, that this man was an honourable man, and therefore his name is mentioned; and gives this as a rule, that whenever any prophet mentions the name of his father, he was honourable. Perhaps, it is here observed, to distinguish him from another of the same name; and there was one of this name, Joel, a high priest in the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, according to Seder Olam Zuta ^{F9} and Abarbinel ^{F10}; in whose time Joel is by some thought to prophesy.

Ver. 2. *Hear this, ye old men,* etc.] What the prophet was about to relate, concerning the consumption of the fruits of the earth, by various sorts of creatures, and by a drought; and these are called upon to declare if ever the like had been known or heard of by them; who by reason of age had the

greatest opportunities of knowledge of this sort, and could remember what they had heard or seen, and would faithfully relate it: this maybe understood of elders in office, as well as in age;

and give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land; or “earth”, not of the whole earth; but of the land of Judea; who were more particularly concerned in this affair, and therefore are required to listen attentively to it:

hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? that is, not the selfsame thing, but anything equal to it; a judgment of the same kind and nature, and of the same degree. By this question it seems the like had never been in the memory of any man living; nor in former times, in the days of their ancestors, as could be averted upon report; or attested on the credit of annals, chronicles, or other methods of conveying the history of ages past. As for the plague of locusts in Egypt, though they were such as; never find been, nor would be there any more; yet such or greater, and more in number than those, might be in Judea; besides, they continued but a few, lays at most, these four years successively, as Kimchi observes; and who thinks that in Egypt there was but one sort of locusts, here four; but the passage he quotes in (⁴⁷⁸⁶Psalm 78:46); contradicts him; to which may be added (⁴⁹⁵⁴Psalm 105:34).

Ver. 3. *Tell ye your children of it*, etc.] Give them a particular account of it; describe the creatures and their number as near as you can; say when they begun and how long they continued, and what devastations they made, and what was the cause and reason of such a judgment, your sins and transgressions:

and [let] your children [tell] their children, and their children other generation; or, “to the generation following”^{F11}; let it be handed down from one generation to another that it may be a caution to future posterity how they behave and lest they bring down the like awful judgments on them. What this referred to was as follows:

Ver. 4. *That which the palmer worm hath left hath the locust eaten*, etc.] These, with the two following, are four kinds of, locusts as Jarchi observes; though it is difficult to fix the particular species designed; they seem to have their names from some peculiar properties belonging to them; as the first of these from their sheering or cropping off the fruits and leaves of trees; and the second from the vast increase of them, the multitude they bring forth and the large numbers they appear in:

and that which the locust hath left hath the canker worm eaten; which in the Hebrew language is called from its licking up the fruits of the earth, by which it becomes barren:

and that which the canker worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten; which has its name from wasting and consuming all that comes in its way: now these came not together, but followed one another; not one one year, and another the second, and so on throughout four years, as Kimchi thinks; for though the calamity lasted some years as is manifest from (³⁰²⁵Joel 2:25); yet it is not reasonable, that, for instance what the palmer worm left the first year should remain in the fields and vineyards, on the fig trees and vines till the next year for the locust to consume and is on; but rather these all appeared in succession in one and the same year; and so what the palmer worm left having eaten up what was most agreeable to them, the locust came and devoured what they had left; and then what they left was destroyed by the canker worm, which fed on that which was most grateful to them; and last of all came the caterpillar, and consumed all the others had left; and this might be continued for years successively: when this calamity was, we have no account in sacred history; whether it was in the seven years' famine in the days of Elisha, or the same with what Amos speaks of, (³⁰⁰⁶Amos 4:6-9); is not easy to say: and though it seems to be literally understood, as the drought later mentioned, yet might be typical of the enemies of the Jews succeeding one another in the destruction of them. Not of the four monarchies, the Babylonians, Persians, Grecians, and Romans, as Lyra and Abarbinel; since the Persians particularly never entered into the land of Judea and wasted it; though this is the sense of the ancient Jews, as Jerom relates; for he says the Hebrews interpret the "palmer worm" of the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Chaldeans, who, coming from one climate of the world, destroyed both the ten and the two tribes, that is, all the people of Israel: the locust they interpret of the Medes and Persians, who, having overturned the Chaldean empire, carried the Jews captive: the "canker worm" is the Macedonians, and all the successors of Alexander; especially King Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, who like a canker worm sat in Judea, and devoured all the remains of the former kings, under whom were the wars of the Maccabees: the "caterpillar" they refer to the Roman empire, the fourth and last that oppressed the Jews, and drove them out of their borders. Nor of the several kings of Assyria and Babylon, who followed one another, and wasted first the ten tribes, and then the other two, as Tiglathpileser,

Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar, so Theodoret; since this prophecy only relates to the two tribes. Rather therefore this may point at the several invasions and incursions of the Chaldean army into Judea, under Nebuchadnezzar and his generals; first, when he came up against Jerusalem, and made Jehoiakim tributary to him; a second time, when he carried Jehoiachin and his family into Babylon, with a multitude of the Jews, and their wealth; a third time, when he besieged Jerusalem, and took it, and Zedekiah the king, and carried him captive; and a fourth time, when Nebuzaradan came and burnt the temple, and the houses of Jerusalem, and broke down the walls of it, and cleared the land of its inhabitants and riches; see (⁴²⁴⁰2 Kings 24:1-25:30).

Ver. 5. *Awake, ye drunkards, and weep: and howl, all ye drinkers of wine,* etc.] Who are used to neither, either to awake or to howl, being very prone to drowsiness upon their drinking bouts, and to mirth and jollity in them; but now should be awake, and sober enough, not as being a virtue in them, but through want of wine; and for the same reason should howl, as follows:

because of the new wine, for it is cut off from your mouth; the locusts having spoiled the vines and eaten the grapes, no new wine could be made, and so none could be brought in cups to their mouths; nor they drink it in bowls, as they had used to do; and which, being sweet and grateful to their taste, they were wont to drink in great abundance, till they were inebriated with it; but now there was a scarcity, their lips were dry, but not their eyes. The word, Kimchi says, signifies all liquor which is squeezed by bruising or treading.

Ver. 6. *For a nation is come up upon my land,* etc.] A nation of locusts, so called from their great numbers, and coming from foreign parts; just as the ants are called a “people”, and the conies a “folk”, (⁴¹⁸⁵Proverbs 30:25,26); and which were an emblem of the nation of the Chaldeans, which came up from Babylon, and invaded the land of Judea; called by the Lord “my land”, because he had chosen it for the habitation of his people; here he himself had long dwelt, and had been served and worshipped in it: though Kimchi thinks these are the words of the inhabitants of the land, or of the prophet; but if it can be thought they are any other than the words of God, they rather seem to be expressed by the drunkards in particular, howling for want of wine, and observing the reason of it:

strong, and without number; this description seems better to agree with the Assyrians or Chaldeans, who were a mighty and powerful people, as well

as numerous; though locusts, notwithstanding they are weak, singly taken, yet, coming in large bodies, carry all before them, and there is no stopping them:

whose teeth [are] the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion; or “the grinders”^{F12} of such an one; being hard, strong, and sharp, to bite off the tops, boughs, and branches of trees: Pliny^{F13} says, locusts will gnaw with their teeth the doors of houses; so the teeth of locusts are described in (ⲉⲓⲃⲏⲛ Revelation 9:8); this may denote the strength, cruelty, and voraciousness of the Chaldean army.

Ver. 7. *He hath laid my vine waste,* etc.] That is, the locust, which spoiled the vines in Judea, the singular being put for the plural, by gnawing the branches, biting the tops of them, and devouring the leaves and the fruit; and so not only left them bare and barren, but destroyed them: this may emblematically represent the Assyrians or Babylonians wasting the land of Judea, the vine and vineyard of the Lord of hosts; (see ⲉⲓⲁⲓⲁⲓⲁ Isaiah 5:1-5);

and barked my fig tree; gnawed off the bark of them; locusts are not only harmful to vines, as is hinted by Theocritus^{F14}, but to fig trees also: Pliny^{F15} speaks of fig trees in Boeotia gnawed by locusts, which budded again; and mentions it as something wonderful and miraculous that they should: and yet Sanctius observes, that these words cannot be understood properly of the locusts, since fig trees cannot be harmed by the bite or touch of them; which, besides their roughness, have an insipid bitter juice, which preserves them from being gnawed by such creatures; and the like is observed of the cypress by Vitruvius^{F16}; but the passage out of Pliny shows the contrary. Some interpret it of a frore or scum they left upon the fig tree when they gnawed it, such as Aben Ezra says is upon the face of the water; and something like this is left by caterpillars on the leaves of trees, which destroy them;

he hath made it clean bare; stripped it of its leaves and fruit, and bark also:

and cast [it] away; having got out all the juice they could:

the branches thereof are made white; the bark being gnawed off, and all the greenness and verdure of them dried up; so trees look, when this is their case: and thus the Jews were stripped by the Chaldeans of all their wealth and treasure, and were left bare and naked, and as the scum and offscouring of all things.

Ver. 8. *Lament like a virgin*, etc.] This is not the continuation of the prophet's speech to the drunkards; but, as Aben Ezra observes, he either speaks to himself, or to the land the Targum supplies it, O congregation of Israel; the more religious and godly part of the people are here addressed; who were concerned for the pure worship of God, and were as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ, though not yet come, and for whom they were waiting; these are called upon to lament the calamities of the times in doleful strains, like a virgin:

girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth; either as one that had been betrothed to a young man, but not married, he dying after the espousals, and before marriage; which must be greatly distressing to one that passionately loved him; and therefore, instead of her nuptial robes, prepared to meet him and be married in, girds herself with sackcloth; a coarse hairy sort of cloth, as was usual, in the eastern countries, to put on in token of mourning: or as one lately married to a young man she dearly loved, and was excessively fond of, and lived extremely happy with; but, being suddenly snatched away from her by death, puts on her widow's garments, and mourns not in show only, but in reality; having lost in her youth her young husband, she had the strongest affection for: this is used to express the great lamentation the people are called unto in this time of their distress.

Ver. 9. *The meat offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the Lord*, etc.] The meat offering was made of fine flour, oil, and frankincense; and the drink offering was of wine; and, because of the want of corn and wine, these were not brought to the temple as usual; and which was matter of great grief to religious persons, and especially to the priests, as follows:

the priests, the Lord's ministers, mourn; partly because they had no work to do, and could not answer to their character, the ministers of the Lord, in ministering about holy things, and bringing the sacrifices and offerings of the people to him; and partly because of their want of food, their livelihood greatly depending on the offerings brought, part of which belonged to them, and on which they and their families lived.

Ver. 10. *The field is wasted*, etc.] By the locust, that eat up all green things, the grass and herbs, the fruit and leaves of trees; and also by the Chaldeans trampling on it with their horses, and the increase of which became fodder for them:

the land mourneth; being destitute, nothing growing upon it, and so looked dismally, and of a horrid aspect; or the inhabitants of it, for want of provision:

for the corn is wasted; by the locusts, and so by the Assyrian or Chaldean army, before it came to perfection:

the new wine is dried up: in the grape, through the drought after mentioned: or, “is ashamed”^{F17}; not answering the expectations of men, who saw it in the cluster, promising much, but failed:

the oil languisheth; or “sickens”^{F18}; the olive trees withered; the olives fell off, as the Targum, and so the oil failed: the corn, wine, and oil, are particularly mentioned, not only as being the chief support of human life, as Kimchi observes, and so the loss of them must be matter of lamentation to the people in general; but because of these the meat and drink offerings were, and therefore the priests in particular had reason to mourn.

Ver. 11. *Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen*, etc.] Tillers of the land, who have took a great deal of pains in cultivating the earth, dunging, ploughing, and sowing it; confusion may cover you, because of your disappointment, the increase not answering to your expectations and labours:

howl, O ye vinedressers; that worked in the vineyards, set the vines, watered and pruned them, and, when they had done all they could to them, were dried up with the drought, or devoured by the locusts, as they were destroyed by the Assyrians or Chaldeans; and therefore had reason to howl and lament, all their labour being lost:

for the wheat and for the barley: because the harvest of the field is perished; this belongs to the husbandmen, is a reason for their shame and blushing, because the wheat and barley were destroyed before they were ripe; and so they had neither wheat nor barley harvest. The words, by a transposition, would read better, and the sense be clearer, “thus, be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen, for the wheat and for the barley: because the harvest”, etc. “howl, O ye vine dressers”; for what follows:

Ver. 12. *The vine is dried up*, etc.] Withered away, stripped of its leaves and fruits, and its sap and moisture gone: or, “is ashamed”^{F19}; to see itself in this condition, and not answer the expectation of its proprietor and dresser:

and the fig tree languisheth; sickens and dies, through the bite of the locusts:

the pomegranate tree: whose fruit is delicious, and of which wine was made: the palm tree also; which bears dates:

and the apple tree; that looks so beautiful, when either in bloom, or laden with fruit, and whose fruit is very grateful to the palate; so that both what were for common use and necessary food, and what were for delight and pleasure, were destroyed by these noisome creatures:

[even] all the trees of the field are withered; for locusts not only devour the leaves and fruits of trees, but hurt the trees themselves; burn them up by touching them, and cause them to wither away and die, both by the saliva and dung, which they leave upon them, as Bochart, from various authors, has proved:

because joy is withered away from the sons of men; this is not given as a reason of the above trees dried up and withered, but of the lamentation of the vinedressers and husbandmen: or else the particle *yk* is merely expletive, or may be rendered, “therefore”, or “truly”, or “surely”^{F20}, “joy is withered”, or “ashamed”; it blushes to appear, as it used to do at the time of harvest; but now there was no harvest, and so no joy expressed, as usually was at such times; (see ^{200B}Isaiah 9:3).

Ver. 13. *Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests*, etc.] Prepare and be ready to raise up lamentation and mourning; or gird yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn in that, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi supply the words; (see ^{200B}Jeremiah 4:8);

howl, ye ministers of the altar; who served there, by laying on and burning the sacrifices, or offering incense:

come, lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God; that is, come into the house of the Lord, as Kimchi; into the court of the priests, and there lie all night, in the sackcloth girded with; putting up prayers to God, with weeping and lamentations, that he would avert the judgments that were come or were coming upon them:

for the meat offering and the drink offering are withholden from the house of your God; (see Gill on ^{200B}Joel 1:9”).

Ver. 14. *Sanctify yea a fast*, etc.] This is spoken to the priests, whose business it was to appoint a fast, as the Targum renders it; or to set apart a time for such religious service, as the word signifies; and to keep it holy themselves, and see that it was so kept by others: Kimchi interprets it, prepare the people for a fast; give them notice of it, that they may be prepared for it:

call a solemn assembly; of all the people of the land later mentioned: or, “proclaim a restraint”^{F21}; a time of ceasing, as a fast day should be from all servile work, that attendance may be given to the duties of it, prayer and humiliation:

gather the elders: meaning not those in age, but in office:

[*and*] *all the inhabitants of the land*; not the magistrates only, though first and principally, as examples, who had been deeply concerned in guilt; but the common people also, even all of them:

[*into*] *the house of the Lord your God*; the temple, the court of the Israelites, where they were to go and supplicate the Lord, when such a calamity as this of locusts and caterpillars were upon them; and where they might hope the Lord would hear them, and remove his judgments from them, (^{<1087>}1 Kings 8:37);

and cry unto the Lord; in prayer, with vehemence and earnestness of soul.

Ver. 15. *Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord [is] at hand*, etc.] A time of severer and heavier judgments than these of the locusts, caterpillars, etc. which were a presage and emblem of greater ones, even of the total destruction of their city, temple, and nation, either by the Chaldeans, or by the Romans, or both:

and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come; unawares, suddenly, and irresistibly: there is in the Hebrew text an elegant play on words, which may be rendered, as “wasting from the waster”, or “destruction from the destroyer, shall it come”^{F22}; even from the almighty God, who is able to save and destroy, and none can deliver out of his hands; (see ^{<2336>}Isaiah 13:6); the word signifies one powerful and victorious, as Aben Ezra observes; and so it does in the Arabic language.

Ver. 16. *Is not the meat cut off before our eyes?* etc.] Such an interrogation most strongly affirms; it was a matter out of all question, they

could not but see it with their eyes; it was a plain case, and not to be denied, that every eatable thing, or that of which food was wont to be made, was cut off by the locusts, or the drought, or by the Assyrian or Chaldean army:

[yea], joy and gladness from the house of our God; the harvest being perished, there were no firstfruits brought to the temple, which used to be attended with great joy; and the corn and vines being wasted, no meat offerings made of fine flour, nor drink offerings of wine, were offered, which used to make glad God and man; nor any other sacrifices, on which the priests and their families lived, and were matter of joy to them; and these they ate of in the temple, or in courts adjoining to it. So Philo^{F23} the Jew says of the ancient Jews, that

“having prayed and offered sacrifices, and appeased the Deity, they washed their bodies and souls; the one in lavers, the other in the streams of the laws, and right instruction; and being cheerful, turned themselves to their food, not going home oftentimes, but remaining in the holy places where they sacrificed; and as mindful of the sacrifices, and reverencing the place, they kept a feast truly holy, not shining either in word or deed.”

Ver. 17. *The seed is rotten under their clods,* etc.] Or “grains”^{F24} of wheat or barley, which had been sown, and, for want of rain, putrefied and wasted away under the clods of earth, through the great drought; so that what with locusts, which cropped that that did bud forth, and with the drought, by reason of which much of the seed sown came to nothing, an extreme famine ensued: the Targum is,

“casks of wine rotted under their coverings:”

the garners are desolate; the “treasuries”^{F25}, or storehouses, having nothing in them, and there being nothing to put into them; Jarchi makes these to be peculiar for wine and oil, both which failed, (²⁰¹⁰ Joel 1:10);

the barns are broken down; in which the wheat and barley had used to be laid up; but this judgment of the locusts and drought continuing year after year, the walls fell down, and, no care was taken to repair them, there being no use for them; these were the granaries, and, as Jarchi, for wheat particularly:

for the corn is withered; that which sprung up withered and dried away, through the heat and drought: or was “ashamed”^{F26}; not answering the expectation of the sower.

Ver. 18. *How do the beasts groan?* etc.] For want of fodder, all green grass and herbs being eaten up by the locusts; or devoured, or trampled upon, and destroyed, by the Chaldeans; and also for want of water to quench their thirst:

the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; the larger cattle, as oxen; these were in the utmost perplexity, not knowing where to go for food or drink:

yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate; which have shepherds to lead and direct them to pastures, and can feed on commons, where the grass is short, which other cattle cannot; yet even these were in great distress, and wasted away, and were consumed for want of nourishment.

Ver. 19. *O Lord, to thee will I cry*, etc.] Or pray, as the Targum; with great vehemency and earnestness, commiserating the case of man and beast: these are the words of the prophet, resolving to use his interest at the through of grace in this time of distress, whatever others did:

for the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness; or, “of the plain”^{F27} though in the wildernesses of Judea, there were pastures for cattle: Kimchi interprets them of the shepherds’ tents or cotes, as the word^{F28} is sometimes used; which were will not to be pitched where there were pastures for their flocks: and so the Targum renders it, “the habitations of the wilderness”; these, whether pastures or habitations, or both, were destroyed by fire, the pastures by the locusts, as Kimchi; which, as Pliny^{F29} says, by touching burn the trees, herbs, and fruits of the earth; (see ~~298B~~ Joel 2:3); or by the Assyrians or Chaldeans, who by fire and sword consumed all in their way; or by a dry burning blasting wind, as Lyra; and so the Targum interprets it of a strong east wind like fire: it seems rather to design extreme heat and excessive drought, which burn up all the produce of the earth:

and the flame hath burnt all the trees of the field; which may be understood of flashes of lightning, which are common in times of great heat and drought; (see ~~388A~~ Psalm 83:14).

Ver. 20. *The beasts of the field cry also unto thee*, etc.] As well as the prophet, in their way; which may be mentioned, both as a rebuke to such who had no sense of the judgments upon them, and called not on the Lord; and to express the greatness of the calamity, of which the brute creatures were sensible, and made piteous moans, as for food, so for drink; panting thorough excessive heat and vehement thirst, as the hart, after the water brooks, of which this word is only used, (~~1941~~ Psalm 42:1); but in vain:

for the rivers of waters are dried up; not only springs, and rivulets and brooks of water, but rivers, places where were large deep waters, as Aben Ezra explains it; either by the Assyrian army, the like Sennacherib boasts (~~2375~~ Isaiah 37:25); and is said to be done by the army of Xerxes, wherever it came; or rather by the excessive heat and scorching beams of the sun, by which such effects are produced:

and the fire hath devoured the pastures of the wilderness; (see Gill on “~~2019~~ Joel 1:19”); and whereas the word rendered pastures signifies both “them” and “habitations” also; and, being repeated, it may be taken in one of the senses in (~~2019~~ Joel 1:19); and in the other here: and so Kimchi who interprets it before of “tents”, here explains it of grassy places in the wilderness, dried up, as if the sun had consumed them.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO JOEL 2

In this chapter a further account is given of the judgment of the locusts and caterpillars, or of those who are designed by them, (²⁰¹¹ Joel 2:1-11); the people of the Jews are called to repentance, humiliation, and fasting, urged from the grace and goodness of God, his jealousy and pity for his people, and the answer of prayer that might be expected from him upon this, even to the removal of the calamity, (²⁰¹² Joel 2:12-20); a prophecy of good things, both temporal and spiritual, in the times of the Messiah, is delivered out as matter and occasion of great joy, (²⁰²¹ Joel 2:21-27); and another concerning the effusion of the Spirit, which was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, (²⁰²⁸ Joel 2:28-29); and the chapter is concluded with the judgments and desolations that should come upon the land of Judea after this, for their rejection of Christ, though the remnant according to the election of grace should be delivered and saved from the general destruction, (²⁰³⁰ Joel 2:30-32).

Ver. 1. *Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain,* etc.] This is spoken to the priests, whose business it was to blow the trumpets for calling solemn assemblies to meet in Zion, the temple built there, called from thence the holy mountain of God. Here the trumpet is ordered to be blown with a broken quivering voice, a tarantantara, to give notice of approaching danger by the locusts, or those enemies signified by them, and to prepare for it, and return to God by repentance;

let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; at the judgments of God coming upon them, and the alarm of them:

for the day of the Lord cometh, for [it is] nigh at hand; the time fixed by him to punish a wicked people, and to pour out his wrath and vengeance on them; the day of his visitation, not in love, but in anger.

Ver. 2. *A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness,* etc.] Alluding to the gloomy and thick darkness caused by the locusts, which sometimes come in prodigious numbers, like thick clouds, and darken the air; so the land of Egypt was darkened by them,

(^{<2105}Exodus 10:15); historians and travellers relate, as Bochart ^{F30} has shown, that these creatures will fly like a cloud, and darken the heavens at noonday, cover the sun, and hinder the rays of it from touching the earth; though all these phrases may be expressive of great afflictions and calamities, which are often in Scripture signified by darkness, as prosperity is by light; (see ^{<2102}Isaiah 8:22 9:1);

as the morning spread upon the mountains; as the morning light, when it first appears, diffuses itself in a moment throughout the earth, and is first seen on the tops of the mountains ^{F31}; so these locusts, and this calamity threatened, should suddenly and at once come, and be spread over the whole land; and which could no more be resisted than the morning light. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, in connection with the next clause, “as the morning spread upon the mountains, a people much and mighty”; but the accents will not admit of it; though it may seem a little improper that the same thing should be as a dark day, and: the morning light; wherefore Cocceius understands the whole of the day of Christ, which was light to many nations, and darkness to the wicked Jews:

a great people and a strong; numerous and mighty, many in number, mighty in strength; so the locusts are represented as a nation and people for might and multitude, (^{<2106}Joel 1:6); an emblem of the Chaldeans and Babylonians, who were a large and powerful people:

there hath not been ever the like, neither shall any more after it, [even] to the years of many generations; that is, in the land of Judea; otherwise there might have been the like before in other places, as in Egypt, and since in other countries. Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, account for it thus; that it was never known, before or since, that four kinds of locusts came together; as for the plague of Egypt, there was but one sort of them, they say; but it is best to understand it of the like not having been in the same country: and such a numerous and powerful army as that of the Chaldeans had not been in Judea, and made such havoc and desolation as that did; nor would any hereafter, for many generations, even until the Romans came and took away their place and nation.

Ver. 3. *A fire devoureth before them, and behind them aflame burneth,* etc.] This is not to be understood of the heat of the sun, or of the great drought that went before and continued after the locusts; but of them themselves, which were like a consuming fire; wherever they came, they devoured all green grass, herbs, and leaves of trees, as fire does stubble;

they sucked out the juice and moisture of everything they came at, and what they left behind shrivelled up and withered away, as if it had been scorched with a flame of fire: and so the Assyrians and Chaldeans, they were an emblem of, destroyed all they met with, by fire and sword; cut up the corn and herbage for forage; and what they could not dispense with they set fire to, and left it burning. Sanctius thinks this refers to fire, which the Chaldeans worshipped as God, and carried before their armies as a sacred and military sign; but this seems not likely:

the land [is] as the garden of Eden before them; abounding with fields and vineyards, set with fruitful trees, planted with all manner of pleasant plants, and all kind of corn growing upon it, and even resembling a paradise:

and behind them a desolate wilderness; all green grass eaten up, the corn of the field devoured, the vines and olives destroyed, the leaves and fruit of them quite gone, and the trees themselves barked; so that there was just the same difference between this country before the calamities described came upon it, and what it was after, as between the garden of Eden, or a paradise, and the most desolate wilderness; such ravages were made by the locusts, and by those they resembled:

yea, and nothing shall escape them; no herb: plant, or tree, could escape the locusts; nor any city, town, or village, nor scarce any particular person, could escape the Chaldean army; but was either killed with the sword, or carried captive, or brought into subjection. The Targum interprets it of no deliverance to the ungodly.

Ver. 4. *The appearance of them [is] as the appearance of horses*, etc.] in their running, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; they came with, as much swiftness and eagerness, with as much fierceness and courage, as horses rush into the battle. Bochart^{F32} has shown, from various writers, that the head of a locust is in shape like that of a horse; and Theodoret on the text observes, that whoever thoroughly examines the head of a locust will easily perceive that it is very like the head of a horse; (see ~~607~~ Revelation 9:7). The Chaldeans are often represented as strong and mighty, fierce and furious, and riding on horses exceeding swift, (~~2413~~ Jeremiah 4:13 5:15 ~~3006~~ Habakkuk 1:6-8);

and as horsemen, so shall they run; with great agility and swiftness. The particle “as” is observed by some, against those interpreters that apply this wholly to the enemies of the Jews, and not the locusts; and it seems indeed

best to favour them; but Theodoret observes, that the “as” here may be taken, not as a note of similitude, but as used for the increase and vehemency of the expression.

Ver. 5. *Like the noise of chariots on the tops of that mountains shall they leap*, etc.] The motion of the locusts is leaping from place to place; for which the locusts have legs peculiarly made, their hindermost being the longest; wherefore Pliny^{F33} observes, that insects which have their hindermost legs long leap locusts; to which agrees the Scripture description of them: “which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth; even those of them ye may eat; the locust after his kind”, (^{<812>}Leviticus 11:21,22); which words, as Dr. Shaw^{F34}, observes, may bear this construction: “which have knees upon” or “above their [hinder] legs, to leap withal upon the earth”; and he observes, that the **hbrah**, “locust”, has the two hindermost of its legs or feet much stronger, larger, and longer, than any of the foremost; in them the knee, or the articulation of the leg and thigh, is distinguished by a remarkable bending or curvature, whereby it is able, whenever prepared to jump, to spring and raise itself with great force and activity; and this fitly resembles the jumping of chariots on mountains and hills, which are uneven, and usually have stones lie scattered about, which, with the chains and irons about chariots, cause a great rattling; and the noise of locusts is compared to the noise of these, which is represented as very great; some say it is to be heard six miles off, as Remigius on the place; and Pliny says^{F35}, they make such a noise with their wings when they fly, that they are thought to be other winged fowls; (see ^{<699>}Revelation 9:9). Chariots were made use of in war, and the Chaldeans are said to have chariots which should come like a whirlwind, (^{<2413>}Jeremiah 4:13);

like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble; as they are before compared to fire, and a flame of fire that devoured all things as easily as the fire devours stubble, so here to the crackling noise of it; (see ^{<2006>}Ecclesiastes 7:6);

as a strong people set in battle array: that is, as the noise of a mighty army prepared for battle, just going to make the onset, when they lift up their voices aloud, and give a terrible shout; for this clause, as the other two, refer to the noise made by the locusts in their march; an emblem of the terribleness of the Chaldeans in theirs, who were heard before they were seen.

Ver. 6. *Before their face the people shall be much pained*, etc.] Or, “at their presence”; at the sight of them they shall be in pain, as a woman in travail; into such distress an army of locusts would throw them, since they might justly fear all the fruits of the earth would be devoured by them, and they should have nothing left to live upon; and a like consternation and pain the army of the Assyrians or Chaldeans upon sight filled them with, as they expected nothing but ruin and destruction from them:

all faces shall gather blackness; like that of a pot, as the word ^{F36} signifies; or such as appears in persons dying, or in fits and swoons; and this here, through fear and hunger; (see Na 2:10 ^{<2018>} Lamentations 4:8 5:10).

Ver. 7. *They shall run like mighty men*, etc.] Like men of war, in a hostile way, as soldiers run upon their enemy with undaunted courage and bravery. Bochart from Pisidas describes the locusts’ manner of fighting, who says, they strike not standing, but running:

they shall climb the wall like men of war; scale the walls of cities as besiegers do; walls and bulwarks cannot keep them out; all places are accessible to them, walled cities, towns, yea, even houses, (^{<2016>} Exodus 10:6);

and they shall march everyone on his ways; in his proper path, following one another, and keeping just distance:

and they shall not break their ranks; or “pervert their ways”, as the word signifies in the Arabic language, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, observe; that is, decline not from their paths, as the Septuagint version; proceed in an orderly way, keep rank and file; so they are said to go forth in bands, (^{<1817>} Proverbs 30:27); and to encamp, (Na 3:17). Jerom on the text relates what he saw with his own eyes:

“this we lately saw (says he) in this province (Palestine); for when swarms of locusts came, and filled the air between heaven and earth, they flew in such order, by the disposition and command of God, that they kept their place like chequered squares in a pavement fixed by the hands of artificers; so as not to decline a point, nor even I may say a nail’s breadth;”

they keep as exact order as if military discipline was known and observed by them. Some render it, “they shall not ask their way” ^{F37}; being unconcerned about it, moving on in a direct line securely.

Ver. 8. *Neither shall one thrust another*, etc.] Press upon another, thrust him out of his place, or push him forward, or any ways straiten and distress him, or in the least hinder him in his progress:

they shall walk everyone in his path; or “highway”^{F38}; everyone should have his path, and keep in it, and it should be as roomy to him as if he had a highway to walk in by himself, and in which he could not err:

and when they shall fall upon the sword; on which they would pitch without any fear or dread of it:

they shall not be wounded: or “cut to pieces”^{F39} by it; it not being easy for the sword to pierce and cut them, through the smoothness and smallness of their bodies; (see ⁽⁶⁰⁹⁾Revelation 9:9); and besides, their numbers being so great, the loss of a few by the use of a sword, or a dart, or any such flying projectile, as the word^{F40} signifies, would be of little consequence, and avail very little to the utter rout, or cutting of them in pieces. Kimchi observes that the word signifies haters of gain; and to this sense Jarchi explains it; and so the Targum,

“they go to the place whither they are sent, they slay, and receive not mammon;”

they are not, as other enemies, to be appeased by money, as Kimchi interprets it. The Targum is, they are not to be bribed, as soldiers sometimes may be, and so depart; (see ⁽²³¹⁷⁾Isaiah 13:17); and to this sense are other versions^{F41}.

Ver. 9. *They shall run to and fro in the city*, etc.] Leap about from place to place, as locusts do; (see ⁽²³⁰⁴⁾Isaiah 33:4); and as the Chaldeans did when they became masters of the city of Jerusalem; they ran about from place to place to seize upon their spoil and plunder:

they shall run upon the wall; which before they climbed, now they shall run upon, and go from tower to tower, as the Chaldeans did, and broke clown the walls and fortifications:

they shall climb up upon the houses, and enter in at the windows, like a thief; so the locusts entered into the houses of the Egyptians, (⁽¹⁰⁰⁶⁾Exodus 10:6); and Pliny says^{F42}, they will eat through everything, and even the doors of houses. Theodoret on the place observes, that not only this may be done by enemies, what is here said,

“but even [we have often seen] it done by locusts; for not only flying, but even creeping up the walls, they enter into houses at the windows.”

Ver. 10. *The earth shall quake before them*, etc.] The inhabitants of it, because of the desolating judgments they bring with them, and those enemies that are signified by them:

the heavens shall tremble; being obscured by them:

the sun and moon shall be dark; the locusts sometimes come in such large numbers as to intercept the rays of the sun. Pliny^{F43} says they sometimes darken it; and though some thought they did not fly in the night, because of the cold; this he observes is owing to their ignorance, not considering that they pass over wide seas to distant countries; and this will account for it how the moon also may be darkened by them, and the stars, as follows:

and the stars shall withdraw their shining; though all this may be understood in a figurative sense of the great consternation that all sorts of persons should be in at such calamities coming upon the land, either by locusts, or by enemies; as the king, queen, nobles, and the common people of the land, signified by sun, moon, and stars, heaven and earth.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army*, etc.] Either the army of the locusts, whom Pliny^{F44} calls “*pestis deorum*”, “the plague of the gods”; and the Arabians frequently style them the army of God. It is a tradition of theirs that locusts fell into the hands of Mahomet, with this inscription on their backs and wings,

“we are the army of the most high God;”

and because they were, for that reason Mahomet made a law that none should kill them; (see Gill on “~~610B~~ Revelation 9:3”). These creatures are certainly at his beck and command; he can “command the locust to devour the land”, (~~417B~~ 2 Chronicles 7:13); which may be meant by his uttering his voice here; though Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it of the Lord’s giving notice of this judgment by his prophets before it came: or this may design the army of the Assyrians or Chaldeans, of which the locusts were all emblem, and which were of the Lord’s mustering together, and was at his command; and who is here represented as a General at the head of his army, making a speech to them to animate and encourage them to the battle, and to give them the word of command when to begin the onset:

for his camp [is] very great; or numerous, as both the locusts and Chaldeans were:

for [he is] strong that executeth his word; or “strong is it”; namely, the camp and army of the locusts; which, though feeble in themselves, separately considered; yet being in such large bodies, and the Lord at the head of them, and strengthened by him, were able to fulfil his word; which he can make the least and meanest of his creatures do: or the Assyrian or Chaldean army, which was both numerous and mighty: which the Targum may refer unto, paraphrasing the words,

“for strong are the executors of his word:”

for the day of the Lord [is] great and very terrible, and who can abide it? the day appointed by the Lord to take vengeance on the Jews for sin; and this, being the day of his wrath, is very dreadful and intolerable; so any season may be called, in which God remarkably pours down his wrath on men of their sins; (see ¹⁶¹⁷Revelation 6:17). Such was the time of Jerusalem’s destruction, both by the Chaldeans and Romans.

Ver. 12. *Therefore also now, saith the Lord*, etc.] Before this terrible and intolerable day, which is near at hand, comes; before these judgments and calamities threatened take place, though just at hand; serious repentance is never too late, now is the accepted time; (see ¹⁹¹²Luke 19:42-44 ¹⁹¹²2 Corinthians 6:2);

turn ye [even] to me with all your heart; against whom they had sinned, and who had prepared his army against them, and was at the head of it, just ready to give the orders, and play his artillery upon them; and yet suggests, that even now, that if they turned to the Lord by true repentance, not, feignedly and hypocritically, but cordially and sincerely, with true hearts, and with their whole hearts, he was ready to receive and forgive them. The Targum is,

“turn ye to my worship with all your heart:”

and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; external signs of inward grief and sorrow, testifying their hearty return to the Lord; which, though, without the heart, signify nothing, yet should be shown where hearty repentance is, for the honour and glory of God.

Ver. 13. *And rend your heart, and not your garments*, etc.] Which latter used to be done in times of distress, either private or public, and as a token of grief and sorrow, (^{<03734>}Genesis 37:34 ^{<0700>}Esther 4:1); nor was it criminal or unlawful, the apostles themselves used it, (^{<0444>}Acts 14:14); nor is it absolutely forbidden here, only comparatively, that they should rend their hearts rather than their garments; or not their garments only, but their hearts also; in like sense as the words in (^{<2065>}Hosea 6:6); are to be taken as rending garments was only an external token of sorrow and might be done hypocritically. Where no true repentance was, the Lord calls for that, rather than the other; and that they would show contrition of heart and brokenness of spirit under a sense of sin, and in the view of pardoning grace and mercy; which is here held forth, to influence godly sorrow and evangelical repentance; the acts of which, flowing from faith in Christ are much more acceptable to the Lord than any outward expressions of grief; (see ^{<0517>}Psalms 51:17 ^{<2575>}Isaiah 57:15 66:2). The Targum is,

“remove the wickedness of your heart but not with the rending of your meats;”

the rending of the garment goes to the heart some say to the navel ^{F45}:

and turn unto the Lord your God; consider him not as an absolute God, and as an angry one, wrathful and inexorable; but as your covenant God and Father as your God in Christ, ready to receive backsliding sinners and prodigal sons; yea all sinners sensible of sin that flee to him for mercy through Christ:

for be [is] gracious and merciful; he is the God of all grace, and has laid up a fulness of it in Christ; and he gives it freely to them that ask it of him without upbraiding them with their sins; he is rich and plenteous in mercy, and ready to forgive; he delights in showing mercy, and in them that hope in it; and this is no small encouragement to turn to the Lord, and seek mercy of him: and, besides, he is

slow to anger; he is not hasty to stir it up, and show it; he bears with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath; and his longsuffering to his own people issues in their salvation: he waits to be gracious to them; and, though he may seem to be angry, he does not stir up all his wrath their sins deserve nor does he retain anger for ever:

and of great kindness; both in a providential way, and in a way of special grace through Christ; whom he has provided as a Saviour, and sent him

into the world as such, and saves sinners by obedience sufferings, and death: these characters of God are taken out of (⁴⁰³⁴⁶Exodus 34:6,7); and are admirably adapted to engage and encourage sensible souls to turn to the Lord by acts of faith in him, and repentance towards him; (see ²⁸⁸⁷Isaiah 55:7); and it is added,

and repenteth him of the evil; which the sins of men deserve; and he has threatened on account of them; not that he ever changes the counsels of his will, but alters the course of his providence, and the manner of his conduct towards men, according to his unalterable repentance otherwise does not properly belong to God, (⁴⁰²³⁹Numbers 23:19); but is ascribed to him after the manner of men; and is used to express his compassion men; how ready he is to receive and forgive returning sinners and not execute the threatened and deserved evil and to bestow all needful good; (see Jon 3:10 4:2). The Targum is,

“and he recalls his word from bringing on the evil.”

Ver. 14. *Who knoweth [if] he will return and repent*, etc.] Which some understand of man, and of his returning and repentance; either thus whosoever he be that knows the ways of repentance, he will return, and God will repent of this evil: which sense is mentioned by Kimchi and Ben Melech: or he that knoweth that iniquity is on him will return and repent; so Jarchi, with which agrees the Targum,

“he that knows that sins are in him will return from them, and he shall obtain mercy; and whoever repents, his sins shall be forgiven him;”

but rather they are to be understood of God, as some in Kimchi, and paraphrase it, who knows? perhaps God may return; and this is the sense of Aben Ezra, and seems to be most correct; and to be interpreted, either as carrying some doubt in it; not as if it was questionable whether God will give pardon to repenting sinners, but whether he will at once remove the present affliction and chastisement; which may be thus expressed to check the presumption and awaken the security of the people, and rouse them from their sluggishness and stupidity: or rather as expressive of hope that God would return and change the dispensation of his providence, and repent of the evil he had threatened, or brought upon them; which might be justly grounded upon the character before given of him, and that from the

revelation of himself, and the proclamation of his own perfections; (see Jon 3:9);

and leave a blessing behind him; meaning not behind God himself, as if he was departed, or about to depart, for which there was no great concern, provided he left a temporal blessing with them; but behind the army of the locust, after that had made all the devastation it did: or rather “cause to leave”; stop the locust in its progress, and not suffer it to make a total desolation, but cause it to leave some of the fruits of the earth behind it. So Aben Ezra gives the sense of the words,

“perhaps God will return, and cause the locust to leave a blessing;”

and to the same purpose Jarchi, of which they make a meat offering and a drink offering, as follows:

[even] a meat offering and a drink offering to the Lord your God; at least leave so much of the wheat, that a meat offering might be made of it; and so many of the vines, as that so much wine might be produced by them as would furnish out a drink offering to be offered to the Lord, agreeably to the laws given about these; for which the greatest concern is expressed, this being cut off and withheld from the house of the Lord, by reason of the present scarcity, (~~2009~~ Joel 1:9,13); which shows a truly pious and religious mind, having more at heart the worship of God than themselves and families.

Ver. 15. *Blow the trumpet in Zion*, etc.] For the calling of the people together to religious duties, which was one use of the silver trumpets made for and blows by the priests, (~~400E~~ Numbers 10:2,3,8,10);

sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly; (see Gill on “~~2014~~ Joel 1:14”).

Ver. 16. *Gather the people*, etc.] The common people, all the inhabitants of the land, (~~2014~~ Joel 1:14); summon them to meet together in the temple, in order to humble themselves before God for their sins, and implore his mercy, and seek his face to remove his judgments, or avert them:

sanctify the congregation; see that they are sanctified and prepared for a fast, as the law directs in such cases; that they may be clean and free from all ceremonial impurities; that their bodies and clothes be washed, and that they abstain from their wives, and from all lawful pleasures, as well as sinful ones:

assemble the elders; both in age and authority; that they, by their presence and example, might influence others to attend such a service:

gather the children and those that suck the breast; who were involved in the common calamity and distress, were obliged to fasting and whose cries might affect parents, and engage them the more to humiliation and repentance for their sins, which brought such, miseries, not only upon themselves, but upon their tender infants; and they might think their cries would move the pity and compassion of God; all which is suggested in the note of Kimchi:

let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet; where they are adorning themselves and preparing for an interview with each other; or where they are enjoying each other's embraces and the pleasures of the matrimonial state. The sense is, let them put off their nuptial robes, and deny themselves their lawful pleasures, and betake themselves to fasting mourning, and prayer; (see ⁴⁰⁷⁵1 Corinthians 7:5). This refers to a custom among the Jews at the time of espousals when the bridegroom and bride were introduced into the nuptial chamber, where the marriage was completed; and, according to the Jewish writes it was not finished before: the blessing of the bridegroom and bride did not complete the marriage but the bringing of them into the chamber did; and then they were said to be married, though as yet they had not cohabited and then, and not before a man might enjoy his wife ^{F46}: and the marriage chamber was nothing else but a linen cloth or garment spread upon four poles over the head of the bridegroom and bride; this they called *hpwj* ^{F47}; the word is here rendered a "closet" and the same with the "chamber"; and their leaving and coming out of this signifies their abstaining from the lawful enjoyment of each other, which now they had a right unto.

Ver. 17. *Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar*, etc.] Not the altar of incense which stood in the holy place; but the altar of burnt offering, where the priests used to stand and do service; but now having nothing to do of that kind, they are called upon to weep and pray between that and the porch of the temple; where they might be seen and heard by the people in the outward court which the porch led into: this is thought by some to be the same situation with that between the temple and the altar, (⁴²³⁵Matthew 23:35);

and let them say, spare thy people, O Lord; they are directed to plead, not in a way of justice, but mercy; that though it might be just with God to destroy these people, who were called by his name; yet it is entreated that he would not, but in mercy spare them, and not cut them off in his sore displeasure, which the present judgment threatened them with: there seems to be an argument for mercy suggested, in the relation these people stood in to God, they are “thy people”, whom thou hast chosen, and who are called by thy name; though this was also an aggravation of their sin; and the same may be observed in what follows:

and give not thine heritage to reproach: the people whom he had chosen for his inheritance, and the land of Canaan he had given to them for an inheritance; both which would be given to reproach if such a famine should ensue that they must be obliged to go into other countries for food:

that the Heathen should rule over them; as they would, should they be forced to leave their own country, and settle in theirs for the sake of food: or “to be a proverb”, or “byword, among the Heathen”, as Jarchi. This clause Jerom thinks opens the mystery, and explains who are meant by the mighty nation under the name of locusts, the enemies of the Jews; though this does not necessarily follow, take the words in either sense, as explained: it seems indeed very likely, that though the locusts may be understood literally, yet may be considered as an emblem of the Assyrian or Chaldean army, as we have all along observed; and, as the same ancient writer observes, when we read of the locusts, we should think of the Chaldeans, in which thought we may be confirmed by this clause:

wherefore should they say among the people, where [is] their God? they boast of as their Creator and Benefactor, their Protector and Defender, that gave them a land flowing with milk and honey, and abounding with all blessings? what is become of that? and where is he now? which the Gentiles would say in a reproaching blaspheming way, should they be reduced to famine by the locusts, or fall into the hands of their enemies; than which kind of reproach and blasphemy there is nothing more cutting to religious minds: (see ^{<920>}Psalm 42:10 ^{<370>}Micah 7:10); and this, as well as the former is used as an argument with God for mercy. The Targum is,

“where are they that are redeemed by the Word of your God?”

Ver. 18. *Then will the Lord be jealous for his land*, etc.] Or “zealous” for it; for the honour of it, and the good of its inhabitants, and for the glory of

his own name, it being the chief place in the world for his worship and service; and his indignation will be moved against those who have brought desolation on it:

and pity his people; as a father his children, who had suffered much, and had been reduced to great distress by the locusts, or by their enemies: this the prophet foretells would be done upon their repentance, fasting, prayers, and tears; or, as some think, this is a narrative of what had been done, and the prophet was a witness of; that the people meeting together with their princess and priests, and humbling themselves before the Lord, and crying to him, he expressed a zeal and compassion for them, and delivered them out of their troubles; for though their humiliation is not expressed, it may be understood and supposed, as doubtless, it was fact.

Ver. 19. *Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people*, etc.] By his prophets, as Kimchi: or, “the Lord answered and said”^{F48}; while they were praying and weeping, or as soon as they cried unto him; or, however, praying to him, they might assure themselves that he heard them, and would answer them both by words and deeds:

behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil; that is, cause the earth to bring forth corn, as wheat and barley, and the vines and olive trees to bring forth grapes and olives, from which wine and oil might be made: this is, according to some interpreters, to be understood of an abundance of spiritual blessings:

and ye shall be satisfied therewith; or, “with it”; with each and every of the above things, corn, wine, and oil; they should not only have them, but have enough of them, even to satiety:

and I will no more make you a reproach among the Heathen; for want of food, and as if forsaken of God. The Targum is,

“and I will not give you any more the reproaches of famine among the people;”

(see ²⁰¹⁷ Joel 2:17).

Ver. 20. *But I will remove far off from you the northern [army]*, etc.] The army of the locusts, which came from the northern corner, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; and is the first sense Jarchi makes mention of; though he says their Rabbins^{F49} interpret it of the evil imagination hid in the heart of men;

and the two seas, later mentioned, of the two temples, first and second, destroyed by it; so, Kimchi says, they explain this verse of the days of the Messiah, and observes, the same sense they give; but Jarchi mentions another, according to which a people coming from the north are designed, even the kings of Assyria; and with this agrees the Targum, which paraphrases it,

“and the people which come from the north I will remove far off from you;”

and indeed locusts do not usually come from the north, but from the south, or from the east; it was an east wind that brought the locusts into Egypt, (^{<1003>}Exodus 10:13); though the word “northern” may be used of the locusts in the emblem, because the Assyrians or Chaldeans came from the north to Judea:

and will drive him into a land barren and desolate: where there are no green grass, herbs, plants, and trees, to live upon, and so must starve and die:

with his face towards the east sea; the front of this northern army was towards the east sea, into which it was drove and fell; that is, the sea of Chinnereth, or Gennesareth, the same with the lake of Tiberias, often mentioned in the New Testament; or the Salt sea, the same with the lake Asphaltites, or Dead sea, which was where Sodom and Gomorrah formerly stood, as is usually said; and both these were to the east of the land of Israel, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; and so either of them might be called the “eastern sea”:

and his hinder part towards the utmost sea; the rear of this army was towards the utmost sea, or hinder sea, as it is called in (^{<3848>}Zechariah 14:8); the western sea, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, the same with the Mediterranean sea, which lay to the west of the land of Israel; so the Egyptian locusts were cast into the Red sea, (^{<1009>}Exodus 10:19); and Pliny ^{F50} observes, that they are sometimes taken away with a wind, and fall into seas and lakes, and adds, perhaps this comes by chance; but what is here related came not by chance, but by the will and providence of God:

and his stink shall come up, and his ill savour shall come up: that is, the stink and ill savour of the locusts shall come, up out of the seas and lakes into which they fell, and where they died and putrefied; or, being cast up

from thence upon the shores, gave a most noisome stench; so Jerom on the place says,

“in our times we have seen swarms of locusts cover the land of Judea, which upon the wind rising have been driven into the first and last seas; that is, into the Dead and Mediterranean seas; and when the shores of both seas have been filled with heaps of dead locusts, which the waters have thrown up, their rottenness and stench have been so very noxious as to corrupt the air, and produce a pestilence among men and beasts;”

or this may be understood of the fall and ruin of the enemies of the Jews, signified by these locusts; and some apply it to Sennacherib’s army smote by the angel, when there fell in one night a hundred and fourscore and five thousand of them in the land of Israel, and lay unburied, (^{<1295>}2 Kings 19:35); Theodoret interprets the seas of armies; the first sea of the army of the Babylonians, by which Nineveh the royal seat of the Assyrians was destroyed; and the other sea of the army of the Persians, who, under Cyrus, took Babylon, the metropolis of the Chaldean empire:

because he hath done great things; evil things, as the Targum; either the locust, which had done much mischief to the fruits of the earth; or the enemy, signified by it, who had behaved proudly, and done much hurt to the inhabitants of Judea: or, “though he hath done great things”^{F51}, as some render it, yet all this shall come to him. Some interpret it of God, “for he (God) hath done”, or “will do, great things”^{F52}; in the removing of the locusts, or in the destruction of those enemies they represented, as is expressly said of him in (^{<3121>}Joel 2:21).

Ver. 21. *Fear not, O land*, etc.] O land of Israel, as the Targum, and the inhabitants of it; neither of the locusts, who had so terrified them, and had done so much mischief, and threatened more; nor of their enemies, the Assyrians or Chaldeans, and their powerful armies, or any other; but, on the contrary,

be glad, and rejoice; at the removal of the locusts, and at the destruction of their enemies:

for the Lord will do great things; good things, in opposition to the evil things done by the locusts, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe; or by the destroying army of the king of Assyria, by delivering the Jews out of the Babylonish captivity; and in the times of the Maccabees,

and especially in the times of Christ, which are quickly prophesied of in this chapter; and which prophecies some interpreters begin here, it not being unusual for the prophets to pass directly from things temporal to things spiritual, and especially to the great deliverance and salvation by Christ, and also by temporal blessings to design spiritual ones.

Ver. 22. *Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field*, etc.] Which before groaned, and were perplexed for want of pasture, and cried because of the drought, (²⁰¹⁸Joel 1:18,20); perhaps the Gentiles may be here designed, in the mystic and spiritual sense, in distinction from the Jews, the children of Zion, in (²⁰²³Joel 2:23);

for the pastures of the wilderness do spring; grass in abundance springs up in them, and covers them, so that there was plenty of food for the beasts of the field:

for the tree beareth her fruit; brings forth and bears fruit suitable to it, agreeable to its nature:

the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength; send forth their branches, put forth their buds, their leaves and fruit. This and the preceding clause cannot be understood as a reason why the beasts of the field should not be afraid, for they relate not to them, but to men; and may serve to confirm the mystic sense of the words, as they may refer to the great fruitfulness produced in the wilderness of the Gentile world, through the preaching of the Gospel in the times of the Messiah; which are more clearly pointed at in (²⁰²³Joel 2:23); and which were introduced with great outward peace and plenty; and the Jews^{F53} by the tree bearing her fruit, in the preceding clause, understand barren trees bearing fruit.

Ver. 23. *Be glad then, ye children of Zion*, etc.] The people of the Jews, and especially the spiritual and believing part of them; such as were born again, that were born of Zion, and born in Zion, and brought up by her, and in her; the children of that Zion or Jerusalem that is the mother of us all; and who were looking for the Messiah, and to whom it would be good news and glad tidings to hear of his coming, (³⁰⁰Zechariah 9:9);

and rejoice in the Lord your God; not in any creature or creature enjoyment, but in the Lord. The Targum is,

“in the Word of the Lord your God;”

in Christ the essential Word; (see ^{<308B>}Philippians 3:3 4:4); though rather Jehovah the Father, the giver and sender of Christ, is here meant, because of what follows; and who is to be rejoiced in by his people, not as an absolute God, but as in Christ, and as their covenant God and Father in him; who has chosen them for himself, and is their portion and inheritance; which are reasons sufficient why they should rejoice in him, and others follow:

for he hath given you the former rain moderately; or rather, “for he hath given you the teacher of righteousness” ^{F54}; to which agrees the Targum,

“for he hath returned to you your teacher in righteousness;”

and so Jarchi paraphrases the words, and interprets them of the prophets in general,

“your prophets that teach you to return unto me, that I may justify you;”

and R. Japhet says that **hrwm** signifies a prophet that should teach them in the way of righteousness; not Isaiah, as Grotius; but the King Messiah as Abarbinel interprets it; who is the teacher sent from God, and given by him, as his presence with him, and the miracles done by him, sufficiently prove, (^{<308B>}John 3:2); for which he was abundantly qualified, being the omniscient God, and the Son of God that lay in the bosom of his Father; is the Wisdom of God, as Mediator; had the Spirit of wisdom on him, and the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in him; and who is able to make his teachings effectual, and to qualify others for such work. This office he performed personally on earth, both in a doctrinal way, and by way of example; and now executes it by his Spirit, and by his ministers: and a “teacher of righteousness” he may be truly said to be; since he not only taught the Gospel, the word of righteousness in general; but in particular directed men to seek in the first place the righteousness of God, which is no other than his own; and pronounced those happy that hungered after it: he declared he came to fulfil all righteousness, even the law for righteousness; and taught men to believe in him for it, and to live righteously and godly. Aben Ezra observes, that the phrase is the same with “the sun of righteousness”, (^{<308B>}Malachi 4:2); which is said of Christ the author of righteousness, who is our righteousness made so by imputation, the Lord our righteousness: or, as here, “a teacher unto, or for

righteousness”^{F55}, all which is matter of joy and gladness; (see ^{<2610>}Isaiah 61:10);

and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first [month]; alluding to the two seasons of the year in which rain was given to the Jews; the former rain fell in Marchesvan, which answers to our September and, October, part of each, at their seedtime; and the latter in Nisan, the first month of their ecclesiastical year, and answers to part of March and April, and fell some time before their harvest; and these former and latter rains now fall about the same time. So Dr. Shaw^{F56} observes, that

“the first rains in these countries (Syria, Phoenicia, and the Holy Land) usually fall about the beginning of November; the latter sometimes in the middle, sometimes toward the end, of April:”

and elsewhere he says^{F57},

“in Barbary the first rains fall some years in September, in others a month later; the latter rains usually fall in the middle of April:”

and the same traveller relates^{F58}, that

“upon the coast (of Egypt) from Alexandria, all along to Damiata and Tineh, they have their former and latter rains as in Barbary and the Holy Land.”

This rain spiritually designs the doctrine of the Gospel, which is sometimes compared to rain, (^{<6510>}Deuteronomy 32:2 ^{<2650>}Isaiah 55:10,11); because as rain it comes from God, descends from heaven, is a divine gift, both as to the ministry and experience of it; it tarries not for man, neither for his desires nor deserts; falls according to divine direction, sometimes here, and sometimes there; is a great blessing, and brings many with it, revives, refreshes, and makes fruitful. Jerom interprets these two rains of the first receiving of doctrine, and of a more perfect knowledge of it; as also of the two Testaments, the Old and New: but it may be better interpreted of the preaching of the Gospel by John the Baptist, and by Christ; or by Christ, and then by his apostles; or of the first and second ministration of apostles, first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles; or of the coming of Christ in the flesh, for the same word is used here as in the former clause, and of his spiritual coming in the latter day, both which are compared to rain, (^{<2010>}Hosea 6:3 ^{<1716>}Psalm 72:6).

Ver. 24. *And the floors shall be full of wheat*, etc.] The churches of Christ, which will now be in Judea, and in the Gentile world, which are his “floors”, (^{<4182>}Matthew 3:12); and which will be set up everywhere through the preaching of the Gospel, the descent of the former and latter rain; these will be full of precious souls gathered in, compared to wheat, and of the choice and excellent, doctrines of the Gospel, and of all spiritual provisions, (^{<4133>}Matthew 13:30 ^{<4238>}Jeremiah 23:28);

and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil; with the wine of Gospel doctrine, and the oil of true grace; there shall be a flow, an overflow, a redundancy of these, both in the ministers of the word and private Christians, in whom the grace of God shall abound and superabound; (see ^{<863>}Romans 5:20 ^{<5014>}1 Timothy 1:14).

Ver. 25. *And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten*, etc.] Or “I will recompense to you the years”^{F59}; give you fruitful ones, as a full compensation for those in which the locust ate up the fruits of the earth for some years running:

the canker worm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm; of which (see ^{<2004>}Joel 1:4);

my great army which I sent among you; as in (^{<2011>}Joel 2:11); the Targum of the whole is,

“and I will recompense unto you good years, in the room of the years in which the people, nations, and tongues, the governors and kingdoms of vengeance, spoiled you, my great army which I sent among you;”

and Kimchi observes, that the sense of the Targumist is, that this verse is a prophecy of the days of the Messiah; as no doubt it is, in which the Lord has done for his people, as Moses prayed he would, “make [them] glad according to the days wherein [he] afflicted [them], and the years wherein [they had] seen evil”, (^{<4905>}Psalms 90:15); the times of the Messiah, in which so many good things come to the people of God, are a sufficient recompence for what they endured in times past. Of the Mahometan notion of locusts being the army of God, (see Gill on “^{<2011>}Joel 2:11”).

Ver. 26. *And ye shall eat in plenty*, etc.] Or, “in eating eat”^{F60}; most surely eat, and in great abundance; which Hebraism not only denotes the certainty of a thing, but the increase and abundance of it; (see ^{<0227>}Genesis 22:17 ^{<1340>}1

Chronicles 4:10); there is plenty of spiritual provisions held forth under the Gospel dispensation: much in God, in his goodness, grace, and love, truth and faithfulness; in his covenant, the blessings and promises of it: much in Christ, who is compared to many things eatable; is called the Lamb of God, the fatted calf, the hidden manna, the tree of life, and the bread of God; everything in him, and that belongs to him, is food for faith; his flesh is meat indeed, his blood is drink indeed; the fulness of grace in him; the righteousness wrought out by him; the salvation he is the author of; upon all which the believer lives by faith: much in the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, compared to honey for sweetness of taste; to milk for its nourishing nature, easiness of digestion, and the suitableness of it for babes; and to strong meat fit for men: and there is great plenty also in the ordinances of the Gospel, particularly in the Lord's supper, the feast of fat things, where saints are invited to eat and drink abundantly; which eating is not a bare attendance on outward ordinances, or a superficial taste of the things in them, but a feeding upon them by faith, receiving and digesting them;

and be satisfied; eat to satiety; eat and be full, so as to be entirely contented, and desire no other sort of food; thus saints, as Naphtali, are satisfied with the favour and love of God, having a delightful sensation of it, and a full persuasion of interest in it; with Christ as the bread of life, so as not to hunger after other; with his righteousness, as not to seek any other; and with his salvation, being so suitable to them; and with the goodness and fatness of the Lord's house, his word and ordinances;

and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you; acknowledge him to be the giver of all this spiritual food, and that they are unworthy of it; ascribe it entirely to the grace of God, who has done wonders for them; in wonderfully setting them apart for himself in eternal election; in making such a well ordered covenant with them in Christ; in sending him to be their Saviour and Redeemer; in calling them out of darkness into marvellous light; in bestowing such love upon them, as to call them and make them his children, and also heirs of him and eternal glory; (see ⁴⁹²⁶Psalm 22:26);

and my people shall never be ashamed; because they shall always have food to eat; shall never be disappointed, when they rightly apply for it in proper places and times; and not be like the troops of Tema, and companies of Sheba, (⁴⁸⁶⁹Job 6:19,20); they shall not be ashamed of their faith and hope, and expectation of good things promised them; nor of the

word and ordinances, and the profession they have made of Christ in this world; nor shall they be ashamed at his coming; but shall be placed at his right hand, and received into his kingdom, and shall be led by him to fountains of living water, and be satisfied with pleasures for evermore.

Ver. 27. *And ye shall know that I [am] in the midst of Israel*, etc.] The presence of God among his people shall be so manifest, the tokens of it so clear, that it shall be easily known, by the impressions of his love upon them; the teachings of his Spirit in them; the usefulness of the word and ordinances to them; the spiritual and heavenly frame of soul they shall be favoured with, and the savouriness of their conversation; this is the blessing Christ has promised to Gospel ministers and churches, (^{<4180>}Matthew 28:20);

and [that] I [am] the Lord your God, and none else; that he is their covenant God and Father, and acknowledge none else:

and my people shall never be ashamed; which is repeated for the certainty of it; (see ^{<3126>}Joel 2:26).

Ver. 28. *And it shall come to pass afterward*, etc.] After the teacher of righteousness has been sent, and a plentiful rain of the Gospel has been let down in the land of Judea, in the ministry of John the Baptist, Christ and his apostles, and such a comfortable enjoyment of the blessings of grace in it, and the knowledge of God by it; and after the wonderful work of redemption wrought by Christ. R. Jeshua in Aben Ezra and Jarchi both say this prophecy refers to time to come; and Kimchi observes, that the phrase is the same with “in the last days”; and so the Apostle Peter quotes it, (^{<4427>}Acts 2:17); a phrase, as the above writer observes, which always signifies the days of the Messiah, to which he applies these words; and so do other Jewish writers, both ancient and modern ^{F61}; and there is no doubt with us Christians that they belong to the times of Christ and his apostles, since they are by an inspired writer said to be fulfilled in those times, (^{<4426>}Acts 2:16,17); here some begin a new chapter;

[that] I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; not on such whose hearts are made tender as flesh, according to (^{<3535>}Ezekiel 36:26); as Jarchi; for the Spirit must be given first to make the heart such; nor only upon men in the land of Israel, a place fit to prophesy in, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi; but upon all men, as this phrase frequently signifies; (see ^{<2345>}Isaiah 40:5); that is, all sorts of men, Jews and Gentiles, men of all nations; and such there

were on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured down upon the apostles, and the grace of the Spirit was given to many of all nations; though that was only the beginning of the fulfilment of this prophecy, which quickly had a further accomplishment in the Gentile world; and denotes the abundance of the gifts of the Spirit, both extraordinary and ordinary, and of his grace, and the blessings of it, bestowed on them;

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; as Agabus, Barnabas, Simeon, etc. and the four daughters of Philip the evangelist, (~~44123~~Acts 11:28 13:1 21:9,10);

your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; as Ananias, Peter, Paul, John, and others, some in their elder, some in their younger years, (~~4490~~Acts 9:10 10:17 16:9 22:17 26:19 27:23); though prophecy, dreams, and visions, being the usual ways of conveying knowledge, here signify that the knowledge of men in Gospel times should be equal to, yea, exceed, whatever was communicated to men in the highest degree in former times: John the Baptist was greater than any of the prophets, and yet the least in the kingdom of heaven was greater than he, (~~44728~~Luke 7:28).

Ver. 29. *And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour my Spirit.*] Men servants and maidservants should partake of the gifts and grace of the Spirit in great, abundance; and many of them were effectually called by grace, through the ministry of the word; and some servants became ministers of it; all which appears from (~~4472~~1 Corinthians 7:21,22 ~~5001~~1 Timothy 6:1,2 ~~5010~~Philemon 1:10,11,16); for that is not true what the Jews ^{F62} say, the Shechinah or divine Majesty does not rest but upon a wise man, and one mighty and rich; or prophecy, as Maimonides ^{F63} has it.

Ver. 30. *And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth,* etc.] This, and what follow, refer to the prodigies seen in the air, and done in the earth, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem ^{F64}; when in the air were seen comets and blazing stars, particularly one in the form of a sword, hanging over Jerusalem, and appearances of armies engaged in battle; and, on the earth, a flame was seen in the temple, and a voice heard in it, saying, let us go hence; the doors of it opened of themselves; an idiot went about, crying woe to the people, woe to the city, etc.

blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke; “blood” may design the great slaughter of them by the Roman army in the land of Judea, and by murders committed among themselves in the city of Jerusalem, which were very horrible, and of great numbers; “fire”, the burning of towns and cities; though Kimchi interprets it of lightnings in the heavens; and “pillars of smoke”, rising up in straightness and height like palm trees, as the word ^{F65} signifies, vast quantities of it arising from cities and towns burnt. Gussetius ^{F66} interprets this of the burning of the martyrs in the first ages of Christianity, and of their spiritual affections, which ascended upwards to God, and were grateful to him; (see ⁻²¹⁸⁶ Song of Solomon 3:6).

Ver. 31. *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,* etc.] Not by eclipses, as Aben Ezra; but by the clouds of smoke arising from the burning of towns and cities, which would be so great as to obscure the sun, and through which the moon would look like blood: or all, this may be understood in a figurative sense of the change that should be made in the ecclesiastic and civil state of the Jewish nation, signified by the “heavens” and “earth”; and particularly that their king or kingdom should be in a low, mean, and distressed condition, designed by the sun; and the change of their priesthood is signified by the “moon”: so Vitringa on (⁻²⁹⁰³ Isaiah 24:23); interprets the “sun” here of King Agrippa, the last king of the Jews in obscurity; and the “moon” of Ananias junior, the high priest, slain by the zealots:

before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come; not the fall of Gog and Magog, as Kimchi; not the day of the last judgment, but of the destruction of Jerusalem; not by the Chaldeans, but by the Romans; their last destruction, which was very great and terrible indeed, and in which there was a manifest appearance of the hand and power of God; (see ⁻³⁰⁰¹ Malachi 4:1). Maimonides ^{F67} interprets it of the destruction of Sennacherib near Jerusalem; but if that sense is not acceptable, he proposes that of the destruction of Gog and Magog, in the times of the Messiah.

Ver. 32. *And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered,* etc.] Or “saved”, as in (⁻⁴¹²¹ Acts 2:21); from those miseries and calamities before described, from the impending ruin and destruction of the city; and so it was, that those that believed in Christ, that were in the city, had an intimation of it beforehand, and removed from thence to a place called Pella ^{F68}, and so escaped being involved in the common calamity: though this also may be understood of a

spiritual deliverance and salvation by Christ, from sin, Satan, and the world, and from the second death, and wrath to come, and out of the hands of every enemy; which such share in who call on the name of the Lord, pray to him for grace and mercy, life and salvation, through Christ; that have a spiritual knowledge of God in Christ, real and sincere desires after him, and trust and confidence in him, which this phrase supposes; and which also includes the whole worship of God, internal and external, performed in a spiritual and evangelical manner; (see ^{<5013>}Romans 10:13);

for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said; either by this prophet, or some others before him; (see ^{<1947>}Psalms 14:7 ^{<2810>}Isaiah 59:20 ^{<2811>}Obidiah 1:21); this cannot be understood literally of Mount Zion and Jerusalem, unless it be of deliverance out of it; not in it, for Jerusalem was the seat of blood, confusion, and distress; but mystically of the church of Christ, often called Zion and Jerusalem, (^{<5022>}Hebrews 12:22); hither the deliverer came, here he is, and to be seen; from hence the word of the Lord came, the Gospel of salvation, which proclaims deliverance to the captives; here it is to be heard, met with, and found, (^{<2311>}Isaiah 2:3 ^{<1118>}Luke 4:18 ^{<5125>}Romans 11:26);

and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call; not merely externally, by the outward ministry of the word; but internally, according to his purpose, and by his grace, powerfully and effectually, to the special blessings of grace here, and eternal glory hereafter: these are the remnant according to the election of grace; the little flock to whom God gives the kingdom; the few that enter in at the strait gate; the little city, and few men in it, delivered by the poor wise man; these share in the deliverance of Zion, and shall be certainly and completely saved, with an everlasting salvation. This may respect not only the remnant, or a small number of the Jews that believed in Christ, upon his first coming, and the preaching of the Gospel by his apostles, but the call and conversion of them in the latter day; which sense connects the words better with the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO JOEL 3

This chapter, which some make the fourth, contains a prophecy of God's judgments on all the antichristian nations at the time of the Jews' conversion, and the reasons of them, (²⁹⁰¹Joel 3:1-3); a threatening of Tyre and Zidon, by way of retaliation, for carrying the riches of the Jews into their temples, and selling their persons to the Greeks, (²⁹⁰⁴Joel 3:4-8); an alarm to prepare for the battle of Armageddon, or the destruction that shall be made in the valley of Jehoshaphat, (²⁹⁰⁹Joel 3:9-15); and after that an account of the happy state of the church of Christ, their safety and security, plenty, prosperity, and purity, to the end of the world, (²⁹¹⁶Joel 3:16-21).

Ver. 1. *For, behold, in those days, and at that time*, etc.] Which Kimchi refers to the times of the Messiah; and is true of the latter times of the Messiah, of his spiritual reign yet to come:

when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem: not from the Edomites, Tyrians, and Philistines, that had carried them captive in the times of Ahaz; nor from Babylon, where they had been carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar; for nothing of what is after foretold followed upon the return of these captivities: but this designs the present captivity of the Jews, and the restoration of them to their own land; of which (see ²⁵⁰⁸Isaiah 52:8 ²⁸¹⁸Jeremiah 30:3,9,18-21).

Ver. 2. *I will also gather all nations*, etc.] Or cause or suffer them to be gathered together against his people; not the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, in the times of Jehoshaphat, as Aben Ezra; but either the Turks, prophesied of under the name of Gog and Magog in Ezekiel, (²⁵⁰¹Ezekiel 38:1-39:21); and a multitude of other nations with them, who shall be gathered together against the Jews, to regain the land of Judea from them, they will upon their conversion inhabit; or else all the antichristian kings and nations, which shall be gathered to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, (⁶¹⁶⁴Revelation 16:14);

and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat: Kimchi thinks this was some valley near to Jerusalem, in which Jehoshaphat built or

wrought some works, and so was called by his name: Joseph Ben Gorion ^{F69} speaks of a valley, called the valley of Jehoshaphat, which was near Jerusalem, to the further end of which one Zachariah, a good man, in the times of the Jewish wars, was rolled and died, being cast down from the top of a tower upon the wall east of Jerusalem; and which is confirmed by R. Abraham, as quoted by Lively; and the true Josephus says ^{F70}, that the valley into which this man was cast lay directly under Jerusalem; and Benjamin of Tudela ^{F71} makes mention of a valley of this name, which he says lies between Jerusalem and the mount of Olives; where Jerom ^{F72} places it by the name of Caelas; with whom Mr. Maundrell ^{F73} agrees, who says that this valley lies between Mount Moriah and Mount Olivet, and has its name from the sepulchre of Jehoshaphat: and, according to Lyra on the place, who is followed by Adrichomius ^{F74}, it is the same with the valley of Kidron, which was so situated; but, why that should be called the valley of Jehoshaphat, no reason is given. Aben Ezra and others are of opinion that this is the same with the valley of Berachah, where Jehoshaphat obtained a very great victory over many nations, (⁴⁰⁰2 Chronicles 20:1,26); but it does not appear to have been called by his name, and, besides, seems to be at a great distance from Jerusalem; though there may be an allusion to it, that as many nations were there collected together and destroyed, so shall it be in the latter day; and I am of opinion that no proper name of a place is here meant, as going by it in common, but is so called from the judgment of God here executed upon his and his people's enemies. So Jarchi calls it "the valley of judgments"; Jehoshaphat signifying "the judgment" of the Lord: Kimchi says it may be so called because of judgment, the Lord there pleading with the nations, and judging them: and in the Targum it is rendered,

"the valley of the division of judgment:"

and to me it designs no other than Armageddon, the seat of the battle of Almighty God, (⁶¹⁶Revelation 16:16); and which may signify the destruction of their troops; (see Gill on "⁶¹⁶Revelation 16:16");

and will plead with them there for my people, and [for] my heritage Israel; the people of the Jews, who will now be converted, who will have the "loammi", (³⁰⁰Hosea 1:9), taken off of them, and will be called the people of the living God again, and be reckoned by him as his portion and inheritance; though not them only, but all the saints; all that have separated from antichrist, his doctrine and worship, and have suffered by him:

whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land; Kimchi refers this to the scattering of the Jews by Titus and his army, and the partition of Judea among them, which is not amiss; in consequence of which they are still a scattered people, and their land has been parted between Turks and Papists^{F75}; sometimes inhabited by the one, and sometimes by the other, and now by both, on whom God will take vengeance; he will plead the cause of his people, by the severe judgments he will inflict on his and their enemies. This may respect the persecuting of the Christians from place to place, and seizing on their lands and estates, and parting them, as well as the dispersion of the Jews, and the partition of the land of Canaan.

Ver. 3. *And they have cast lots for my people*, etc.] Not only parted their land, but cast lots for their persons, Or played at dice for them, how many captives each soldier should have, and which should be their share and property: ninety seven thousand Jews, Josephus^{F76} says, were carried captive by the Romans, who, very probably, cast lots for them, as was usual in such cases; (see Na 3:10);

and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink; either they gave a boy to be prostituted to natural lusts, in lieu of a whore; and a girl to be debauched for a bottle of wine: or they gave a boy for the price of a whore, as the Targum and Kimchi interpret it; that is, they gave a boy, instead of money, to a whore, to lie with her, as the eunuch was given to Thais; and they gave a girl to the wine merchant for as much wine as they could drink at one sitting. These phrases both express their uncleanness and intemperance, and also the low price and value they set upon their captives; and is applicable enough to the Papists, notorious for the same abominable lusts.

Ver. 4. *Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine?* etc.] The Tyrians, Zidonians, and Philistines, were near neighbours of the Jews, and implacable enemies to them; and are here put for the enemies of the true church of Christ, the Papists and Turks, and in whose possession those places now are: these are addressed by the Lord, inquiring or demanding the reason of their ill usage of him and his people: “what have ye to do with me?” to be called by my name, or accounted my people? I know you not, nor will I have any fellowship with you: or what have ye to do with my people, to disturb and distress them? what wrong have I or they done you, that you thus use them?

will ye render me a recompence? for turning you out of your land, and putting my people into it? do you think to retaliate this?

and if ye recompense me; by doing an injury to my people:

swiftly [and] speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head; bring swift and sudden destruction upon you.

Ver. 5. *Because ye have taken my silver and my gold,* etc.] Which is all the Lord's, (³¹¹⁸Haggai 2:8); or which he had bestowed upon his people, and they had taken from them:

and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things; either the rich furniture of the houses of his people, which they carried into their own houses, or "palaces"^{F77}, as it may be rendered; having either taken them away themselves, or bought them of others that had taken them: or else the rich vessels of the temple; as these were carried away by the Chaldeans, and put into their idol temples, (²⁷⁰⁰²Daniel 1:2); so afterward they were taken by the Romans, and put into the temples of their gods: whether any of these came into the hands of the Tyrians, etc. by any means, and were put into their idol temples, as the temple of Hercules, is not certain; however, it is notorious that the Papists, the Tyrians are an emblem of, not only build stately temples, and dedicate them to angels and saints, but most profusely adorn them with gold and silver, and all goodly and desirable things; which is putting them to an idolatrous use they were not designed for.

Ver. 6. *The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem,* etc.] Not children in age literally, as Kimchi, kidnapped or bought by the Tyrians; but the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem:

have ye sold unto the Grecians; or sons of Javan; it was one part of the merchandise of Tyre to trade in the persons of men; and Javan, or the Greeks, with others, were their merchants for them, (³⁵⁷¹³Ezekiel 27:13); and the souls of men are a part of the trade of the merchants of Rome, typified by the Tyrians, (⁶⁶⁸¹³Revelation 18:13);

that ye might remove them far from their border; from their own land, or place of dwelling, that so they might not be easily redeemed, and return to it any more. Rome, the antichristian Tyre, trading with the souls of men, is to their eternal damnation, as much as in them lies. Cocceius interprets this

of the children of the church being trained up in the doctrine of Aristotle, in the times of the schoolmen.

Ver. 7. *Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them*, etc.] That is, bring them back to their own land, from their places whither they have been carried captive, and where they have dwelt in obscurity, and as if theft had been buried in graves, but now should be raised up and restored; and this their restoration will be as life from the dead. So the Targum,

“behold, I will bring them publicly from the place whither ye have sold them;”

this is to be understood, not of the same persons, but of their posterity, they being the same natural body. Kimchi interprets it of them and their children; them at the resurrection of the dead, their children at the time of salvation. Some think this had its accomplishment in Alexander and his successors, by whom the Jews, who had been detained captives in other countries, were set free; particularly by Demetrius, as Josephus^{F78} relates: though it may be applied to the future restoration of the Jews, out of all countries, unto their own land; or rather to the gathering together the spiritual Israel, or people of God, who have been persecuted from place to place by their antichristian enemies;

and will return your recompence upon your own head; do to them as they have done to others; pay them in their own coin; retaliate the wrongs done to his people; (see ⁶³⁰Revelation 13:10 18:6).

Ver. 8. *And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah*, etc.] That is, deliver them into their hands, to dispose of them; this is thought to have been literally fulfilled in the Tyrians, when thirty thousand^{F79} of them were sold for slaves, upon the taking of their city by Alexander, who put some of them into the hands of the Jews, they being in friendship with him: it mystically designs the power that the Jewish church, converted, and in union with Gentile Christians, will have over the antichristian states:

and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off; the inhabitants of Sheba, a country by the Jews reckoned the uttermost parts of the earth; (see ⁴¹²Matthew 12:42). These are not the same with the Sabeans, the inhabitants of Arabia Deserts, that took away Job’s oxen and asses; but rather those who were the inhabitants of Arabia Felix, which lay at a

greater distance. So Strabo ^{F80} says, the Sabeans inhabited Arabia Felix; and Diodorus Siculus ^{F81} reckons the Sabeans as very populous, and one of the Arabian nations, who inhabited that Arabia which is called Felix, the metropolis of which is Saba; and he, as well as Strabo, observes, that this country produces many odoriferous plants, as cassia, cinnamon, frankincense, and calamus, or the sweet cane; hence incense is said to come “from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country”, (^{240B}Jeremiah 6:20); and since the Jews traded with these people for those spices, it is easy to conceive how they sold their captives to them: now these lived at a great distance, in the extreme parts of Arabia, both towards the Indian sea and the Arabian gulf. And Diodorus Siculus ^{F82} observes, that **δία τον εκτοπισμος**, because of the distance of their situation, they never came into the power or under the dominion of any, or were never subdued. These seem to be the descendants of Cush, the son, of Ham; and if they were the descendants of Joktan, the son of Shem, as some think, these are placed by Vitranga ^{F83} in Carmania; and where Pliny ^{F84} makes mention of a city called Sabe, and of the river Sabis; and it is worthy of notice that the ancient Greek fathers ^{F85}, with one consent, interpret the Sabeans of the Saracens: and whether they may not design the Turks, in whose possession this country now is, and into whose hands the antichristian powers may be delivered by means of the Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, may be considered;

for the Lord hath spoken [it]; and therefore it shall be accomplished. The Targum is,

“for by the word of the Lord it is so decreed;”

whose counsels and decrees can never be frustrated. This, in an ancient book of the Jews called Mechilta, is referred to the prophecy of Noah concerning Canaan, whose sons inhabited Tyre, “a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren”, (⁰⁰²⁵Genesis 9:25), as Jarchi observes.

Ver. 9. *Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles*, etc.] This decree of God, concerning the deliverance of his church; and the destruction of their enemies; which is to be proclaimed among them, to the terror of them, and the comfort of God’s people, encouraging them to the battle, since they might be sure of victory; for the prophet here returns to give an account of the armies to be gathered together, and to be destroyed in the valley of Jehoshaphat, as appears from (^{241B2}Joel 3:12); and to this end heralds are here ordered to make proclamation of war throughout the nations, and to

gather them to the battle of Almighty God; whether seriously, or ironically, may be considered; what follows seems to be spoken in the latter way, to the enemies of the church; though they may be interpreted as spoken seriously to the people of God themselves:

prepare war; get all things ready for it, men and arms:

wake up the mighty men; generals, captains, and other officers, men of strength and courage; let them arouse from the sleep and lethargy in which they are, and get themselves in a readiness for war, and put themselves at the head of their troops:

let all the men of war draw near, let them come up; to the land of Judea, and to Jerusalem; that is, either the Christian powers with their armies, to defend Jerusalem against the Turks, and deliver it out of their hands; let them appear on the behalf of the Jews: or else let the enemies of Christ's church and people come up against them, even the most powerful of them; let them muster up all their forces, and do the most they can, they shall not prevail.

Ver. 10. *Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears*, etc.] Let not only soldiers, and such as have been trained up in military discipline, appear in the field on this occasion; but let husbandmen and vinedressers leave their fields and vineyards, and turn their instruments of husbandry and vinedressing into weapons of war; let them not plead want of armour, but convert these to such uses: on the contrary, when this battle will be over, swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks, (^{2111*} Isaiah 2:4);

let the weak say, I [am] strong; such as are weak, through sickness, or old age, let them not plead their weakness to excuse them from engaging in this war; but let them make the best of themselves, and say they are strong and healthy, and fit for it, and enter in it with all courage and bravery: this is said either ironically to the enemies of God's people, suggesting that all hands would be wanted, and should be employed, weak and strong, and all little enough; when they had made the utmost effort they could, it would be in vain: or else they are seriously spoken to the people of God, that none of them should excuse themselves, or be discouraged because of their weakness from engaging in this last and more battle; but take heart, and be of good courage, and quit themselves like men, and be strong, since they might be sure of victory beforehand. The Apostle Paul refers to this text in

(^{<47120>}2 Corinthians 12:10); and applies it to spiritual weakness and strength; and indeed the weakest believer, that is so in faith and] knowledge, may say he is strong, in comparison of what he once was, and others are; strong, not in himself, but in Christ, and the power of his might, and in the grace that is in him; nor should he excuse himself from fighting the Lord's battles, against sin, Satan, and the world, and false teachers; or from doing the Lord's work, any service he calls him to; or from bearing the cross he lays on him on account of his weakness; nor should he: be discouraged by it from those things; but let him strengthen himself, as Aben Ezra interprets it, take heart, and be of good courage.

Ver. 11. *Assemble yourselves*, etc.] From divers parts into one place: “be ye gathered”; or “gather yourselves together”, as the Targum and Kimchi; get together in a body, muster up all the forces you can collect together, Jarchi, from Menachem, by the change of a letter, renders it, “make ye haste”; lose time in preparing for this battle; get men, and arms for them, as fast as you can; be as expeditious as possible:

and come, all ye Heathen; antichristian nations, Mahometan or Papal; which latter, especially, are sometimes called Heathen and Gentiles, because of the Heathenish rites introduced into their worship, (^{<49106>}Psalms 10:16 ^{<66112>}Revelation 11:2);

and gather yourselves round about: from all parts, to the valley of Jehoshaphat or Armageddon, (^{<66164>}Revelation 16:14,16); this is spoken ironically to them, to use their utmost endeavours to get most powerful armies against the people of God, which would be of no avail, but issue in their own destruction; or it may signify what should be done by the providence of God, bringing such large numbers of them together to their own ruin:

thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord; which is a prayer of the prophet, or of the church, to God, that he would send down his mighty ones, the angels that excel in strength, and destroy this great army thus gathered together, as an angel in one night destroyed the army of Sennacherib. So Kimchi and Aben Ezra interpret it of angels, and many other interpreters; but perhaps it may be better to understand it of Christian princes and their forces, those armies clothed in white, and riding on white horses, in token of victory; with Christ at the head of them, (^{<66194>}Revelation 19:14); who may be said to be caused to “come down”; because, being

assembled shall go down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, where their enemies are gathered together, and discomfit them, The Targum is,

“there the Lord shall, break the strength of their strong ones.”

Ver. 12. *Let the Heathen be awakened, and come to the valley of Jehoshaphat*, etc.] That is, let the enemies of Christ and his church be aroused from that state of security in which they are, and prepare for their own defence; for in such a state the antichristian powers will be before their destruction; (see ^{<687>}Revelation 18:7); let them bestir themselves, and exert all the rigour and strength they have; let them come in high spirits against the people of God; let them invade the holy land, and come even to the valley of Jehoshaphat; and, when come thither, let them, descend into the place appointed for their ruin: the land of Judea being said to be higher than other countries, going to it is generally expressed by going up to it; otherwise it is more usual to say that men go down a valley than come up to it; and, mention being made again of this valley, shows that the same thing is referred to here as in (^{<281>}Joel 3:2); these words are said in answer to the petition in (^{<281>}Joel 3:11); for they are spoken by the Lord, as appears by what follows:

for there will I sit to judge all the Heathen round about; thither gathered together from all parts: the allusion is to a judge upon the bench, sitting to hear and try causes, and pass a definitive sentence; and here it signifies the execution of that sentence; such a pleading the cause of his people, as to take vengeance and inflict just punishment upon their enemies; (see ^{<300>}Psalm 9:4,5 ^{<644>}Revelation 14:14).

Ver. 13. *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe*, etc.] This is said to the mighty ones sent, the Christian princes, the executioners of God’s vengeance on antichrist; the angels that will pour out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian states, compared to reapers, with a sharp sickle in their hands, to cut them down, as grain is cut when reaped; as the same states are compared to a harvest ripe, the measure of their sins being filled up, and the time of their destruction appointed for them come; (see ^{<645>}Revelation 14:15);

come, get ye down; to the valley: or “go tread ye” ^{F86}; for another simile is made use of: the reference here is to the treading of clusters of grapes in the winepress, as appears by what follows: and so the Targum renders it,

“descend, tread their mighty men;”

in like manner Jarchi interprets it; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it: and Dr. Pocock observes, that the word <Arabic> in the Arabic language signifies to tread, as men tread grapes in a press: the reasons follow,

for the press is full; of clusters of the vine; or the valley is full of wicked men, compared unto them, destined to destruction:

the fats overflow; with the juice of grapes squeezed out, denoting the great effusion of blood that will be made; (see ^{<6148>}Revelation 14:18-20 19:15,18,20);

for their wickedness [is] great; is come to its height, reaches even to heaven, and calls aloud for vengeance; an end is come to it, and to the authors of it, (^{<6185>}Revelation 18:5). The Targum of the whole is,

“draw out the sword against them, for the time of their end is come; descend, tread their mighty men slain, as anything is trodden in a winepress; pour out their blood, for their wickedness is multiplied.”

Ver. 14. *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision*, etc.] The same with the valley of Jehoshaphat before mentioned; which shows that not any valley of that name is intended, but a certain place so called from the judgments of God in it; and here named “the valley of decision”, because here their judgment will be determined, as Kimchi and Jarchi; and at this time the controversy between God, and his people’s enemies, will be decided, and at an end: or “the valley of concision”, as the Vulgate Latin version; because in this place, and at this time, the nations gathered together in it will be cut to pieces: or, as others, “the valley of threshing” ^{F87}; because, as, in Jehoshaphat’s time, the Moabites and Ammonites were threshed by the Jews in the valley of Berachah, to which the allusion is; so at this time the antichristian kings and their armies will be threshed and beaten, and destroyed by the men of Judah, God’s professing people; (see ^{<3043>}Micah 4:13); these seem to be the words of the prophet, breaking out into this pathetic exclamation, upon a sight of the vast multitudes gathered together in this valley, and slain in it; and the doubling of the word serves to express the prodigious number of them: and this shows that this prophecy refers either to the vast army of the Turks, under the name of Gog, and the great slaughter that will be made of them; and that this valley may be the same with the valley of Hamongog, that is, the valley of the

multitude of Gog, where their multitude of slain shall be buried, (^{<3311>}Ezekiel 39:11); or to that vast carnage of the antichristian kings and their armies at Armageddon, (^{<6164>}Revelation 16:14,16 19:18-21); the Targum is,

“armies, armies, in the valley of the division of judgment:”

for the day of the Lord [is] near in the valley of decision; that is, the great and terrible day of the Lord, to take vengeance on all the antichristian powers, both eastern and western, is nigh at hand, which will be done in this valley.

Ver. 15. *The sun and moon shall be darkened,* etc.] Both the politic and ecclesiastic state of antichrist shall be ruined and destroyed; it shall “fare” with Rome Papal as it did with Rome Pagan, at the time of its dissolution; (see ^{<6162>}Revelation 6:12,13 16:8);

and the stars shall withdraw their shining; antichristian princes and nobles in the civil state, and the clergy of all ranks in the church state, shall lose their glory.

Ver. 16. *The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem,* etc.] Christ, the Lamb, shall now appear as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and utter his voice in his providence and judgments on the behalf of his church and people, signified by Zion and Jerusalem; and therefore said to roar, and utter his voice from thence; he will be heard far and near, and strike terror in the hearts of his enemies; (see ^{<2531>}Jeremiah 25:30,31);

and the heavens and the earth shall shake; great revolutions will be made in the world, both in church and state, among the antichristian powers; and such as will also make them shake and tremble, as well as alter the form and frame of things among them; (see ^{<6168>}Revelation 16:18,19); changes in government, civil and ecclesiastic, are sometimes signified by such phrases, (^{<3116>}Haggai 2:6,7 ^{<8126>}Hebrews 12:26,27 ^{<6164>}Revelation 6:14 11:13,19);

but the Lord [will be] the hope of his people; the object, author, ground, and foundation of their hope of salvation here and hereafter; in whom they may hope for and expect safety and security in the worst of times; since he will be their “refuge”, or their “harbour”^{F88} as it may be rendered; to whom they may have recourse, to shelter and screen them from the rage and wrath of their enemies, and where they will be safe, till the indignation of God be over and past; and while calamities and judgments are upon the

unchristian and ungodly world, they will have nothing to fear amidst these storms, being in a good harbour:

and the strength of the children of Israel; of the spiritual Israel; of all such who are Israelites indeed, the Lord's chosen, redeemed, and called people, both Jews and Gentiles; the author and giver of their spiritual strength, the strength of their lives and of their hearts, of their graces and of their salvation; by whom they are furnished with strength to do the duties of religion; to exercise grace; to wrestle with God in prayer; to withstand spiritual enemies; to bear afflictions patiently, and to persevere to the end: or he is their "fortress"^{F89}; their strong hold and place of defence, where they are safe from every enemy, free from all distresses, enjoy solid peace and comfort, and have plenty of provisions, (²³³⁶Isaiah 33:16).

Ver. 17. *So shall ye know that I [am] the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain*, etc.] The church of God, which is his dwelling place; and will appear more manifestly to be so at this time, when Christ the Lamb will stand on Mount Zion, with an 144,000, having his Father's name in their foreheads, (⁶⁶⁴⁰Revelation 14:1); and which presence of the Lord will be clearly discerned by his people; by the destruction of their enemies, and by his protection of them; by his being their hope and strength, their refuge and their fortress; they will experimentally know his divine inhabitation among them:

then shall Jerusalem be holy; or "holiness"^{F90}; not Jerusalem, literally taken, as Kimchi; though, it being now rebuilt, will be inhabited by holy persons, the converted Jews, and so all manner of holiness practised in it; but rather the whole church of God everywhere, consisting of holy persons, made so through the holiness of Christ imputed to them, and the sanctifying grace of his Spirit wrought in them; not that they will be perfectly holy in themselves, as the saints will in the New Jerusalem state, (⁶²¹²Revelation 21:2,27); but they will be greatly so; holiness will be predominant and universal among men; there will be more real saints, and fewer hypocrites will be in the churches; (see ²³⁰³Isaiah 4:3 ³⁸⁴⁰Zechariah 14:20,21);

and there shall no strangers pass through her any more; to hurt and annoy the church of God; for there shall be none in these times to molest, disturb, and hurt, in all the holy mountain of the Lord, (²³¹⁰Isaiah 11:9); or to pollute her with false doctrine, superstitious worship, or morality; or her communion shall not be interrupted and made uncomfortable, or she be

pestered with hypocrites and ungodly persons, strangers to God and godliness, to Christ, his Spirit, and the power of religion; (see ⁽²⁸¹⁾Isaiah 52:1 ⁽²⁴⁴⁾Ezekiel 44:9).

Ver. 18. *And it shall come to pass in that day*, etc.] When antichrist shall be destroyed; the Jews converted; the power of godliness revived, and the presence of God among his people enjoyed. Vitringa, in his Commentary on Isaiah, frequently applies this, and such like prophecies, to the times of the Maccabees; though, he owns, they were but an emblem of better times under the Gospel dispensation; nor does he deny the mystical and spiritual sense of them;

[that] the mountains shall drop down new wine; which, and the following expressions, are to be understood not in a strict literal sense, as Lactantius ^{F91} seems to have understood them; who says, that, in the Millennium, God will cause a rain of blessing to descend morning and evening; the earth shall bring forth all kind of fruit without the labour of man; honey shall drop from the rocks, and the fountains of milk and wine shall overflow: but hyperbolically, just as the land of Canaan is said to flow with milk and honey; not that it really did, but the phrase is used to denote the fertility of it, and the abundance of temporal blessings in it. The literal sense is this, that the mountains shall be covered with vines, on which they are often planted; these vines shall be full of large clusters of grape; and these grapes, being pressed, shall yield a large quantity of new wine; and so, by a metonymy, the mountains are said to drop it down ^{F92}, that is, abound with it, or produce an abundance of it: but the spiritual or mystical sense is, that the churches of Christ in those times, comparable to mountains, and so to hills in the next clause, for their exalted and visible glorious state in which they now will be; and for the rich gifts and graces of the Spirit within them; and for the pasture upon them, and the trees of righteousness that grow thereon; and also for their firmness and stability, their immovableness and perpetual duration; these shall abound with fresh and large discoveries of the love of God and Christ, which is better than wine, (⁽²¹⁰⁾Song of Solomon 1:2,4); like wine, cheering and refreshing; like new wine, though old as to its original, yet new in the manifestations of it; and which are usually made in the church, and the ordinances of it, to the making glad the hearts of the Lord's people; also they shall abound with the blessings of grace, the fruits of love, such as pardon, peace, justification, etc. which, like wine, fill with joy, revive and comfort; and though they are ancient blessings, provided long ago, they are exhibited under the Gospel

dispensation in a new covenant way; and the application of them is made in the churches, in Zion, where the Lord commands the blessing, even life for evermore. This may also take in the Gospel, which brings the good news of these blessings, and so is very reviving and cheering; and, though ordained and preached of old, is newly revealed under the present dispensation; and will be more clearly in later times, when all the mountains or churches will abound with it, and even the whole earth be filled with the knowledge of it, (²¹⁰⁰Isaiah 11:9); likewise the ordinance of the Lord's supper, that feast of fat things, of wines on the lees well refined, made in the mountain of the Lord, for all his people may be included; and both in that, and in the ministry of the word, the Lord is sometimes pleased, as he may more abundantly hereafter, to give his saints some foretaste of that new wine, which Christ and they shall partake of in his Father's kingdom; (see ²¹⁰⁰Song of Solomon 7:9 ²³⁷⁶Isaiah 25:6 55:1-3) (⁴⁰⁰Matthew 26:29);

and the hills shall flow with milk: that is, there shall be much pasturage upon them, and a great number of cattle feeding thereon, which shall yield large quantities of milk; and so, by the same figure as before, the hills may be said to flow with it ^{F93}. The spiritual meaning is, that the churches of Christ, comparable to hills, for the reasons before given, shall abound with the means of grace, with the sincere milk of the word; to which the Gospel is compared for its whiteness and purity, for every word of God is pure and purifying; for assuaging the wrath the law produces; it being easy of digestion, even to newborn babes; and its salutary nourishing virtue and efficacy; and of this there will be great abundance in the latter day; (see ²¹⁰⁰Song of Solomon 4:11) (⁴⁰⁰⁰1 Peter 2:2,3);

and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters; that is, the channels in which the rivers run; these, in a time of drought, are sometimes empty, and the bottoms of them to be seen, but now full of water, and flow with it: grace is often in Scripture compared to "water" because of its refreshing, cleansing, and fructifying nature; and "rivers" denote, an abundance of it; and the "channels", through which it is conveyed to men, out of the fulness of Christ, are the ordinances; (see ³⁰⁰²Zechariah 4:12); and the prophecy suggests, that these should not be dry and empty, but that large measures of grace shall be communicated by means of them to the souls of men, to their great comfort and edification, and for the supply of their wants; (see ⁴⁰²⁵Ezekiel 36:25 ⁴⁰⁰⁵John 3:5 4:10,14 7:37-39);

and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord; not meaning baptism, as some; nor Christ, the fountain of grace, life, and salvation; but the Gospel, the word of the Lord, that fountain full of excellent truths and doctrines; of the blessings of grace; of exceeding great and precious promises; and of much spiritual peace, joy, and comfort: this is the law or doctrine of the Lord, that should come out of Zion, or the church, (^{<211B>}Isaiah 2:3); the living waters that shall come out of Jerusalem, (^{<344B>}Zechariah 14:8); and the same with the waters in Ezekiel's vision, that came from under the threshold of the house, (^{<240E>}Ezekiel 47:1); it seems to denote the small beginnings of the Gospel, and the great increase and overflow of it in the world, as it does in all the above passages: this is referred by the ancient Jews ^{F94} to the times of the Messiah;

and shall water the valley of Shittim; a plain or valley near Jordan, upon the borders of Moab, at the farther end of Canaan that way, (^{<063D>}Numbers 33:49 ^{<060E>}Joshua 3:1). Benjamin of Tudela ^{F95} says, that from the mount of Olives may be seen the plain and brook of Shittim, unto or near Mount Nebo, which was in the land of Moab. This valley or plain, as the Targum, was so called, either from the "shittah" tree, (^{<2419>}Isaiah 41:19); of which was the wood "shittim", so much used for various things in the tabernacle and temple, that grew there; and which Jerom on this place says was a kind of tree that grew in the wilderness, like a white thorn in colour and leaves, though not in size, for otherwise it was a very large tree, out of which the broadest planks might be cut, and its wood very strong, and of incredible, smoothness and beauty; and which grew not in cultivated places, nor in the Roman soil, but in the desert of Arabia; and therefore one would think did not grow in this plain near Jordan, and so could not be denominated from hence: but Dr. Shaw ^{F96} observes, that the Acacia is by much the largest and the most common tree of these deserts (that is, of Arabia), as it might likewise have been of the plains of Shittim, over against Jericho, from whence it took its name; and adds, we have some reason to conjecture that the shittim wood, whereof the various utensils, etc. of the tabernacle, etc. (^{<025D>}Exodus 25:10,13,23), etc. were made, was the wood of the acacia. Or it may be this place had its name from the rushes which grew on the banks of Jordan, near to which it was; for so, is the word interpreted by some ^{F97}: and Saadiah Gaon says, this valley is Jordan; so called, because Jordan was near to a place called Shittim: however, be it as it will, this can never be understood in a literal sense, that any fountain should arise out of the temple, and flow as far as beyond Jordan, and water any tract of land there;

but must be understood spiritually, of the same waters of the sanctuary as in Ezekiel's vision, (^{<3470>}Ezekiel 47:1,8); at most, the literal sense could only be, that the whole land should be well watered from one end to the other, and, become very fertile and fruitful, by the order and direction of the Lord, that dwells in his temple. The mystical sense is best. Jarchi makes mention of a Midrash, that interprets it of the expiation of the sins of the Israelites, in the affair of Baalpeor at Shittim, (^{<0251>}Numbers 25:1-3); but the true spiritual sense is, that the Gospel shall be carried to the further parts of the earth; that the whole world shall be filled and watered with it, and become fruitful, which before was like a desert; these living waters shall flow, both toward the former and the hinder seas, the eastern and west: era, as in (^{<3848>}Zechariah 14:8); (see ^{<2310>}Isaiah 11:9). Some render it, "shall water the valley of cedars"^{F98}; the shittim wood being a kind of cedar, of which many things belonging to the tabernacle, a type of the church, was made, being firm, sound, incorruptible, and durable; (see ^{<0250>}Exodus 25:10,23 26:26,32 27:1); saints are compared to cedars for their height in Christ, their strength in him, and in his grace; their large and spreading leaves, branches, and roots, or growth in grace; and for their duration and incorruption; (see ^{<0415>}Numbers 24:5,6 ^{<3923>}Psalms 92:13); a valley may signify the low estate of God's people; or be an emblem of lowly, meek, and humble souls, to whom the Gospel is preached, and who are watered and revived by it, and to whom more grace is given; see (^{<2304>}Isaiah 40:4 61:1 57:15). It is by Symmachus rendered "the valley of thorns"; and so Quinquarboreus^{F99} says the word signifies and designs such who are barren in good works.

Ver. 19. *Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness,* etc.] These two nations having been the implacable enemies of Israel, are here put for the future adversaries of the church of Christ, Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan; who will all be destroyed as such, and be no more: Rome is called, spiritually or mystically, Egypt, (^{<6108>}Revelation 11:8); and Edom is a name that well agrees with it, it signifying "red", as it is with the blood of the saints: and it is common, with the Jewish writers, by Edom to understand Rome; which though it may not be true of all places they so interpret, yet is of many, and so here. Kimchi, by Egypt understands the Ishmaelites, or the Turks; and, by Edom, Rome;

for the violence [of] the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood is their land; either in the land of Judah; or rather in their own land, Egypt and Edom. This respects the violences and outrages

committed by the antichristian states upon the true professors of the Christian religion, the Waldenses and Albigenses, and others, whose innocent blood, in great quantities, has been spilled by them. Antichrist is represented as, drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, and in whom will be found the blood of all the prophets and saints; and for this reason ruin and destruction will come upon him and his followers, and blood will be given them to drink, for they are worthy, (^{677b} Revelation 17:6 18:24 16:6,7).

Ver. 20. *But Judah shall dwell for ever*, etc.] The converted Jews shall dwell in their own land for ever, to the end of the, world and never more be carried captive, (²³⁷²⁵ Ezekiel 37:25); and the true professing people of God, as Judah signifies, shall continue in a church state, evermore, and never more be disturbed by any enemies, they shall dwell safely and peaceably to the end of time:

and Jerusalem from generation to generation; shall dwell so in like manner, age after age; that is, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, or the members of the true church of Christ, who shall see and enjoy peace and prosperity, both temporal and spiritual, as Jerusalem signifies.

Ver. 21. *For I will cleanse their blood [which] I have not cleansed*, etc.] Which some understand, as the Targum, of the Lord's, inflicting further punishments on the, enemies of his people, for shedding their innocent blood; and that he will not expiate their sins, nor hold them guiltless, or suffer them to go unpunished; but rather this is to be interpreted in a way of grace and mercy, as a benefit bestowed on Judah and Jerusalem, who are the immediate antecedents to the relative here; and in the words a reason is given why they should dwell safely and peaceably for ever, because the Lord will justify them from their sins; forgive their iniquities; cleanse them from all their pollution, signified by blood; of which grace they will have had no application made to them till this time; but now all their guilt and faith will be removed; and particularly God will forgive, and declare to be forgiven their sin of crucifying Christ; whose blood they had imprecated upon themselves and their children, and which has remained on them; but now will be removed, with all the sad effects of it. Though this may also refer to the conversion of the Gentiles, and the pardon of their sins, and the sanctification of their persons, in such places and parts of the world, where such blessings of grace have not been bestowed in times past for many ages, if ever;

for the Lord dwelleth in Zion; and therefore will diffuse his grace, and spread the blessings of it all around: or “even the Lord [that] dwelleth in Zion”^{F100}; he will do what is before promised; being the Lord, he can do it; and dwelling in Zion his church, it may be believed he will do it; and this will be for ever, when his Shechinah shall return thither in the days of the Messiah, as Kimchi observes.

FOOTNOTES

- ft1 -- Onomast. Sacr. p. 856.
- ft2 -- Deuteronomy Vita & Mart. Sanct. c. 4.
- ft3 -- Deuteronomy Vita Proph. c. 14.
- ft4 -- Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 14. 2.
- ft5 -- Chronological Tables, cent. 7. and 8.
- ft6 -- Scripture Chronology, B. 6. c. 2. p. 646.
- ft7 -- Fol. 12. 1, 2.
- ft8 -- P. 55, 105. Ed. Meyer.
- ft9 -- Fol. 104.
- ft10 -- In Meyer. Anotat. in ib. p, 626.
- ft11 -- **rj a rwdl** “posteritati sequenti”, Vatablus; “generationi posteræ”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius.
- ft12 -- **tw[| tm** “molares”, Pagninus, Mercerus, Burkius.
- ft13 -- Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.
- ft14 -- Idyll. 5.
- ft15 -- Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 25.
- ft16 -- Deuteronomy Architectura, l. 2. c. 9. p. 70.
- ft17 -- **çybw h** “erubuit”, Tigurine version, Mercer, Liveleus; “puduit”, Drusius, Tarnovius; “pudefit”, Cocceius.
- ft18 -- **l l ma** “infirmatum est”, Montanus. So some in Vatablus.
- ft19 -- **hçybw h** “confusa est”, V. L. “pudefacta est”, Cocceius; “pudet”, Drusius.
- ft20 -- **yk** “ideo”, Grotius; “imo”, Piscator; “sane”, Mercer.

- ft21 -- **hrx[warq** “vocate retentionem”, Montanus; “proclamate diem interdicti”, Junius & Tremellius, Heb. “interdictum”, Piscator; “edicite coetum cum cessatione”, Cocceius.
- ft22 -- **ydçm dçk** “uti vastitas a Deo vastatore”, Drusius.
- ft23 -- Deuteronomy Plantatione Noe, p. 237.
- ft24 -- **twdrp** “grana”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Tarnovius, Cocceius, Bochartus. So Ben Melech, who observes they are so called, because they are separated and scattered under the earth.
- ft25 -- **twrxa** “thesauri”, Pagninus, Montanus, Mercerus, Vatablus, Piscator.
- ft26 -- **çybwħ** “confusum est”, V. L. “puduit”, Drusius; “pudore afficit”, Cocceius.
- ft27 -- **rbdm** “non tantum desertum significat sed et campum sativum”, Oecolampadius. “A place of pasture for cattle”, Ben Melech.
- ft28 -- **twan** “caulas”, Piscator. So Ben Melech.
- ft29 -- Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.
- ft30 -- Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 5. p. 479.
- ft31 -- “Postera vix summos spargebat lumine montes Orta dies----”, Virgil. Aeneid. 12.
- ft32 -- Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 5. p. 474, 475.
- ft33 -- Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 48.
- ft34 -- Travels, p. 420. Ed. 2.
- ft35 -- Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.
- ft36 -- **rwrap** “fuliginem”, Montanus; “luridum ollae colorem”, Tigurine version, Tarnovius; “ollam pro nigore ollae”, Drusius.
- ft37 -- **µtj ra ^wj b[y al** “non interrogabunt [isti ab illo] de semitis suis”, some in Vatablus, and others in Kimchi and Abendana.
- ft38 -- **wtl smb** “per aggerem suum”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “via

elevata”, Drusius; “via strata sua”, Cocceius.

- ft39 -- w[xby “verbum significat discidit”, Amos ix. 1. Tarnovius, so Ben Melech.
- ft40 -- j l ç d[b “per missile”, Cocceius; so Bochartus, Castalio, Drusius, Burkius; “super missile”, Montanus.
- ft41 -- “Non avari erunt”, Montanus; “nec lucro inhiant”, Tigurine version; “non studebunt avaritiae”, so some in Vatablus.
- ft42 -- Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.
- ft43 -- Ibid. (Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.)
- ft44 -- Ibid. (Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.)
- ft45 -- T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 26. 2.
- ft46 -- Maimon. Hilchot Ishot, c. 10. sect. 2, 4. Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. Eben Hezer, c. 55. sect. 2, 3.
- ft47 -- R. Elias Levita, Tishbi in hpj p. 119.
- ft48 -- ^ [yw “et respondit”, Piscator, Drusius, Burkius.
- ft49 -- Vid. T. Bab. Succah, fol. 52. 1.
- ft50 -- Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 29.
- ft51 -- twç[l l ydgh yk “quamvis magna gesserit”, Gataker.
- ft52 -- “Quia magnifica Jehovah agit”, Junius & Tremellius; “aget”, Piscator, Liveleus, Castalio.
- ft53 -- T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 112. 2.
- ft54 -- hqdxl hrwmh “doctorem justitiae”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Munster.
- ft55 -- “Doctorem ad justitiam”, Tigurine version, Mercerus, Castalio, Drusius, Cocceius, Burkius.
- ft56 -- Travels, tom. 2. par. 2. c. 1. p. 335. Ed. 2.
- ft57 -- Ib. tom. 1. part 3. sect. 2. p. 137.

- ft58 -- Ib. tom. 2. part 2. c. 2. sect. 3. p. 377.
- ft59 -- **μkl ytml çw** “et rependam vobis”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Tarnovius; “compensabo”, Grotius, Cocceius.
- ft60 -- **l wka μtl ka** “comedetis comedendo”, Pagninus, Montanus; “ceras”, Vatablus, Piscator, Tarnovius.
- ft61 -- Zohar in Numb. fol. 99. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 15. fol. 219. 2. Debarim Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 242. 2. Abarbinel, Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 9. 3. R. Isaac, Chizzuk Emunah, par. 1. p. 51.
- ft62 -- T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 92. 1.
- ft63 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 32.
- ft64 -- Vid. Joseph. Deuteronomy Bello Jud. 1. 6. c. 5. sect. 3.
- ft65 -- **ç[twrmt** “palmas fumi”, Piscator, Cocceius.
- ft66 -- Ebr. Comment. p. 947.
- ft67 -- Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 19. p. 271.
- ft68 -- Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 1. 3. c. 5. p. 75.
- ft69 -- Hist. Heb. 1. 6. c. 27.
- ft70 -- Deuteronomy Bello Jud. 1. 4. c. 5. sect. 4.
- ft71 -- Massaot, sive Itinera, p. 44.
- ft72 -- Deuteronomy locis Hebr. fol. 92. C.
- ft73 -- Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 103, 106. Ed. 7.
- ft74 -- Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 172.
- ft75 -- Written about 1750. Editor.
- ft76 -- Deuteronomy Bello Jud. 1. 6. c. 9. sect. 3.
- ft77 -- **μkyl kyhl** “in palatia vestra”, Montanus, Drusius, Burkius.
- ft78 -- Antiqu. 1. 13. c. 5.
- ft79 -- Arriam. de Exped. Alexand. 1. 2. c. 24.

- ft80 -- Geograph. l. 16. p. 536.
- ft81 -- Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 179, 180.
- ft82 -- Ibid. p. 181.
- ft83 -- Comment. in Jessiam, c. 43. 3.
- ft84 -- Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 23.
- ft85 -- In Catena Graec. Patr. apud Spanhem. Hist. Jobi, c. 3. p. 47.
- ft86 -- **wdr** **πατεiτε**, “calcate”, Sept. so Syr. Ar.
- ft87 -- **𐤨𐤒** **h qm[b** “in valle triturationis”, Piscatsr.
- ft88 -- **hsj m** “refugium”, Tigurine version, Burkus; “receptus”, Tarnovius.
- ft89 -- **ˆw[m** “prsesidium”, Tarnovius; “arx”, Cocceius.
- ft90 -- **çdq** “sanctitas”, Munster, Mercerus, Vatablus, Piscator, Tarnovius.
- ft91 -- Epitome Divin. Institut. c. 11. Vid. Institut. l. 7. c. 24.
- ft92 -- “Incultisque rubens pendebit sentibus uva, Et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella”. Virgil. Eclog. 4. l. 29, 30.
- ft93 -- “Flumina jam lactis, jam flumina nectaris ibant, Flavaque de viridi stillabant ibice mella”. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1.
- ft94 -- Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2.
- ft95 -- Itineranium, p. 44.
- ft96 -- Travels, c. 3. p. 444, 459. Ed. 2.
- ft97 -- Vid. Relaud. Palestina Illustrata, l. 1. c. 54, p. 351, 352.
- ft98 -- **pyj çh l j n ta** “vallem cedrorum lectissimorum”, Junius & Tremellius, Tarnovius.
- ft99 -- Scholia in Targum in loc.
- ft100 -- **hwwhyw** “even I the Lord”, margin of our Bibles.