

THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET

EZEKIEL

Commentary by **A. R. FAUSSETT**

INTRODUCTION

The name Ezekiel means “(whom) God will strengthen” [GESENIUS]; or, “God will prevail” [ROSENMULLER]. His father was Buzi (^{<2008>}Ezekiel 1:3), a priest, and he probably exercised the priestly office himself at Jerusalem, previous to his captivity, as appears from the matured priestly character to be seen in his prophecies, a circumstance which much increased his influence with his captive fellow countrymen at Babylon. Tradition represents Sarera as the land of his nativity. His call to prophesy was in the fifth year from the date of his being carried away with Jehoiachin (see ^{<12241>}2 Kings 24:11-15) by Nebuchadnezzar, 599 B.C. The best portions of the people seem to have been among the first carried away (^{<3116>}Ezekiel 11:16 ^{<2412>}Jeremiah 24:2-7,8,10). The ungodly were willing to do anything to remain in their native land; whereas the godly believed the prophets and obeyed the first summons to surrender, as the only path of safety. These latter, as adhering to the theocratic principle, were among the earliest to be removed by the Chaldeans, who believed that, if they were out of the way, the nation would fall to pieces of itself. They were despised by their brethren in the Holy Land not yet captives, as having no share in the temple sacrifices. Thus Ezekiel’s sphere of labor was one happier and less impeded by his countrymen than that of Jeremiah at home. The vicinity of the river Chebar, which flows into the Euphrates near Circeslum, was the first scene of his prophecies (^{<3001>}Ezekiel 1:1). Tel-Abib there (now Thallaba) was his place of residence (^{<2185>}Ezekiel 3:15), whither the elders used to come to inquire as to God’s messages through him. They were eager to return to Jerusalem, but he taught them that they must first return to their God. He continued to prophesy for at least twenty-two years, that is, to the twenty-seventh year of the captivity (^{<3247>}Ezekiel 29:17), and probably remained with the captives by the Chebar the rest of his life. A treatise, falsely attributed to EPIPHANIUS, states a tradition that he was killed at Babylon by a prince of his people whom he had reproved for idolatry.

He was contemporary with Jeremiah and Daniel. The former had prophesied for thirty-four years before Ezekiel, and continued to do so for six or seven years after him. The call of Ezekiel followed the very next year after the communication of Jeremiah's predictions to Babylon (²⁶¹⁵⁹Jeremiah 51:59), and was divinely intended as a sequel to them. Daniel's predictions are mostly later than Ezekiel's but his piety and wisdom had become proverbial in the early part of Ezekiel's ministry (²³⁴⁴⁸Ezekiel 14:14, 16 28:3). They much resemble one another, especially in the visions and grotesque images. It is a remarkable proof of genuineness that in Ezekiel no prophecies against Babylon occur among those directed against the enemies of the covenant-people. Probably he desired not to give needless offense to the government under which he lived. The effect of his labors is to be seen in the improved character of the people towards the close of the captivity, and their general cessation from idolatry and a return to the law. It was little more than thirty years after the close of his labors when the decree of the Jews' restoration was issued. His leading characteristic is realizing, determined energy; this admirably adapted him for opposing the "rebellious house" "of stubborn front and hard heart," and for maintaining the cause of God's Church among his countrymen in a foreign land, when the external framework had fallen to pieces. His style is plain and simple. His conceptions are definite, and the details even of the symbolical and enigmatical parts are given with lifelike minuteness. The obscurity lies in the substance, not in the form, of his communications. The priestly element predominates in his prophecies, arising from his previous training as a priest. He delights to linger about the temple and to find in its symbolical forms the imagery for conveying his instructions. This was divinely ordered to satisfy the spiritual want felt by the people in the absence of the outward temple and its sacrifices. In his images he is magnificent, though austere and somewhat harsh. He abounds in repetitions, not for ornament, but for force and weight. Poetical parallelism is not found except in a few portions, as in the seventh, twenty-first, twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth through thirty-first chapters. His great aim was to stimulate the dormant minds of the Jews. For this end nothing was better suited than the use of mysterious symbols expressed in the plainest words. The superficial, volatile, and wilfully unbelieving would thereby be left to judicial blindness (²³⁰⁶⁰Isaiah 6:10 ²⁰¹³¹Matthew 13:11-13, etc.); whereas the better-disposed would be awakened to a deeper search into the things of God by the very obscurity of the symbols. Inattention to this divine purpose has led the modern Jews so to magnify this obscurity as to ordain that no one shall read this book till he has passed his thirtieth year.

RABBI HANANIAS is said to have satisfactorily solved the difficulties (*Mischna*) which were alleged against its canonicity. Ecclesiasticus 49:8

refers to it, and JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 10.5.1]. It is mentioned as part of the canon in MELITO'S catalogue [EUSEBIUS, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4.26]; also in ORIGEN, JEROME, and the *Talmud*. The oneness of tone throughout and the repetition of favorite expressions exclude the suspicion that separate portions are not genuine. The earlier portion, the first through the thirty-second chapters, which mainly treats of sin and judgment, is a key to interpret the latter portion, which is more hopeful and joyous, but remote in date. Thus a unity and an orderly progressive character are imparted to the whole. The destruction of Jerusalem is the central point. Previous to this he calls to repentance and warns against blind confidence in Egypt (³¹⁷⁵Ezekiel 17:15-17; compare ³⁵⁰²Jeremiah 37:7) or other human stay. After it he consoles the captives by promising them future deliverance and restoration. His prophecies against foreign nations stand between these two great divisions, and were uttered in the interval between the intimation that Nebuchadnezzar was besieging Jerusalem and the arrival of the news that he had taken it (³⁵²²Ezekiel 33:21). HAVERNICK marks out nine sections: —

- (1) Ezekiel's call to prophesy (³⁰⁰²Ezekiel 1:1-3:15).
- (2) Symbolical predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem (³¹⁸¹⁶Ezekiel 3:16-7:27).
- (3) A year and two months later a vision of the temple polluted by Tammuz or Adonis worship; God's consequent scattering of fire over the city and forsaking of the temple to reveal Himself to an inquiring people in exile; happier and purer times to follow (³¹⁰⁰Ezekiel 8:1-11:25).
- (4) Exposure of the particular sins prevalent in the several classes — priests, prophets, and princes (³⁵⁰²Ezekiel 12:1-19:14).
- (5) A year later the warning of judgment for national guilt repeated with greater distinctness as the time drew nearer (³⁵¹⁰Ezekiel 20:1-23:49).
- (6) Two years and five months later — the very day on which Ezekiel speaks — is announced as the day of the beginning of the siege; Jerusalem shall be overthrown (³⁵¹⁰Ezekiel 24:1-27).
- (7) Predictions against foreign nations during the interval of his silence towards his own people; if judgment begins at the house of God, much more will it visit the ungodly world (³⁵²⁰Ezekiel 25:1-32:32). Some of these were uttered much later than others, but they all *began* to be given after the fall of Jerusalem.
- (8) In the twelfth year of the captivity, when the fugitives from Jerusalem (³⁵²¹Ezekiel 33:21) had appeared in Chaldea, he foretells

better times and the re-establishment of Israel and the triumph of God's kingdom on earth over its enemies, Seir, the heathen, and Gog (Ezekiel 33:1-39:29).

(9) After an interval of thirteen years the closing vision of the order and beauty of the restored kingdom (Ezekiel 40:1-48:35). The particularity of details as to the temple and its offerings rather discountenances the view of this vision being only symbolical, and not at all literal. The event alone can clear it up. At all events it has not yet been fulfilled; it must be future. Ezekiel was the only *prophet* (in the strict sense) among the Jews at Babylon. Daniel was rather a *seer* than a prophet, for the spirit of prophecy was given him to qualify him, not for a spiritual office, but for disclosing future events. His position in a heathen king's palace fitted him for revelations of the *outward* relations of God's kingdom to the kingdoms of the world, so that his book is ranked by the Jews among the Hagiographa or "Sacred Writings," not among the prophetic Scriptures. On the other hand, Ezekiel was distinctively a *prophet*, and one who had to do with the *inward* concerns of the divine kingdom. As a priest, when sent into exile, his service was but transferred from the visible temple at Jerusalem to the spiritual temple in Chaldea.

CHAPTER 1

EZEKIEL 1:1-28.

EZEKIEL'S VISION BY THE CHEBAR. FOUR CHERUBIM AND WHEELS.

1. *Now it came to pass* — rather, “*And it came,*” etc. As this formula in ^{<6000>}Joshua 1:1 has reference to the *written* history of previous times, so here (and in ^{<8000>}Ruth 1:1, and ^{<7000>}Esther 1:1), it refers to the *unwritten* history which was before the mind of the writer. The prophet by it, as it were, continues the history of the preceding times. In the fourth year of Zedekiah’s reign (^{<2619>}Jeremiah 51:59), Jeremiah sent by Seraiah a message to the captives (^{<2900>}Jeremiah 29:1-32) to submit themselves to God and lay aside their flattering hopes of a speedy restoration. This communication was in the next year, the fifth, and the fourth month of the same king (for Jehoiachin’s captivity and Zedekiah’s accession coincide in time), *followed up* by a prophet raised up among the captives themselves, the energetic Ezekiel.

thirtieth year — that is, counting from the beginning of the reign of Nabopolassar, father of Nebuchadnezzar, the era. of the Babylonian empire, 625 B.C., which epoch coincides with the eighteenth year of Josiah, that in which the book of the law was found, and the consequent reformation began [SCALIGER]; or the thirtieth year of Ezekiel’s life. As the Lord was about to be a “little sanctuary” (^{<2610>}Ezekiel 11:16) to the exiles on the Chebar, so Ezekiel was to be the ministering priest; therefore he marks his priestly relation to God and the people at the outset; the close, which describes the future temple, thus answering to the beginning. By designating himself expressly as “the priest” (^{<2000>}Ezekiel 1:3), and as having reached his thirtieth year (the regular year of priests commencing their office), he marks his office as the priest among the prophets. Thus the opening vision follows naturally as the formal institution of that spiritual temple in which he was to minister [FAIRBAIRN].

Chebar — the same as Chabor or Habor, whither the ten tribes had been transported by Tiglath-pileser and Shalmaneser (^{<2716>}2 Kings 17:6 ^{<336>}1 Chronicles 5:26). It flows into the Euphrates near Carchemish or Circesium, two hundred miles north of Babylon.

visions of God — Four expressions are used as to the revelation granted to Ezekiel, the three first having respect to what was presented from without, to assure him of its *reality*, the fourth to his being internally made fit to receive the revelation; “the heavens were opened” (so ^{<4036>}Matthew 3:16 ^{<4076>}Acts 7:56 ^{<6917>}Revelation 19:11); “he saw visions of God”; “the word of Jehovah came *verily* (as the meaning is rather than ‘expressly, *English Version*, ^{<3103>}Ezekiel 1:3) unto him” (it was no unreal hallucination); and “the hand of Jehovah was upon him” (^{<2381>}Isaiah 8:11 ^{<2700>}Daniel 10:10,18 ^{<6017>}Revelation 1:17; the Lord by His touch strengthening him for his high and arduous ministry, that he might be able to witness and report aright the revelations made to him).

2. Jehoiachin’s captivity — In the third or fourth year of Jehoiakim, father of Jehoiachin, the *first* carrying away of Jewish captives to Babylon took place, and among them was Daniel. The *second* was under Jehoiachin, when Ezekiel was carried away. The *third* and final one was at the taking of Jerusalem under Zedekiah.

4. whirlwind — emblematic of God’s judgments (^{<2239>}Jeremiah 23:19 25:32).

out of the north — that is, from Chaldea, whose hostile forces would invade Judea from a *northerly* direction. The prophet conceives himself in the temple.

fire infolding itself — laying hold on whatever surrounds it, drawing it to itself, and devouring it. Literally, “catching itself,” that is, kindling itself [FAIRBAIRN]. The same *Hebrew* occurs in ^{<0124>}Exodus 9:24, as to the “fire mingled with the hail.”

brightness ... about it — that is, about the “cloud.”

out of the midst thereof — that is, out of the midst of the “fire.”

color of amber — rather, “the glancing brightness (literally, ‘the eye’, and so *the glancing appearance*) of polished brass. The *Hebrew*, *chasmal*, is from two roots, “smooth” and “brass” (compare ^{<3107>}Ezekiel 1:7 ^{<6015>}Revelation 1:15) [GESENIUS]. The *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* translate it, “*electrum*”; a brilliant metal compounded of gold and silver.

5. Ezekiel was himself of a “gigantic nature, and thereby suited to counteract the Babylonish spirit of the times, which loved to manifest itself in gigantic, grotesque forms” [HENGSTENBERG].

living creatures — So the *Greek* ought to have been translated in the parallel passage, ^{<6016>}Revelation 4:6, not as *English Version*, “beasts”; for

one of the “four” is *a man*, and man cannot be termed “beast.” ⁽⁻²³⁰⁰⁾Ezekiel 10:20 shows that it is the cherubim that are meant.

likeness of a man — Man, the noblest of the four, is the ideal model after which they are fashioned (⁽⁻²³⁰⁰⁾Ezekiel 1:10 ⁽⁻²³⁰⁴⁾Ezekiel 10:14). The point of comparison between him and them is the erect posture of their bodies, though doubtless including also the general mien. Also the *hands* (⁽⁻²³⁰²⁾Ezekiel 10:21).

6. Not only were there four distinct living creatures, but each of the four had four faces, making sixteen in all. The four living creatures of the cherubim answer by contrast to the four world monarchies represented by four *beasts*, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome (⁽⁻²⁰⁰⁰⁾Daniel 7:1-28). The Fathers identified them with the four Gospels: Matthew the lion, Mark the ox, Luke the man, John the eagle. Two cherubim only stood over the ark in the temple; two more are now added, to imply that, while the law is retained as the basis, a new form is needed to be added to impart new life to it. The number four may have respect to the four quarters of the world, to imply that God’s angels execute His commands everywhere. Each head in front had the face of a man as the primary and prominent one: on the right the face of a lion, on the left the face of an ox, above from behind the face of an eagle. The Mosaic cherubim were similar, only that the human faces were put looking towards each other, and towards the mercy seat between, being formed out of the same mass of pure gold as the latter (⁽⁻⁰²⁵⁹⁾Exodus 25:19,20). In ⁽⁻²⁰⁰²⁾Isaiah 6:2 two wings are added to cover their countenances; because there they stand by the throne, here under the throne; there God deigns to consult them, and His condescension calls forth their humility, so that they veil their faces before Him; here they execute His commands. The face expresses their intelligence; the wings, their rapidity in fulfilling God’s will. The Shekinah or flame, that signified God’s presence, and the written name, JEHOVAH, occupied the intervening space between the cherubim ⁽⁻⁰⁰⁴⁴⁾Genesis 4:14,16 3:24 (“placed”; properly, “to place in *a tabernacle*”), imply that the cherubim were appointed at the fall as symbols of God’s presence in a consecrated place, and that man was to worship there. In the patriarchal dispensation when the flood had caused the removal of the cherubim from Eden, *seraphim* or *teraphim* (*Chaldean* dialect) were made as models of them for domestic use (⁽⁻⁰³¹⁹⁾Genesis 31:19, *Margin*; ⁽⁻⁰³³⁰⁾Genesis 31:30). The silence of the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth chapters of Exodus to their configuration, whereas everything else is minutely described, is because their form was so well-known already to Bezaleel and all Israel by tradition as to need no detailed description. Hence Ezekiel (⁽⁻²³⁰⁰⁾Ezekiel 10:20) at once knows them, for he had seen them repeatedly in the carved work of the outer sanctuary of Solomon’s temple (⁽⁻⁰⁰²³⁾1 Kings 6:23-29). He

therefore consoles the exiles with the hope of having the same cherubim in the renovated temple which should be reared; and he assures them that the same God who dwelt between the cherubim of the temple would be still with His people by the Chebar. But they were not in Zerubbabel's temple; therefore Ezekiel's foretold temple, if literal, is yet future. The ox is selected as chief of the tame animals, the lion among the wild, the eagle among birds, and man the head of all, in his ideal, realized by the Lord Jesus, combining all the excellencies of the animal kingdom. The cherubim probably represent the ruling powers by which God acts in the natural and moral world. Hence they sometimes answer to the ministering angels; elsewhere, to the redeemed saints (the elect Church) through whom, as by the angels, God shall hereafter rule the world and proclaim the manifold wisdom of God (¹⁶²⁸Matthew 19:28 ¹⁶²⁹1 Corinthians 6:2 ¹⁶³⁰Ephesians 3:10 ¹⁶³¹Revelation 3:21 4:6-8). The "lions" and "oxen," amidst "palms" and "open flowers" carved in the temple, were the four-faced cherubim which, being traced on a flat surface, presented only one aspect of the four. The human-headed winged bulls and eagle-headed gods found in Nineveh, sculptured amidst palms and tulip-shaped flowers, were borrowed by corrupted tradition from the cherubim placed in Eden near its fruits and flowers. So the Aaronic calf (¹⁶³²Exodus 32:4,5) and Jeroboam's calves at Daniel and Beth-el, a schismatic imitation of the sacred symbols in the temple at Jerusalem. So the ox figures of Apis on the sacred arks of Egypt.

7. *straight feet* — that is, straight *legs*. Not protruding in any part as the legs of an ox, but straight like a man's [GROTIUS]. Or, like solid pillars; *not bending*, as man's, at the knee. They glided along, rather than walked. Their movements were all sure, right, and without effort [KITTO, *Cyclopaedia*].

sole ... calf's foot — HENDERSON hence supposes that "*straight feet*" implies that they did not project horizontally like men's feet, but vertically as calves' feet. The *solid firmness* of the round foot of a calf seems to be the point of comparison.

color — *the glittering appearance*, indicating God's purity.

8. The hands of each were the hands of a man. The hand is the symbol of *active power*, *guided by skilfulness* (¹⁶³³Psalms 78:72).

under their wings — signifying their operations are hidden from our too curious prying; and as the "wings" signify something more than human, namely, the secret prompting of God, it is also implied that they are moved by it and not by their own power, so that they do nothing at random, but all with divine wisdom.

they four had ... faces and ... wings — He returns to what he had stated already in ^{<3006>}Ezekiel 1:6; this gives a reason why they had hands on their four sides, namely, because they had faces and wings on the four sides. They moved whithersoever they would, not by active energy merely, but also by knowledge (expressed by their *faces*) and divine guidance (expressed by their “wings”).

9. they — had no occasion to turn themselves round when changing their direction, for they had a face (^{<3006>}Ezekiel 1:6) looking to each of the four quarters of heaven. They made no mistakes; and their work needed not be gone over again. Their wings were joined above in pairs (see ^{<3011>}Ezekiel 1:11).

10. they ... had the face of a man — namely, in front. The human face was the primary and prominent one and the fundamental part of the composite whole. On its right was the lion’s face; on the left, the ox’s (called “cherub,” ^{<3004>}Ezekiel 10:14); at the back from above was the eagle’s.

11. The tips of the two outstretched wings reached to one another, while the other two, in token of humble awe, formed a veil for the lower parts of the body.

stretched upward — rather, “were parted from above” (compare *Margin*; see on ^{<3012>}Isaiah 6:2). The joining together of their wings above implies that, though the movements of Providence on earth may seem conflicting and confused, yet if one lift up his eyes to heaven, he will see that they admirably conspire towards the one end at last.

12. The same idea as in ^{<3009>}Ezekiel 1:9. The repetition is because we men are so hard to be brought to acknowledge the wisdom of God’s doings; they seem tortuous and confused to us, but they are all tending steadily to one aim.

the spirit — the secret impulse whereby God moves His angels to the end designed. They do not turn back or aside till they have fulfilled the office assigned them.

13. likeness ... appearance — not tautology. “Likeness” expresses the general form; “appearance,” the particular aspect.

coals of fire — denoting the intensely pure and burning justice wherewith God punishes by His angels those who, like Israel, have hardened themselves against His long-suffering. So in ^{<3012>}Isaiah 6:2,6, instead of cherubim, the name “seraphim,” *the burning ones*, is applied, indicating God’s consuming righteousness; whence their cry to Him is, “Holy! holy! holy!” and the burning coal is applied to his lips, for the message through

his mouth was to be one of judicial severance of the godly from the ungodly, to the ruin of the latter.

lamps — torches. The fire emitted sparks and flashes of light, as torches do.

went up and down — expressing the marvellous vigor of God's Spirit, in all His movements never resting, never wearied.

fire ... bright — indicating the glory of God.

out of the fire ... lightning — God's righteousness will at last cause the bolt of His wrath to fall on the guilty; as now, on Jerusalem.

14. ran and returned — Incessant, restless motion indicates the plenitude of life in these cherubim; so in ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾Revelation 4:8, "they rest not day or night" (⁽³⁰¹⁰⁾Zechariah 4:10).

flash of lightning — rather, as distinct from "lightning" (⁽²⁰¹³⁾Ezekiel 1:13), "the meteor flash," or sheet lightning [FAIRBAIRN].

15. one wheel — The "dreadful height" of the wheel (⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾Ezekiel 1:18) indicates the gigantic, terrible energy of the complicated revolutions of God's providence, bringing about His purposes with unerring certainty. One wheel appeared transversely within another, so that the movement might be without turning, whithersoever the living creatures might advance (⁽²⁰¹⁷⁾Ezekiel 1:17). Thus each wheel was composed of two circles cutting one another at right angles, "one" only of which appeared to touch the ground ("upon the earth"), according to the direction the cherubim desired to move in.

with his four faces — rather, "according to its four faces" or sides; as there was a side or direction to each of the four creatures, so there was a wheel for each of the sides [FAIRBAIRN]. The four sides or semicircles of each composite wheel pointed, as the four faces of each of the living creatures, to the four quarters of heaven. HAVERNICK refers "his" or "its" to *the wheels*. The cherubim and their wings and wheels stood in contrast to the symbolical figures, somewhat similar, then existing in Chaldea, and found in the remains of Assyria. The latter, though derived from the original revelation by tradition, came by corruption to symbolize the astronomical zodiac, or the sun and celestial sphere, by a circle with wings or irradiations. But Ezekiel's cherubim rise above natural objects, the gods of the heathen, to the representation of the one true God, who made and continually upholds them.

16. appearance ... work — their *form* and the *material* of their work.

beryl — rather, “the glancing appearance of the Tarshish stone”; the chrysolite or topaz, brought from Tarshish or Tartessus in Spain. It was one of the gems in the breastplate of the high priest (^{<2830>}Exodus 28:20 ^{<2154>}Song of Solomon 5:14 ^{<706>}Daniel 10:6).

four had one likeness — The similarity of the wheels to one another implies that there is no inequality in all God’s works, that all have a beautiful analogy and proportion.

17. went upon their four sides — Those faces or sides of the four wheels moved which answered to the direction in which the cherubim desired to move; while the transverse circles in each of the four composite wheels remained suspended from the ground, so as not to impede the movements of the others.

18. rings — that is, feloes or circumferences of the wheels.

eyes — The multiplicity of eyes here in the wheels. and ^{<3002>}Ezekiel 10:12, in the cherubim themselves, symbolizes the *plenitude of intelligent life*, the eye being the window through which “the spirit of the living creatures” in the wheels (^{<3003>}Ezekiel 1:20) looks forth (compare ^{<3005>}Zechariah 4:10). As the wheels signify the providence of God, so the eyes imply that He sees all the circumstances of each case, and does nothing by blind impulse.

19. went by them — went *beside* them.

20. the spirit was to go — that is, their will was for going whithersoever the Spirit was for going.

over against them — rather, *beside* or *in conjunction with them*.

spirit of the living creature — put collectively for “the living *creatures*”; the cherubim. Having first viewed them separately, he next views them in the aggregate as the composite living *creature* in which the Spirit resided. The life intended is that connected with God, holy, spiritual life, in the plenitude of its active power.

21. over against — rather, “along with” [HENDERSON]; or, “beside” [FAIRBAIRN].

22. upon the heads — rather, “above the heads” [FAIRBAIRN].

color — glitter.

terrible crystal — dazzling the spectator by its brightness.

23. straight — erect [FAIRBAIRN], expanded upright.

two ... two ... covered ... bodies — not, as it might seem, contradicting ^{<3011>}Ezekiel 1:11. The two wings expanded upwards, though chiefly used for flying, yet up to the summit of the figure where they were parted from each other, covered the upper part of the body, while the other two wings covered the lower parts.

24. voice of ... Almighty — the thunder (^{<4208>}Psalm 29:3,4).

voice of speech — rather, “the voice” or “sound of *tumult*,” as in ^{<2416>}Jeremiah 11:16. From an *Arabic* root, meaning the “impetuous rush of heavy rain.”

noise of ... host — (^{<2438>}Isaiah 13:4 ^{<2716>}Daniel 10:6).

25. let down ... wings — While the Almighty gave forth His voice, they reverently let their wings fall, to listen stilly to His communication.

26. The Godhead appears in the likeness of enthroned humanity, as in ^{<0240>}Exodus 24:10. Besides the “paved work of a sapphire stone, as it were the body of heaven in clearness,” there, we have here the “throne,” and God “as a man,” with the “appearance of fire round about.” This last was a prelude of the incarnation of Messiah, but in His character as Savior and as Judge (^{<6611>}Revelation 19:11-16). The azure sapphire answers to the color of the sky. As others are called “sons of God,” but He “the Son of God,” so others are called “sons of man” (^{<3011>}Ezekiel 2:1,3), but He “the Son of man” (^{<0613>}Matthew 16:13), being the embodied representative of humanity and the whole human race; as, on the other hand, He is the representative of “the fullness of the Godhead” (^{<5019>}Colossians 2:9). While the cherubim are movable, the throne above, and Jehovah who moves them, are firmly fixed. It is good news to man, that the throne above is filled by One who even there appears as “a man.”

27. color of amber — “the glitter of chasnal” [FAIRBAIRN]. See on ^{<3011>}Ezekiel 1:4; rather, “polished brass” [ENDERSON]. Messiah is described here as in ^{<2716>}Daniel 10:5,6 ^{<6614>}Revelation 1:14,15.

28. the bow ... in ... rain — the symbol of the sure covenant of mercy to God’s children remembered amidst judgments on the wicked; as in the flood in Noah’s days (^{<6613>}Revelation 4:3). “Like hanging out from the throne of the Eternal a fing of peace, assuring all that the purpose of Heaven was to preserve rather than to destroy. Even if the divine work should require a deluge of wrath, still the faithfulness of God would only shine forth the more brightly at last to the children of promise, in consequence of the *tribulations* needed to prepare for the ultimate good” [FAIRBAIRN]. (^{<2508>}Isaiah 54:8-10).

I fell upon ... face — the right attitude, spiritually, before we enter on any active work for God (^{<3012>}Ezekiel 2:2 3:23,24 ^{<3017>}Revelation 1:17). In this first chapter God gathered into one vision the substance of all that was to occupy the prophetic agency of Ezekiel; as was done afterwards in the opening vision of the Revelation of Saint John.

CHAPTER 2

EZEKIEL 2:1-10.

EZEKIEL'S COMMISSION.

1. *Son of man* — often applied to Ezekiel; once only to Daniel (²⁰⁸⁷Daniel 8:17), and not to any other prophet. The phrase was no doubt taken from Chaldean usage during the sojourn of Daniel and Ezekiel in Chaldea. But the spirit who sanctioned the words of the prophet implied by it the *lowliness and frailty* of the prophet as man “lower than the angels,” though now admitted to the vision of angels and of God Himself, “lest he should be exalted through the abundance of the revelations” (²⁷¹²2 Corinthians 12:7). He is appropriately so called as being type of the divine “Son of man” here revealed as “man” (see on ²⁰²³Ezekiel 1:26). That title, as applied to Messiah, implies at once His *lowliness* and His *exaltation*, in His manifestations as *the Representative man*, at His first and second comings respectively (²⁹⁰⁶Psalm 8:4-8 ²¹⁶³Matthew 16:13 20:18; and on the other hand, ²⁰⁷³Daniel 7:13,14 ²¹⁶⁶Matthew 26:64 ²¹⁵²John 5:27).

2. *spirit entered ... when he spake* — The divine word is ever accompanied by the Spirit (²⁰⁰²Genesis 1:2,3).

set ... upon ... feet — He had been “upon his face” (²⁰²³Ezekiel 1:28). Humiliation on our part is followed by exaltation on God’s part (²⁰²³Ezekiel 3:23,24 ²²²⁹Job 22:29 ²⁹⁰⁶James 4:6 ²¹⁶⁵1 Peter 5:5). “On the feet” was the fitting attitude when he was called on to walk and work for God (²¹⁸⁸Ephesians 5:8 6:15).

that I heard — rather, “*then* I heard.”

3. *nation* — rather, “nations”; the word usually applied to the *heathen* or *Gentiles*; here to the Jews, as being altogether *heathenized* with idolatries. So in ²⁰¹¹Isaiah 1:10, they are named “Sodom” and “Gomorrhah.” They were now become “Lo-ammi,” not the *people* of God (²⁰⁰⁹Hosea 1:9).

4. *impudent* — literally, “hard-faced” (²¹⁰⁷Ezekiel 3:7,9).

children — resumptive of “they” (²⁰¹¹Ezekiel 2:3); the “children” walk in their “fathers’” steps.

I ... send thee — God opposes His command to all obstacles. Duties are ours; events are God's.

Thus saith the Lord God — God opposes His name to the obstinacy of the people.

5. forbear — namely, to hear.

yet shall know — Even if they will not hear, at least they will not have ignorance to plead as the cause of their perversity (²³³³Ezekiel 33:33).

6. briers — not as the *Margin* and GESENIUS, “rebels,” which would not correspond so well to “thorns.” The *Hebrew* is from a root meaning “to sting” as *nettles* do. The wicked are often so called (¹²¹⁹2 Samuel 23:6 ²¹¹¹Song of Solomon 2:2 ²³⁹⁸Isaiah 9:18).

scorpions — a reptile about six inches long with a deadly sting at the end of the tail.

be not afraid — (²¹³⁸Luke 12:4 ¹¹³⁴1 Peter 3:14).

7. most rebellious — literally, “rebellion” itself: its very essence.

8. eat — (See on ²⁴⁵⁶Jeremiah 15:16; ⁶⁰⁰⁹Revelation 10:9,10). The idea is to possess himself fully of the message and digest it in the mind; not literal *eating*, but such an *appropriation* of its unsavory contents that they should become, as it were, part of himself, so as to impart them the more vividly to his hearers.

9. roll — the form in which ancient books were made.

10. within and without — on the face and the back. Usually the parchment was written only on its *inside* when rolled up; but so full was God's message of impending woes that it was written also on the back.

CHAPTER 3

⋈ EZEKIEL 3:1-27.

EZEKIEL EATS THE ROLL. IS COMMISSIONED TO GO TO THEM OF THE CAPTIVITY AND GOES TO TEL-ABIB BY THE CHEBAR: AGAIN BEHOLDS THE SHEKINAH GLORY: IS TOLD TO RETIRE TO HIS HOUSE, AND ONLY SPEAK WHEN GOD OPENS HIS MOUTH.

1. *eat ... and ... speak* — God’s messenger must first inwardly appropriate God’s truth himself, before he “speaks” it to others (see on ⋈ Ezekiel 2:8). Symbolic actions were, when possible and proper, performed outwardly; otherwise, internally and in spiritual vision, the action so narrated making the naked statement more intuitive and impressive by presenting the subject in a concentrated, embodied form.

3. *honey for sweetness* — Compare ⋈ Psalm 19:10 119:103 ⋈ Revelation 10:9, where, as here in ⋈ Ezekiel 3:14, the “sweetness” is followed by “bitterness.” The former being due to the painful nature of the message; the latter because it was the Lord’s service which he was engaged in; and his eating the roll and finding it sweet, implied that, divesting himself of carnal feeling, he made God’s will his will, however painful the message that God might require him to announce. The fact that God would be glorified was his greatest pleasure.

5. See *Margin, Hebrew*, “deep of lip, and heavy of tongue,” that is, men speaking an obscure and unintelligible tongue. Even they would have listened to the prophet; but the Jews, though addressed in their own tongue, will not hear him.

6. *many people* — It would have increased the difficulty had he been sent, not merely to one, but to “many people” differing in tongues, so that the missionary would have needed to acquire a new tongue for addressing each. The after mission of the apostles to many peoples, and the gift of tongues for that end, are foreshadowed (compare ⋈ 1 Corinthians 14:21 with ⋈ Isaiah 28:11).

had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened — (⋈ Matthew 11:21,23).

7. *will not hearken unto thee: for ... not ... me* — (^{<615D>}John 15:20). Take patiently their rejection of thee, for I thy Lord bear it along with thee.

8. Ezekiel means one “strengthened by God.” Such he was in godly firmness, in spite of his people’s opposition, according to the divine command to the priest tribe to which he belonged (^{<630D>}Deuteronomy 33:9).

9. *As ... flint* — so Messiah the antitype (^{<280D>}Isaiah 50:7; compare ^{<300B>}Jeremiah 1:8,17).

10. *receive in ... heart ... ears* — The transposition from the natural order, namely, first receiving with the *ears*, then in the *heart*, is designed. The preparation of the heart for God’s message should precede the reception of it with the ears (compare ^{<300B>}Proverbs 16:1 ^{<300D>}Psalms 10:17).

11. *thy people* — who ought to be better disposed to hearken to thee, their fellow countryman, than hadst thou been a foreigner (^{<300B>}Ezekiel 3:5,6).

12. (^{<408B>}Acts 8:39). Ezekiel’s abode heretofore had not been the most suitable for his work. He, therefore, is guided by the Spirit to Tel-Abib, the chief town of the Jewish colony of captives: there he sat on the ground, “the throne of the miserable” (^{<300B>}Ezra 9:3 ^{<250D>}Lamentations 1:1-3), seven days, the usual period for manifesting deep grief (^{<300B>}Job 2:13; see ^{<300D>}Psalms 137:1), thus winning their confidence by sympathy in their sorrow. He is accompanied by the cherubim which had been manifested at Chebar (^{<300B>}Ezekiel 1:3,4), after their departure from Jerusalem. They now are heard moving with the “*voice of a great rushing* (compare ^{<400D>}Acts 2:2), *saying*, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from His place,” that is, moving *from the place* in which it had been at Chebar, to accompany Ezekiel to his new destination (^{<300B>}Ezekiel 9:3); or, “from His place” may rather mean, *in His place and manifested “from” it*. Though God may seem to have forsaken His temple, He is still in it and will restore His people to it. His glory is “blessed,” in opposition to those Jews who spoke evil of Him, as if He had been unjustly rigorous towards their nation [CALVIN].

13. *touched* — literally, “kissed,” that is, closely embraced.

noise of a great rushing — typical of great disasters impending over the Jews.

14. *bitterness* — sadness on account of the impending calamities of which I was required to be the unwelcome messenger. But the “hand,” or powerful impulse of Jehovah, urged me forward.

15. *Tel-Abib* — *Tel* means an “elevation.” It is identified by MICHAELIS with *Thallaba* on the Chabor. Perhaps the name expressed the Jew’s hopes

of restoration, or else the fertility of the region. *Abib* means the *green ears* of corn which appeared in the month Nisan, the pledge of the harvest.

I sat, etc. — This is the *Hebrew Margin* reading. The *text* is rather, “I beheld them sitting there” [GESENIUS]; or, “And those that were settled there,” namely, the older settlers, as distinguished from the more recent ones alluded to in the previous clause. The ten tribes had been long since settled on the Chabor or Habor (^{<1276>}2 Kings 17:6) [HAVERNICK].

17. *watchman* — Ezekiel alone, among the prophets, is called a “watchman,” not merely to sympathize, but to give timely warning of danger to his people where none was suspected. Habakkuk (Habakkuk 2:1) speaks of standing upon his “watch,” but it was only in order to be on the lookout for the manifestation of God’s power (so ^{<2518>}Isaiah 52:8 62:6); not as Ezekiel, to act as a watchman to others.

18. *warning ... speakest to warn* — The repetition implies that it is not enough to warn once in passing, but that the warning is to be inculcated continually (^{<502>}2 Timothy 4:2, “in season, out of season”; ^{<421>}Acts 20:31, “night and day with tears”).

save — ^{<1116>}Ezekiel 2:5 had seemingly taken away all hope of salvation; but the reference there was to the mass of the people whose case was hopeless; a few individuals, however, were reclaimable.

die in ... iniquity — (^{<812>}John 8:21,24). Men are not to flatter themselves that their ignorance, owing to the negligence of their teachers, will save them (^{<812>}Romans 2:12, “As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law”).

19. *wickedness ... wicked way* — *internal* wickedness of *heart*, and *external* of the *life*, respectively.

delivered thy soul — (^{<2101>}Isaiah 49:4,5 ^{<4105>}Acts 20:26).

20. *righteous ... turn from ... righteousness* — not one “righteous” as to the *root* and *spirit of regeneration* (^{<1883>}Psalm 89:33 138:8 ^{<2362>}Isaiah 26:12 27:3 ^{<6103>}John 10:28 ^{<5106>}Philippians 1:6), but as to its *outward appearance* and performances. So the “righteous” (^{<1887>}Proverbs 18:17 ^{<4193>}Matthew 9:13). As in ^{<1189>}Ezekiel 3:19 the minister is required to lead the wicked to good, so in ^{<1120>}Ezekiel 3:20 he is to confirm the well-disposed in their duty.

commit iniquity — that is, give himself up *wholly* to it (^{<1108>}1 John 3:8,9), for even the best often fall, but not *wilfully* and *habitually*.

I lay a stumbling-block — not that God tempts to sin (³⁰¹³James 1:13,14), but God gives men over to judicial blindness, and to *their own* corruptions (³¹⁹⁶Psalms 9:16,17 94:23) when they “like not to retain God in their knowledge” (³¹⁰²Romans 1:24,26); just as, on the contrary, God makes “the way of the righteous plain” (³⁰⁴¹Proverbs 4:11,12 15:19), so that they do “not stumble.” CALVIN refers “stumbling-block” not to the *guilt*, but to its *punishment*; “I bring *ruin* on him.” The former is best. Ahab, after a kind of righteousness (¹¹²⁷1 Kings 21:27-29), relapsed and consulted lying spirits in false prophets; so God permitted one of these to be his “stumbling-block,” both to sin and its corresponding punishment (¹¹²²1 Kings 22:21-23).

his blood will I require — (³⁸⁵⁷Hebrews 13:17).

22. *hand of the Lord* — (³⁰⁰⁸Ezekiel 1:3).

go ... into the plain — in order that he might there, in a place secluded from unbelieving men, receive a fresh manifestation of the divine glory, to inspirit him for his trying work.

23. *glory of the Lord* — (³¹⁰³Ezekiel 1:28).

24. *set me upon my feet* — having been previously prostrate and unable to rise until raised by the divine power.

shut thyself within ... house — implying that in the work he had to do, he must look for no sympathy from man but must be often alone with God and draw his strength from Him [FAIRBAIRN]. “Do not go out of thy house till I reveal the future to thee by signs and words,” which God does in the following chapters, down to the eleventh. Thus a representation was given of the city shut up by siege [GROTIUS]. Thereby God proved the obedience of His servant, and Ezekiel showed the reality of His call by proceeding, not through rash impulse, but by the directions of God [CALVIN].

25. *put bands upon thee* — not literally, but spiritually, the binding, depressing influence which their rebellious conduct would exert on his spirit. Their perversity, like bands, would repress his freedom in preaching; as in ⁴⁰²2 Corinthians 6:12, Paul calls himself “straitened” because his teaching did not find easy access to them. Or else, it is said to console the prophet for being shut up; if thou wert now at once to announce God’s message, they *would* rush on thee and *bind* them with “bands” [CALVIN].

26. *I will make my tongue ... dumb* — Israel had rejected the prophets; therefore God deprives Israel of the prophets and of His word — God’s sorest judgment (⁶⁰²1 Samuel 7:2 ³⁰⁸¹Amos 8:11,12).

27. *when I speak ... I will open thy mouth* — opposed to the silence imposed on the prophet, to punish the people (³¹⁸³Ezekiel 3:26). After the interval of silence has awakened their attention to the cause of it, namely, their sins, they may then hearken to the prophecies which they would not do before.

He that heareth, let him hear ... forbear — that is, thou hast done thy part, whether they hear or forbear. He who shall forbear to hear, it shall be at his own peril; he who hears, it shall be to his own eternal good (compare ⁶²¹¹Revelation 22:11).

CHAPTER 4

EZEKIEL 4:1-17.

SYMBOLICAL VISION OF THE SIEGE AND THE INIQUITY-BEARING.

1. *tile* — a sun-dried brick, such as are found in Babylon, covered with cuneiform inscriptions, often two feet long and one foot broad.

2. *forth* — rather, “watch tower” (²⁹⁵⁰⁴Jeremiah 52:4) wherein the besieges could watch the movements of the besieged [GESENIUS]. A wall of circumvallation [*Septuagint* and ROSENMULLER]. A kind of battering-ram [MAURER]. The first view is best.

a mount — wherewith the Chaldeans could be defended from missiles.

battering-rams — literally, “through-borers.” In ²⁹⁵²²Ezekiel 21:22 the same *Hebrew* is translated “captains.”

3. *iron pan* — the divine decree as to the Chaldean army investing the city.

set it for a wall of iron between thee and the city — Ezekiel, in the person of God, represents the wall of separation between him and the people as one of iron: and the Chaldean investing army. His instrument of separating them from him, as one impossible to burst through.

set ... face against it — inexorably (²⁹³⁴⁶Psalm 34:16). The exiles envied their brethren remaining in Jerusalem, but exile is better than the straitness of a siege.

4. Another symbolical act performed at the same time as the former, in vision, not in external action, wherein it would have been only puerile: narrated as a thing ideally done, it would make a vivid impression. The second action is supplementary to the first, to bring out more fully the same prophetic idea.

left side — referring to the *position* of the ten tribes, the *northern* kingdom, as Judah, the *southern*, answers to “the right side” (²⁹⁰⁴⁸Ezekiel 4:6). The Orientals facing the east in their mode, had the north on their *left*, and the south on their *right* (²⁹³⁴⁶Ezekiel 16:46). Also the right was more honorable

than the left: so Judah as being the seat of the temple, was more so than Israel.

bear the iniquity — iniquity being regarded as a *burden*; so it means, “bear the *punishment* of their iniquity” (^{<0146>}Numbers 14:34). A type of Him who was the great *sin-bearer*, not in mimic show as Ezekiel, but in reality (^{<2504>}Isaiah 53:4,6,12).

5. three hundred and ninety days — The three hundred ninety years of punishment appointed for Israel, and forty for Judah, cannot refer to the siege of Jerusalem. That siege is referred to in ^{<300>}Ezekiel 4:1-3, and in a sense restricted to the literal siege, but comprehending the *whole* train of punishment to be inflicted for their sin; therefore we read here merely of its sore pressure, not of its result. The sum of three hundred ninety and forty years is four hundred thirty, a period famous in the history of the covenant-people, being that of their sojourn in Egypt (^{<0234>}Exodus 12:40,41 ^{<4877>}Galatians 3:17). The forty alludes to the forty years in the wilderness. Elsewhere (^{<0268>}Deuteronomy 28:68 ^{<3008>}Hosea 9:3), God threatened to bring them back to Egypt, which must mean, not Egypt literally, but a bondage as bad as that one in Egypt. So now God will reduce them to a kind of new Egyptian bondage to the world: Israel, the greater transgressor. for a longer period than Judah (compare ^{<3485>}Ezekiel 20:35-38). Not the whole of the four hundred thirty years of the Egypt state is appointed to Israel; but this shortened by the forty years of the wilderness sojourn, to imply, that a way is open to their return to life by their having the Egypt state merged into that of the wilderness; that is, by ceasing from idolatry and seeking in their sifting and sore troubles, through God’s covenant, a restoration to righteousness and peace [FAIRBAIRN]. The three hundred ninety, in reference to the *sin* of Israel, was also literally true, being the years from the setting up of the calves by Jeroboam (^{<1120>}1 Kings 12:20-33), that is, from 975 to 583 B.C.: *about* the year of the Babylonians captivity; and perhaps the forty of Judah refers to that part of Manasseh’s fifty-five year’s reign in which he had not repented, and which, we are expressly told, was the cause of God’s removal of Judah, notwithstanding Josiah’s reformation (^{<1210>}1 Kings 21:10-16 ^{<1236>}2 Kings 23:26,27).

6. each day for a year — literally, “a day for a year, a day for a year.” Twice repeated, to mark more distinctly the reference to ^{<0146>}Numbers 14:34. The picturing of the future under the image of the past, wherein the meaning was far from lying on the surface, was intended to arouse to a less superficial mode of thinking, just as the partial veiling of truth in Jesus’ parables was designed to stimulate inquiry; also to remind men that God’s dealings in the past are a key to the future, for He moves on the same everlasting *principles*, the *forms* alone being transitory.

7. arm ... uncovered — to be ready for action, which the long Oriental garment usually covered it would prevent (²⁵⁷⁰Isaiah 52:10).

thou shalt prophesy against it — This gesture of thine will be a tacit prophecy against it.

8. bands — (²⁰⁸⁵Ezekiel 3:25).

not turn from ... side — to imply the impossibility of their being able to shake off the punishment.

9. wheat ... barley, etc. — Instead of simple flour used for delicate cakes (⁴⁰⁸⁶Genesis 18:6), the Jews should have a coarse mixture of six different kinds of grain, such as the poorest alone would eat.

fitches — spelt or *dhourra*.

three hundred and ninety — The forty days are omitted, since these latter typify the *wilderness period* when Israel stood *separate from the Gentiles and their pollution*, though partially chastened by stint of bread and water (²⁰⁴⁶Ezekiel 4:16), whereas the eating of the polluted bread in the three hundred ninety days implies a forced residence “*among the Gentiles*” who were polluted with idolatry (²⁰⁴³Ezekiel 4:13). This last is said of “Israel” primarily, as being the most debased (²⁰⁴⁹Ezekiel 4:9-15); they had *spiritually* sunk to a level with the heathen, therefore God will make their condition *outwardly* to correspond. Judah and Jerusalem fare less severely, being less guilty: they are to “eat bread by weight and with care,” that is, have a stinted supply and be chastened with the milder discipline of the wilderness period. But Judah also is secondarily referred to in the three hundred ninety days, as having fallen, like Israel, into Gentile defilements; if, then, the Jews are to escape from the exile *among Gentiles*, which is their just punishment, they must submit again to the wilderness probation (²⁰⁴⁶Ezekiel 4:16).

10. twenty shekels — that is, little more than ten ounces; a scant measure to sustain life (²⁵³⁶Jeremiah 52:6). But it applies not only to the siege, but to their whole subsequent state.

11. sixth ... of ... hin — about a pint and a half.

12. dung — as fuel; so the Arabs use beasts’ dung, wood fuel being scarce. But to use human dung so implies the most cruel necessity. It was in violation of the law (⁴⁵⁴⁸Deuteronomy 14:3 23:12-14); it must therefore have been done only *in vision*.

13. Implying that Israel's peculiar distinction was to be abolished and that they were to be outwardly blended with the idolatrous heathen (^{<1538>}Deuteronomy 28:68 ^{<2008>}Hosea 9:3).

14. Ezekiel, as a priest, had been accustomed to the strictest abstinence from everything legally impure. Peter felt the same scruple at a similar command (^{<4104>}Acts 10:14; compare ^{<2604>}Isaiah 65:4). *Positive precepts*, being dependent on a particular command can be set aside at the will of the divine ruler; but *moral precepts* are everlasting in their obligation because God cannot be inconsistent with His unchanging moral nature.

abominable flesh — literally, “flesh that stank from putridity.” Flesh of animals three days killed was prohibited (^{<0777>}Leviticus 7:17,18 19:6,7).

15. *cow's dung* — a mitigation of the former order (^{<3042>}Ezekiel 4:12); no longer “the dung of man”; still the bread so baked is “defiled,” to imply that, whatever partial abatement there might be for the prophet's sake, the main decree of God, as to the pollution of Israel by exile among Gentiles, is unalterable.

16. *staff of bread* — bread by which life is supported, as a man's weight is by the staff he leans on (^{<0333>}Leviticus 26:26 ^{<0456>}Psalms 105:16 ^{<2303>}Isaiah 3:1).

by weight, and with care — in scant measure (^{<3040>}Ezekiel 4:10).

17. *astonied one with another* — mutually regard one another with astonishment: the stupefied look of despairing want.

CHAPTER 5

EZEKIEL 5:1-17.

VISION OF CUTTING THE HAIRS, AND THE CALAMITIES FORESHADOWED THEREBY.

1. *knife ... razor* — the sword of the foe (compare ^{<2104>}Isaiah 7:20). This vision implies even severer judgments than the Egyptian afflictions foreshadowed in the former, for their guilt was greater than that of their forefathers.

thine head — as representative of the Jews. The whole hair being shaven off was significant of severe and humiliating (^{<2104>}2 Samuel 10:4,5) treatment. Especially in the case of a priest; for priests (^{<2104>}Leviticus 21:5) were forbidden “to make baldness on their head,” their hair being the token of consecration; hereby it was intimated that the ceremonial must give place to the moral.

balances — implying the *just discrimination* with which Jehovah weighs out the portion of punishment “divided,” that is, allotted to each: the “hairs” are the Jews: the divine scales do not allow even one hair to escape accurate weighing (compare ^{<2104>}Matthew 10:30).

2. Three classes are described. The sword was to destroy one third of the people; famine and plague another third (“fire” in ^{<2104>}Ezekiel 5:2 being explained in ^{<2104>}Ezekiel 5:12 to mean pestilence and famine); that which remained was to be scattered among the nations. A few only of the last portion were to escape, symbolized by the hairs bound in Ezekiel’s skirts (^{<2104>}Ezekiel 5:3 ^{<2104>}Jeremiah 40:6 ^{<2104>}52:16). Even of these some were to be thrown into the fiery ordeal again (^{<2104>}Ezekiel 5:4 ^{<2104>}Jeremiah 41:1,2, etc. ^{<2104>}Jeremiah 44:14, etc.). The “skirts” being able to contain but few express that extreme limit to which God’s goodness can reach.

5, 6. Explanation of the symbols:

Jerusalem — not the mere city, but the people of Israel generally, of which it was the center and representative.

in ... midst — Jerusalem is regarded in God’s point of view as center of the whole earth, designed *to radiate the true light over the nations in all*

directions. Compare *Margin* (“navel”), ^{<3812>}Ezekiel 38:12 ^{<3812>}Psalm 48:2 ^{<3817>}Jeremiah 3:17. No center in the ancient heathen world could have been selected more fitted than Canaan to be a vantage ground, whence the people of God might have acted with success upon the heathenism of the world. It lay midway between the oldest and most civilized states, Egypt and Ethiopia on one side, and Babylon, Nineveh, and India on the other, and afterwards Persia, Greece, and Rome. The Phoenician mariners were close by, through whom they might have transmitted the true religion to the remotest lands; and all around the Ishmaelites, the great *inland* traders in South Asia and North Africa. Israel was thus placed, not for its own selfish good, but to be the spiritual benefactor of the whole world. Compare ^{<3501>}Psalm 67:1-7 throughout. Failing in this, and falling into idolatry, its guilt was far worse than that of the heathen; not that Israel *literally* went beyond the heathen in abominable idolatries. But “*corruptio optimi pessima*”; the perversion of that which in itself is the best is worse than the perversion of that which is less perfect: is in fact the worst of all kinds of perversion. Therefore their punishment was the severest. So the position of the Christian professing Church now, if it be not a light to the heathen world, its condemnation will be sorer than theirs (^{<4013>}Matthew 5:13 11:21-24 ^{<3503>}Hebrews 10:28,29).

6. *changed ... into* — rather, “hath *resisted* My judgments wickedly”; “hath *rebelled* against My ordinances for wickedness” [BUXTORF]. But see on ^{<3807>}Ezekiel 5:7, end.

7. *multiplied* — rather, “have been more abundantly outrageous”; literally, “to tumultuate”; to have an extravagant rage for idols.

neither have done according to the judgments of the nations — have not been as tenacious of the true religion as the nations have been of the false. The heathen “changed” not their gods, but the Jews changed Jehovah for idols (see ^{<3806>}Ezekiel 5:6, “changed My judgments into wickedness,” that is, idolatry, ^{<3811>}Jeremiah 2:11). The *Chaldean version* and the *Masora* support the negative. Others omit it (as it is omitted in ^{<3812>}Ezekiel 11:12), and translate, “*but* have done according to the judgments,” etc. However, both ^{<3812>}Ezekiel 11:12 and also this verse are true. They in one sense “did according to the heathen,” namely, in all that was bad; in another, namely, in that which was good, zeal for religion, they did *not*. ^{<3809>}Ezekiel 5:9 also proves the negative to be genuine; because in changing their religion, they have *not* done as the nations which have not changed theirs, “*I* (also) will do in thee that which I have not done.”

8. *I, even I* — awfully emphatic. I, even I, whom thou thinkest to be asleep, but who am ever reigning as the Omnipotent Avenger of sin, will

vindicate My righteous government before the nations by judgments on thee.

9. See on ^{<1887>}Ezekiel 5:7.

that which I have not done — worse than any former judgments (^{<2009>}Lamentations 4:6 ^{<1902>}Daniel 9:12). The prophecy includes the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the final one by Antichrist (Zechariah 13:8,9 14:2), as well as that by Nebuchadnezzar. Their doom of evil was not exhausted by the Chaldean conquest. There was to be a germinating evil in their destiny, because there would be, as the Lord foresaw, a germinating evil in their character. As God connected Himself peculiarly with Israel, so there was to be a peculiar manifestation of God's wrath against sin in their case [FAIRBAIRN]. The higher the privileges the greater the punishment in the case of abuse of them. When God's greatest favor, the gospel, was given, and was abused by them, then "the wrath was to come on them to the uttermost" (^{<2061>}1 Thessalonians 2:16).

10. **fathers ... eat ... sons** — alluding to Moses words (^{<1839>}Leviticus 26:29 ^{<1838>}Deuteronomy 28:53), with the additional sad feature, that "the sons should eat their fathers" (see ^{<1838>}2 Kings 6:28 ^{<1849>}Jeremiah 19:9 ^{<1829>}Lamentations 2:20 4:10).

11. **as I five** — the most solemn of oaths, pledging the self-existence of God for the certainty of the event.

defiled my sanctuary — the climax of Jewish guilt: their defiling Jehovah's temple by introducing idols.

diminish — literally "withdraw," namely, Mine "eye" (which presently follows), that is, My favors; ^{<1807>}Job 36:7 uses the *Hebrew* verb in the same way. As the Jews had *withdrawn* from God's sanctuary its sacredness by "defiling" it, so God *withdraws* His countenance from them. The significance of the expression lies in the allusion to ^{<1802>}Deuteronomy 4:2, "Ye shall not *diminish* aught from the word which I command you"; they had done so, therefore God *diminishes* them. The reading found in six manuscripts, "I will cut thee off," is not so good.

12. Statement in plain terms of what was intended by the symbols (^{<1887>}Ezekiel 5:2; see ^{<1882>}Ezekiel 6:12 ^{<1812>}Jeremiah 15:2 21:9).

draw out ... sword after them — (^{<1839>}Leviticus 26:33). Skeptics object; no such thing happened under Zedekiah, as is here foretold; namely, that a third part of the nation should die by pestilence, a third part by the sword, and a third be scattered unto all winds, and a sword sent after them. But the prophecy is not restricted to Zedekiah's time. It includes all that Israel

suffered, or was still to suffer, for their sins, especially those committed at that period (²⁶⁷²Ezekiel 17:21). It only received its primary fulfillment under Zedekiah: numbers then died by the pestilence and by the sword; and numbers were scattered in all quarters and not carried to Babylonia alone, as the objectors assert (compare ²³⁰⁴Ezra 1:4 ²⁷⁸⁸Esther 3:8 ³⁰¹⁴Obadiah 1:14).

pestilence ... and famine — signified by the symbol “fire” (²⁶⁸²Ezekiel 5:2). Compare ²³⁰⁸Isaiah 13:8 ²⁵⁶⁰Lamentations 5:10; plague and famine burning and withering the countenance, as fire does.

13. cause my fury to rest upon them — as on its proper and permanent resting-place (²³⁰²Isaiah 30:32, *Margin*).

I will be comforted — expressed in condescension to man’s conceptions; signifying His *satisfaction* in the vindication of His justice by His righteous judgments (⁶²⁸⁵Deuteronomy 28:63 ²⁰²⁵Proverbs 1:26 ²⁰²⁴Isaiah 1:24).

they shall how — by bitter experience.

14. reproach among the nations — They whose idolatries Israel had adopted, instead of comforting, would only exult in their calamities brought on by those idolatries (compare ²¹⁵⁵Luke 15:15).

15. instruction — literally, “a corrective chastisement,” that is, a striking *example* to warn all of the fatal consequences of sin. For “*it shall be*”; all ancient versions have “*thou*,” which the connection favors.

16. arrows of famine — hail, rain, mice, locusts, mildew (see ⁶⁵²³Deuteronomy 32:23,24).

increase the famine — literally, “congregate” or “collect.” When ye think your harvest safe because ye have escaped drought, mildew, etc., I will find other means [CALVIN], which I will *congregate* as the *forces of an invading army*, to bring famine on you.

17. beasts — perhaps meaning destructive conquerors (²⁰⁰⁴Daniel 7:4). Rather, literal “beasts,” which infest *desolated* regions such as Judea was to become (compare ²³⁴⁸Ezekiel 34:28 ²²²⁹Exodus 23:29 ⁶⁵²⁴Deuteronomy 32:24 ²¹⁷⁵2 Kings 17:25). The same threat is repeated in manifold forms to awaken the careless.

sword — civil war.

CHAPTER 6

EZEKIEL 6:1-14.

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT.

2. *mountains of Israel* — that is, of Palestine in general. The *mountains* are addressed by personification; implying that the Israelites themselves are incurable and unworthy of any more appeals; so the prophet sent to Jeroboam did not deign to address the king, but addressed the altar (^{4113E1} Kings 13:2). The mountains are specified as being the scene of Jewish idolatries on “the high places” (^{2008E} Ezekiel 6:3 ^{0353L} Leviticus 26:30).

3. *rivers* — literally, the “channels” of torrents. Rivers were often the scene and objects of idolatrous worship.

4. *images* — called so from a *Hebrew* root, “to wax hot,” implying the mad *ardor* of Israel after idolatry [CALVIN]. Others translate it, “sun images”; and so in ^{2006E} Ezekiel 6:6 (see ^{4231I2} 2 Kings 23:11 ^{4604I2} 2 Chronicles 34:4 ^{2308I} Isaiah 17:8, *Margin*).

cast your slain men before your idols — The foolish objects of their trust in the day of evil should witness their ruin.

5. *carcasses ... before ... idols* — polluting thus with the dead bones of you, the worshippers, the idols which seemed to you so sacrosanct.

6. *your works* — not gods, as you supposed, but the mere work of men’s hands (^{2308I} Isaiah 40:18-20).

7. *ye shall know that I am the Lord* — and not your idols, lords. Ye shall know Me as the all-powerful Punisher of sin.

8. Mitigation of the extreme severity of their punishment; still their life shall be a wretched one, and linked with exile (^{2002E} Ezekiel 5:2, 12 12:16 14:22 ^{2443I} Jeremiah 44:28).

9. *they that escape of you shall remember me* — The object of God’s chastisements shall at last be effected by working in them true contrition. This partially took place in the complete eradication of idolatry from the Jews ever since the Babylonian captivity. But they have yet to repent of their crowning sin, the crucifixion of Messiah; their full repentance is

therefore future, after the ordeal of trials for many centuries, ending with that foretold in Zechariah 10:9 13:8,9 14:1-4,11. “They shall *remember* me in far countries” (^{<2176>}Ezekiel 7:16 ^{<1501>}Deuteronomy 30:1-8).

I am broken with their whorish heart — FAIRBAIRN translates, actively, “I will break” their whorish heart; *English Version* is better. In their exile they shall remember how long I bore with them, but was at last compelled to punish, after I was “broken” (My long-suffering wearied out) by their desperate (^{<0453>}Numbers 15:39) spiritual whorishness [CALVIN], (^{<4981>}Psalms 78:40 ^{<2173>}Isaiah 7:13 43:24 63:10).

loathe themselves — (^{<1379>}Leviticus 26:39-45 ^{<3806>}Job 42:6). They shall not wait for men to condemn them but shall condemn themselves (^{<2048>}Ezekiel 20:43 36:31 ^{<3006>}Job 42:6 ^{<4131>}1 Corinthians 11:31).

11. Gesticulations vividly setting before the hearers the greatness of the calamity about to be inflicted. In indignation at the abominations of Israel extend thine hand towards Judea, as if about to “strike,” and “stamp,” shaking off the dust with thy foot, in token of how God shall “stretch out His hand upon them,” and *tread* them down (^{<2014>}Ezekiel 6:14 ^{<2114>}Ezekiel 21:14).

12. *He that is far off* — namely, from the foe; those who in a distant exile fear no evil.

he that remaineth — *he that is left* in the city; not carried away into captivity, nor having escaped into the country. Distinct from “he that is near,” namely, those outside the city who are within reach of “the sword” of the foe, and so fall by it; not by “famine,” as those left in the city.

14. *Diblath* — another form of Diblathaim, a city in Moab (^{<0636>}Numbers 33:46 ^{<2482>}Jeremiah 48:22), near which, east and south of the Dead Sea, was the wilderness of Arabia-Deserta.

CHAPTER 7

EZEKIEL 7:1-27.

LAMENTATION OVER THE COMING RUIN OF ISRAEL; THE PENITENT REFORMATION OF A REMNANT; THE CHAIN SYMBOLIZING THE CAPTIVITY.

2. *An end, the end* — The indefinite “an” expresses the general fact of God bringing His long-suffering towards the whole of Judea to an end; “the,” following, marks it as more definitely fixed (^{310E}Amos 8:2).

4. *thine abominations* — the punishment of thine abominations.

shall be in the midst of thee — shall be manifest to all. They and thou shall recognize the fact of thine abominations by thy punishment which shall everywhere befall thee, and that manifestly.

5. *An evil, an only evil* — a peculiar calamity such as was never before; unparalleled. The abruptness of the style and the repetitions express the agitation of the prophet’s mind in foreseeing these calamities.

6. *watcheth for thee* — rather, “waketh for thee.” It awakes up from its past slumber against thee (^{328E}Psalms 78:65,66).

7. *The morning* — so *Chaldean* and *Syriac versions* (compare ^{310E}Joel 2:2). Ezekiel wishes to awaken them from their lethargy, whereby they were promising to themselves an uninterrupted *night* (^{310E}1 Thessalonians 5:5-7), as if they were never to be called to account [CALVIN]. The expression, “morning,” refers to the fact that this was the usual time for magistrates giving sentence against offenders (compare ^{317E}Ezekiel 7:10, below; ^{319A}Psalms 101:8 ^{321D}Jeremiah 21:12). GESENIUS, less probably, translates, “the *order* of fate”; thy turn to be punished.

not the sounding again — not an empty *echo*, such as is produced by the reverberation of *sounds* in “the mountains,” but a real cry of tumult is coming [CALVIN]. Perhaps it alludes to the joyous cries of the grape-gatherers at vintage on the hills [GROTIUS], or of the idolaters in their dances on their festivals in honor of their false gods [TIRINUS]. HAVERNICK translates, “no *brightness*.”

8, 9. Repetition of ^{2100B}Ezekiel 7:3,4; sadly expressive of accumulated woes by the monotonous sameness.

10. *rod ... blossomed, pride ... budded* — The “rod” is the Chaldean Nebuchadnezzar, the instrument of God’s vengeance (^{2300B}Isaiah 10:5 ^{2512B}Jeremiah 51:20). The rod *sprouting* (as the word ought to be translated), etc., implies that God does not move precipitately, but in successive steps. He as it were has planted the ministers of His vengeance, and leaves them to grow till all is ripe for executing His purpose. “Pride” refers to the insolence of the Babylonian conqueror (^{2681B}Jeremiah 50:31,32). The parallelism (“pride” answering to “rod”) opposes JEROME’S view, that “pride” refers to the *Jews* who despised God’s threats; (also CALVIN’S, “though the *rod* grew in Chaldea, the *root* was with the Jews”). The “rod” cannot refer, as GROTIUS thought, to the *tribe* of Judah, for it evidently refers to the “smiteth” (^{2410B}Ezekiel 7:9) as the instrument of smiting.

11. *Violence* (that is, the violent foe) *is risen up as a rod of* (that is, to punish the Jews’) *wickedness* (Zechariah 5:8).

theirs — their possessions, or all that belongs to them, whether children or goods. GROTIUS translates from a different *Hebrew* root, “their nobles,” literally, “their *tumultuous* trains” (*Margin*) which usually escorted the nobles. Thus “nobles” will form a contrast to the general “multitude.”

neither ... wailing — (^{2410B}Jeremiah 16:4-7 25:33). GESENIUS translates, “nor shall there be left any *beauty* among them.” *English Version* is supported by the old Jewish interpreters. So general shall be the slaughter, none shall be left to mourn the dead.

12. *let not ... buyer rejoice* — because he has bought an estate at a bargain price.

nor ... seller mourn — because he has had to sell his land at a sacrifice through poverty. The Chaldeans will be masters of the land, so that neither shall the buyer have any good of his purchase, nor the seller any loss; nor shall the latter (^{2410B}Ezekiel 7:13) return to his inheritance at the jubilee year (see ^{2625B}Leviticus 25:13). Spiritually this holds good now, seeing that “the time is short”; “they that rejoice should be as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not”: Paul (^{2410B}1 Corinthians 7:30) seems to allude to Ezekiel here. ^{2625B}Jeremiah 32:15,37,43, seems to contradict Ezekiel here. But Ezekiel is speaking of the parents, and of the present; Jeremiah, of the children, and of the future. Jeremiah is addressing believers, that they should hope for a restoration; Ezekiel, the reprobate, who were excluded from hope of deliverance.

13. *although they were yet alive* — although they should live to the year of jubilee.

multitude thereof — namely, of the Jews.

which shall not return — answering to “the seller shall not return”; not only he, but *the whole multitude*, shall not return. CALVIN omits “is” and “which”: “the vision touching the whole multitude shall not return” void (²⁵⁹¹Isaiah 55:11).

neither shall any strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life — No hardening of one’s self in iniquity will avail against God’s threat of punishment. FAIRBAIRN translates, “no one by his iniquity shall invigorate his life”; referring to the jubilee, which was regarded as a revivification of the whole commonwealth, when, its disorders being rectified, the body politic sprang up again into renewed life. That for which God thus provided by the institution of the jubilee and which is now to cease through the nation’s iniquity, let none think to bring about by his iniquity.

14. *They have blown the trumpet* — rather, “Blow the trumpet,” or, “Let them blow the trumpet” to collect soldiers as they will, “to make all ready” for encountering the foe, it will be of no avail; none will have the courage to go to the battle (compare ²¹⁶³Jeremiah 6:1), [CALVIN].

15. No security should anywhere be found (⁴⁶²⁵Deuteronomy 32:25). Fulfilled (²¹⁰⁹Lamentations 1:20); also at the Roman invasion (⁴²⁴⁶Matthew 24:16-18).

16. (²¹⁶⁶Ezekiel 6:6).

like doves — which, though usually frequenting the valleys, mount up to the mountains when fearing the bird-catcher (⁴⁹¹⁰Psalms 11:1). So Israel, once dwelling in its peaceful valleys, shall flee from the foe to the mountains, which, as being the scene of its idolatries, were justly to be made the scene of its flight and shame. The plaintive note of the dove (²⁵⁹¹Isaiah 59:11) represents the mournful repentance of Israel hereafter (³²²⁰Zechariah 12:10-12).

17. *shall be weak as water* — literally, “shall go (as) waters”; incapable of resistance (⁴⁰⁷⁵Joshua 7:5 ⁴²²⁴Psalms 22:14 ²³³⁷Isaiah 13:7).

18. *cover them* — as a garment.

baldness — a sign of mourning (²³²⁴Isaiah 3:24 ²⁴⁸⁷Jeremiah 48:37 ³¹⁰⁰Micah 1:16).

19. cast ... silver in ... streets — just retribution; they had abused their silver and gold by converting them into idols, “the stumbling-block of their iniquity” (^{314B}Ezekiel 14:3,4, that is, an occasion of sinning); so these silver and gold idols, so far from “being able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath” (see ^{3110B}Proverbs 11:4), shall, in despair, be cast by them into the streets as a prey to the foe, by whom they shall be “removed” (GROTIUS translates as the *Margin*, “shall be despised as an *unclean* thing”); or rather, as suits the parallelism, “shall be put away from them” *by the Jews* [CALVIN]. “They (the silver and gold) shall not satisfy their souls,” that is, their cravings of appetite and other needs.

20. beauty of his ornament — the temple of Jehovah, the especial glory of the Jews, as a bride glories in her ornaments (the very imagery used by God as to the temple, ³³⁶⁰Ezekiel 16:10,11). Compare ³³²¹Ezekiel 24:21: “My sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes.”

images ... therein — namely, in the temple (^{308B}Ezekiel 8:3-17).

set it far from them — God had “set” the temple (their “beauty of ornament”) “for His majesty”; but they had set up “abominations therein”; therefore God, in just retribution, “set it far from them,” (that is, removed them far from it, or took it away from them [VATABLUS]). The *Margin* translates, “Made it unto them an *unclean thing*” (compare *Margin* on ³¹⁷⁹Ezekiel 7:19, “removed”); what I designed for their glory they turned to their shame, therefore I will make it turn to their ignominy and ruin.

21. strangers — barbarous and savage nations.

22. pollute my secret place — just retribution for the Jews’ pollution of the temple. “Robbers shall enter and defile” the holy of holies, the place of God’s manifested presence, entrance into which was denied even to the Levites and priests and was permitted to the high priest only once a year on the great day of atonement.

23. chain — symbol of the captivity (compare ³²⁷¹Jeremiah 27:2). As they enchained the land with violence, so shall they be chained themselves. It was customary to lead away captives in a row with a chain passed from the neck of one to the other. Therefore translate as the *Hebrew* requires, “*the chain*,” namely, that usually employed on such occasions. CALVIN explains it, that the Jews should be dragged, whether they would or no, before God’s tribunal to be tried as culprits in chains. The next words favor this: “bloody crimes,” rather, “*judgment of bloods*,” that is, with blood sheddings deserving the extreme judicial penalty. Compare ³⁵¹⁹Jeremiah 51:9: “Her *judgment* reacheth unto heaven.”

24. *worst of the heathen* — literally, “wicked of the nations”; the giving up of Israel to their power will convince the Jews that this is a final overthrow.

pomp of ... strong — the *pride* wherewith men “stiff of forehead” despise the prophet.

holy places — the sacred compartments of the temple (¹⁸⁸⁵Psalm 68:35 ³⁶⁵¹Jeremiah 51:51) [CALVIN]. God calls it “*their* holy places,” because they had so defiled it that He regarded it no longer as *His*. However, as the defilement of the temple has already been mentioned (³⁰⁷¹Ezekiel 7:20,22), and “their sacred places” are introduced as a new subject, it seems better to understand this of *the places dedicated to their idols*. As they defiled God’s sanctuary, He will defile their self-constituted “sacred places.”

25. *peace, and ... none* — (³¹⁸³1 Thessalonians 5:3).

26. *Mischief ... upon ... mischief* — (⁶⁵²³Deuteronomy 32:23 ²⁴⁰³Jeremiah 4:20). This is said because the Jews were apt to fancy, at every abatement of suffering, that their calamities were about to cease; but God will accumulate woe on woe.

rumor — of the advance of the foe, and of his cruelty (⁴¹⁰⁵Matthew 24:6).

seek a vision — to find some way of escape from their difficulties (²³⁶⁹Isaiah 26:9). So Zedekiah consulted Jeremiah (²⁶⁷³Jeremiah 37:17 38:14).

law shall perish — fulfilled (²³⁰¹Ezekiel 20:1,3 ³⁷⁴⁹Psalm 74:9 ²³¹⁹Lamentations 2:9; compare ³¹⁸¹Amos 8:11); God will thus set aside the idle boast, “The law shall not perish from the priest” (²⁴⁸⁸Jeremiah 18:18).

ancients — the ecclesiastical rulers of the people.

27. *people of the land* — the general multitude, as distinguished from the “king” and the “prince.” The consternation shall pervade all ranks. The king, whose duty it was to animate others and find a remedy for existing evils, shall himself be in the utmost anxiety; a mark of the desperate state of affairs.

clothed with desolation — Clothing is designed to keep off shame; but in this case shame shall be the clothing.

after their way — because of their wicked ways.

deserts — literally, “judgments,” that is, what just judgment awards to them; used to imply the exact correspondence of God’s judgment with the

judicial penalties they had incurred: they oppressed the poor and deprived them of liberty; therefore they shall be oppressed and lose their own liberty.

CHAPTER 8

EZEKIEL 8:1-18.

This eighth chapter begins a new stage of Ezekiel's prophecies and continues to the end of the eleventh chapter. The connected visions at ^{<3182>}Ezekiel 3:12-7:27 comprehended Judah and Israel; but the visions (^{<3183>}Ezekiel 8:1-11:25) refer immediately to Jerusalem and the remnant of Judah under Zedekiah, as distinguished from the Babylonian exiles.

1. *sixth year* — namely, of the captivity of Jehoiachin, as in ^{<3184>}Ezekiel 1:2, the “fifth year” is specified. The lying on his sides three hundred ninety and forty days (^{<3185>}Ezekiel 4:5,6) had by this time been completed, at least *in vision*. That event was naturally a memorable epoch to the exiles; and the computation of years from it was to humble the Jews, as well as to show their perversity in not having repented, though so long and severely chastised.

elders — namely, those carried away with Jehoiachin, and now at the Chebar.

sat before me — to hear the word of God from me, in the absence of the temple and other public places of Sabbath worship, during the exile (^{<3186>}Ezekiel 33:30,31). It was so ordered that they were present at the giving of the prophecy, and so left without excuse.

hand of ... Lord God fell ... upon me — God's mighty operation *fell*, like a thunderbolt, *upon me* (in ^{<3187>}Ezekiel 1:3, it is less forcible, “was upon him”); whatever, therefore, he is to utter is not his own, for he has put off the mere man, while the power of God reigns in him [CALVIN].

2. *likeness* — understand, “of a man,” that is, of Messiah, the Angel of the covenant, in the person of whom alone God manifests Himself (^{<3188>}Ezekiel 1:26 ^{<3189>}John 1:18). The “fire,” from “His loins downward,” betokens the vengeance of God kindled against the wicked Jews, while searching and purifying the remnant to be spared. The “brightness ... upward” betokens His unapproachable majesty (^{<3190>}1 Timothy 6:16). For *Hebrew*, *eesh*, “fire,” the *Septuagint*, etc., read *ish*, “a man.”

color of amber — the glitter of chasmal [FAIRBAIRN], (see on ^{<3191>}Ezekiel 1:4, “polished brass”).

3. Instead of prompting him to address directly the elders before him, the Spirit carried him away *in vision* (not in person bodily) to the temple at Jerusalem; he proceeds to report to them what he witnessed: his message thus falls into two parts:

(1) The abominations reported in ^{<3180>}Ezekiel 8:1-18.

(2) The dealings of judgment and mercy to be adopted towards the impenitent and penitent Israelites respectively (^{<3181>}Ezekiel 9:1-11:25).

The exiles looked hopefully towards Jerusalem and, so far from believing things there to be on the verge of ruin, expected a return in peace; while those left in Jerusalem eyed the exiles with contempt, as if cast away from the Lord, whereas they themselves were near God and ensured in the possessions of the land (^{<3115>}Ezekiel 11:15). Hence the vision here of what affected those in Jerusalem immediately was a seasonable communication to the exiles away from it.

door of the inner gate — facing the north, the direction in which he came from Chebar, called the “altar-gate” (^{<3185>}Ezekiel 8:5); it opened into the inner court, wherein stood the altar of burnt offering; the inner court (^{<1035>}1 Kings 6:36) was that of the priests; the outer court (^{<3105>}Ezekiel 10:5), that of the people, where they assembled.

seat — the *pedestal* of the image.

image of jealousy — Astarte, or Asheera (as the *Hebrew* for “grove” ought to be translated, ^{<1215>}2 Kings 21:3,7 23:4,7), set up by Manasseh as a rival to Jehovah in His temple, and arresting the attention of all worshippers as they entered; it was the Syrian Venus, worshipped with licentious rites; the “queen of heaven,” wife of Phoenician Baal. HAVERNICK thinks all the scenes of idolatry in the chapter are successive portions of the festival held in honor of Tammuz or Adonis (^{<3184>}Ezekiel 8:14). Probably, however, the scenes are separate proofs of Jewish idolatry, rather than restricted to one idol.

provoketh to jealousy — calleth for a visitation in wrath of the “jealous God,” who will not give His honor to another (compare the second commandment, ^{<1215>}Exodus 20:5). JEROME refers this verse to a statue of Baal, which Josiah had overthrown and his successors had replaced.

4. The Shekinah cloud of Jehovah’s glory, notwithstanding the provocation of the idol, still remains in the temple, like that which Ezekiel saw “in the plain” (^{<3182>}Ezekiel 3:22,23); not till ^{<3184>}Ezekiel 10:4,18 did it leave the temple at Jerusalem, showing the long-suffering of God, which ought to move the Jews to repentance.

5. *gate of ... altar* — the principal avenue to the altar of burnt offering; as to the *northern* position, see ⁽²⁶⁴⁾2 Kings 16:14. Ahaz had removed the brazen altar from the front of the Lord's house to the north of the altar which he had himself erected. The locality of the idol before God's own altar enhances the heinousness of the sin.

6. *that I should go far off from my sanctuary* — “that I should (be compelled by their sin to) go far off from my sanctuary” — (⁽³⁰⁸⁾Ezekiel 10:18); the sure precursor of its destruction.

7. *door of the court* — that is, of the inner court (⁽³⁰⁸⁾Ezekiel 8:3); the court of the priests and Levites, into which now others were admitted in violation of the law [GROTIUS].

hole in ... wall — that is, an aperture or window in the wall of the priests' chambers, through which he could see into the various apartments, wherein was the idolatrous shrine.

8. *dig* — for it had been blocked up during Josiah's reformation. Or rather, the vision is not of an actual scene, but an ideal pictorial representation of the Egyptian idolatries into which the covenant-people had relapsed, practising them in secret places where they shrank from the light of day [FAIRBAIRN], (⁽⁴¹⁾John 3:20). But compare, as to the *literal* introduction of idolatries into the temple, ⁽⁴¹⁾Ezekiel 5:11 ⁽⁴⁷⁾Jeremiah 7:30 32:34.

10. *creeping things ... beasts* — worshipped in Egypt; still found portrayed on their chamber walls; so among the Troglodytae.

round about — On every side they surrounded themselves with incentives to superstition.

11. *seventy men* — the seventy members composing the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, the origination of which we find in the seventy elders, representatives of the congregation, who went up with Moses to the mount to behold the glory of Jehovah, and to witness the secret transactions relating to the establishment of the covenant; also, in the seventy elders appointed to share the burden of the people with Moses. How awfully it aggravates the national sin, that the seventy, once admitted to the Lord's secret council (⁽¹⁵⁴⁾Psalms 25:14), should now, “in the dark,” enter “the secret” of the wicked (⁽⁴⁰⁾Genesis 49:6), those judicially bound to suppress idolatry being the ringleaders of it!

Jaazaniah — perhaps chief of the seventy: son of Shaphan, the scribe who read to Josiah the book of the law; the spiritual privileges of the son (⁽²²⁾2 Kings 22:10-14) increased his guilt. The very name means, “Jehovah hears,” giving the lie to the unbelief which virtually said (⁽³⁰⁹⁾Ezekiel 9:9),

“The Lord seeth us not,” etc. (compare ^{<901>}Psalm 10:11, 14 50:21 94:7,9). The offering of incense belonged not to the elders, but to the priests; this usurpation added to the guilt of the former.

cloud of incense — They spared no expense for their idols. Oh, that there were the same liberality toward the cause of God!

12. every man in ... chambers of ... imagery — The elders (“ancients”) are here the representatives of the people, rather than to be regarded literally. Mostly, the *leaders* of heathen superstitions laughed at them secretly, while publicly professing them in order to keep the people in subjection. Here what is meant is that the *people* generally addicted themselves to secret idolatry, led on by their elders; there is no doubt, also, allusion to *the mysteries*, as in the worship of Isis in Egypt, the Eleusinian in Greece, etc., to which the initiated alone were admitted. “The chambers of imagery” are their own *perverse imaginations*, answering to the *priests’ chambers* in the vision, whereon the pictures were portrayed (^{<2180>}Ezekiel 8:10).

Lord ... forsaken ... earth — They infer this because God has left them to their miseries, without succoring them, so that they seek help from other gods. Instead of repenting, as they ought, they bite the curb [CALVIN].

14. From the *secret* abominations of the chambers of imagery, the prophet’s eye is turned to the *outer court* at the *north door*; *within* the outer court women were not admitted, but only to the *door*.

sat — the attitude of mourners (^{<8213>}Job 2:13 ^{<2181>}Isaiah 3:26).

Tammuz — from a *Hebrew* root, “to melt down.” Instead of weeping for the national sins, they wept for the idol. Tammuz (the *Syrian* for *Adonis*), the paramour of Venus, and of the same name as the river flowing from Lebanon; killed by a wild boar, and, according to the fable, permitted to spend half the year on earth, and obliged to spend the other half in the lower world. An annual feast was celebrated to him in June (hence called Tammuz in the Jewish calendar) at Byblos, when the Syrian women, in wild grief, tore off their hair and yielded their persons to prostitution, consecrating the hire of their infamy to Venus; next followed days of rejoicing for his return to the earth; the former feast being called “the disappearance of Adonis,” the latter, “the finding of Adonis.” This Phoenician feast answered to the similar Egyptian one in honor of Osiris. The idea thus fabled was that of the waters of the river and the beauties of spring destroyed by the summer during the half year when the sun is in the upper heat. Or else, the earth being clothed with beauty, hemisphere, and losing it when he departs to the lower. The name *Adonis* is not here used, as *Adon* is the appropriated title of Jehovah.

15, 16. The next are “*greater* abominations,” not in respect to the idolatry, but in respect to the place and persons committing it. In “the inner court,” immediately before the door of the temple of Jehovah, between the porch and the altar, where the priests advanced only on extraordinary occasions (⁻²⁰¹⁷Joel 2:17), twenty-five men (the leaders of the twenty-four courses or orders of the priests, ⁻¹³⁰⁸1 Chronicles 24:18,19, with the high priest, “the princes of the sanctuary,” ⁻²³⁶³Isaiah 43:28), representing the whole priesthood, as the seventy elders represented the people, stood with their backs turned on the temple, and their faces towards the east, making obeisance to the rising sun (contrast ⁻¹⁰⁸⁴1 Kings 8:44). Sun-worship came from the Persians, who made the sun the eye of their god Ormuzd. It existed as early as Job (⁻⁸⁹²Job 31:26; compare ⁻¹⁷⁴⁹Deuteronomy 4:19). Josiah could only suspend it for the time of his reign (⁻¹²³⁶2 Kings 23:5,11); it revived under his successors.

16. worshipped — In the *Hebrew* a corrupt form is used to express Ezekiel’s sense of the foul corruption of such worship.

17. put ... branch to ... nose — proverbial, for “they turn up the nose in scorn,” expressing their insolent security [*Septuagint*]. Not content with outraging “with their violence” the second table of the law, namely, that of duty towards one’s neighbor, “they have returned” (that is, they turn back afresh) to provoke Me by violations of the first table [CALVIN]. Rather, they held up a branch or bundle of tamarisk (called *barsom*) to their nose at daybreak, while singing hymns to the rising sun [STRABO, 1.15, p. 733]. Sacred trees were frequent symbols in idol-worship. CALVIN translates, “to their own ruin,” literally, “to their nose,” that is, with the effect of rousing *My anger* (of which the *Hebrew* is “nose”) to their ruin.

18. though they cry ... yet will I not hear — (⁻²⁰²⁸Proverbs 1:28 ⁻²⁰¹⁵Isaiah 1:15).

CHAPTER 9

EZEKIEL 9:1-11.

CONTINUATION OF THE PRECEDING VISION: THE SEALING OF THE FAITHFUL.

1. *cried* — contrasted with their “cry” for mercy (²⁰⁸⁸Ezekiel 8:18) is the “cry” here for vengeance, showing how vain was the former.

them that have charge — literally, *officers*; so “officers” (²³⁰⁷Isaiah 60:17), having the city in charge, not to guard, but to punish it. The angels who as “watchers” fulfill God’s judgments (²⁰⁸³Daniel 4:13,17,23 10:20,21); the “princes” (²³⁰³Jeremiah 39:3) of Nebuchadnezzar’s army were under their guidance.

draw near — in the *Hebrew* intensive, “to draw near quickly.”

2. *clothed with linen* — (²⁷⁰⁵Daniel 10:5 12:6,7). His clothing marked his office as distinct from that of the six officers of vengeance; “linen” characterized the high priest (⁶¹⁰⁶Leviticus 16:4); emblematic of purity. The same garment is assigned to the angel of the Lord (for whom Michael is but another name) by the contemporary prophet Daniel (²⁷⁰⁵Daniel 10:5 12:6,7). Therefore the intercessory High Priest in heaven must be meant (³⁰¹²Zechariah 1:12). The six with Him are His subordinates; therefore He is said to be “among them,” literally, “in the midst of them,” *as their recognized Lord* (³⁰⁰⁶Hebrews 1:6). He appears as a “man,” implying His incarnation; as “one” (compare ⁵⁰⁵¹1 Timothy 2:5). Salvation is peculiarly assigned to Him, and so He bears the “inkhorn” in order to “mark” His elect (²³⁰⁴Ezekiel 9:4; compare ⁶²⁰⁷Exodus 12:7 ⁶⁰⁰⁸Revelation 7:3 9:4 13:16,17 20:4), and to write their names in His book of life (⁶⁰³⁸Revelation 13:8). As Oriental scribes suspend their inkhorn at their side in the present day, and as a “scribe of the host is found in Assyrian inscriptions accompanying the host” to number the heads of the slain, so He stands ready for the work before Him. “The higher gate” was probably where now the gate of Damascus is. The six with Him make up the sacred and perfect number, *seven* (Zechariah 3:9 ⁶⁰⁰⁶Revelation 5:6). The executors of judgment on the wicked, in Scripture teaching, are good, not bad, angels; the bad have permitted to them the trial of the pious (⁸⁰¹²Job 1:12 ⁶⁷²⁰2 Corinthians 12:7). The judgment is executed by Him (²³⁰²Ezekiel 10:2,7

^{<4362>}John 5:22,27) through the six (^{<4034>}Matthew 13:41 25:31); so beautifully does the Old Testament harmonize with the New Testament. The seven come “from the way of the north”; for it was there the idolatries were seen, and from the same quarter must proceed the judgment (Babylon lying northeast of Judea). So ^{<4248>}Matthew 24:28.

stood — the attitude of waiting reverently for Jehovah’s commands.

brazen altar — the altar of burnt offerings, not the altar of incense, which was of gold. They “stood” there to imply reverent obedience; for there God gave His answers to prayer [CALVIN]; also as being about to slay victims to God’s justice, they stand where sacrifices are usually slain [GROTIUS], (^{<2347>}Ezekiel 39:17 ^{<2346>}Isaiah 34:6 ^{<2428>}Jeremiah 12:3 46:10).

3. glory of ... God — which had heretofore, as a bright cloud, rested on the mercy seat between the cherubim in the holy of holies (^{<4062>}2 Samuel 6:2 ^{<4801>}Psalms 80:1); its departure was the presage of the temple being given up to ruin; its going from the inner sanctuary to the threshold without, towards the officers standing at the altar outside, was in order to give them the commission of vengeance.

4. midst of ... city ... midst of Jerusalem — This twofold designation marks more emphatically the scene of the divine judgments.

a mark — literally, the Hebrew letter *Tau*, the last in the alphabet, used as a mark (“my sign,” ^{<4813>}Job 31:35, *Margin*); literally, *Tau*; originally written in the form of a cross, which TERTULLIAN explains as referring to the badge and only means of salvation, the cross of Christ. But nowhere in Scripture are the words which are now employed as names of letters used to denote the letters themselves or their figures [VITRINGA]. The noun here is cognate to the verb, “mark a mark.” So in ^{<4608>}Revelation 7:3 no particular mark is specified. We seal what we wish to guard securely. When all things else on earth are confounded, God will secure His people from the common ruin. God gives the *first* charge as to their safety before He orders the punishment of the rest (^{<4810>}Psalms 31:20 ^{<2331>}Isaiah 26:20,21). So in the case of Lot and Sodom (^{<4122>}Genesis 19:22); also the Egyptian first-born were not slain till Israel had time to sprinkle the blood-mark, ensuring their safety (compare ^{<4608>}Revelation 7:3 ^{<4109>}Amos 9:9). So the early Christians had Pella provided as a refuge for them, before the destruction of Jerusalem.

upon the foreheads — the most conspicuous part of the person, to imply how their safety would be manifested to all (compare ^{<2451>}Jeremiah 15:11 39:11-18). It was customary thus to mark worshippers (^{<4616>}Revelation 13:16 14:1,9) and servants. So the Church of England marks the forehead with the sign of the cross in baptizing. At the exodus the mark was on the

houses, for then it was families; here, it is on the *foreheads*, for it is individuals whose safety is guaranteed.

sigh and ... cry — similarly sounding verbs in *Hebrew*, as in *English Version*, expressing the prolonged sound of their grief. “Sigh” implies their *inward grief* (“groanings which cannot be uttered,” ^{<4133>}Romans 8:26); “cry,” the outward expression of it. So Lot (^{<4117>}2 Peter 2:7,8). Tenderness should characterize the man of God, not harsh sternness in opposing the ungodly (^{<4353>}Psalm 119:53,136 ^{<4137>}Jeremiah 13:17 ^{<4121>}2 Corinthians 12:21); at the same time zeal for the honor of God (^{<4359>}Psalm 69:9,10 ^{<4159>}1 John 5:19).

5. *the others* — the six officers of judgment (^{<4192>}Ezekiel 9:2).

6. *come not near any ... upon whom ... mark* — (^{<4604>}Revelation 9:4). It may be objected that Daniel, Jeremiah, and others were carried away, whereas many of the vilest were left in the land. But God does not promise believers exemption from all suffering, but only from what will prove really and lastingly hurtful to them. His sparing the ungodly turns to their destruction and leaves them without excuse [CALVIN]. However, the prophecy waits a fuller and final fulfillment, for ^{<4603>}Revelation 7:3-8, in ages long after Babylon, foretells, as still future, the same sealing of a remnant (one hundred forty-four thousand) of Israel previous to the final outpouring of wrath on the rest of the nation; the correspondence is exact; the same pouring of fire from the altar follows the marking of the remnant in both (compare ^{<4605>}Revelation 8:5, with ^{<4310>}Ezekiel 10:2). So Zechariah 13:9 14:2, distinguish the remnant from the rest of Israel.

begin at ... sanctuary — For in it the greatest abominations had been committed; it had lost the reality of consecration by the blood of victims sacrificed to idols; it must, therefore, lose its semblance by the dead bodies of the slain idolaters (^{<4192>}Ezekiel 9:7). God’s heaviest wrath falls on those who have sinned against the highest privileges; these are made to feel it first (^{<4117>}1 Peter 4:17,18). He hates sin most in those nearest to Him; for example, the priests, etc.

ancient men — the seventy elders.

8. *I was left* — literally “there was left I.” So universal seemed the slaughter that Ezekiel thought himself the only one left [CALVIN]. He was the only one left *of the priests* “in the sanctuary.”

fell upon my face — to intercede for his countrymen (so ^{<4112>}Numbers 16:22).

all the residue — a plea drawn from God’s covenant promise to save the elect *remnant*.

9. *exceeding* — literally, “very, very”; doubled.

perverseness — “apostasy” [GROTIUS]; or, “wresting aside of justice.”

Lord ... forsaken ... earth ... seeth not — The order is reversed from ^{<B182>}Ezekiel 8:12. There they speak of His neglect of His people in their misery; here they go farther and deny His providence (^{<B1011>}Psalm 10:11), so that they may sin fearlessly. God, in answer to Ezekiel’s question (^{<B108>}Ezekiel 9:8), leaves the difficulty unsolved; He merely vindicates His justice by showing it did not exceed their sin: He would have us humbly acquiesce in His judgments, and wait and trust.

10. *mine eye* — to show them their mistake in saying, “The Lord *seeth* not.”

recompense their way upon their head — (^{<B1031>}Proverbs 1:31). Retribution in kind.

11. *I have done as thou hast commanded* — The characteristic of Messiah (^{<B1704>}John 17:4). So the angels (^{<B14321>}Psalm 103:21); and the apostles report their fulfillment of their orders (^{<B1030>}Mark 6:30).

CHAPTER 10

EZEKIEL 10:1-22.

VISION OF COALS OF FIRE SCATTERED OVER THE CITY: REPETITION OF THE VISION OF THE CHERUBIM.

1. The throne of Jehovah appearing in the midst of the judgments implies that whatever intermediate agencies be employed, He controls them, and that the whole flows as a necessary consequence from His essential holiness (³⁰¹²Ezekiel 1:22,26).

cherubim — in ³⁰⁰⁸Ezekiel 1:5, called “living creatures.” The repetition of the vision implies that the judgments are approaching nearer and nearer. These two visions of Deity were granted in the beginning of Ezekiel’s career, to qualify him for witnessing to God’s glory amidst his God-forgetting people and to stamp truth on his announcements; also to signify the removal of God’s manifestation from the visible temple (³⁰⁰⁸Ezekiel 10:18) for a long period (³⁵⁸²Ezekiel 43:2). The feature (³⁰¹²Ezekiel 10:12) mentioned as to the cherubim that they were “full of eyes,” though omitted in the former vision, is not a difference, but a more specific detail observed by Ezekiel now on closer inspection. Also, here, there is no rainbow (the symbol of *mercy* after the flood of wrath) as in the former; for here *judgment* is the prominent thought, though the *marking* of the remnant in ³⁰⁰⁸Ezekiel 9:4,6 shows that there was mercy in the background. The cherubim, perhaps, represent redeemed humanity combining in and with itself the highest forms of subordinate creaturely life (compare ⁸¹³⁰Romans 8:20). Therefore they are associated with the twenty-four elders and are distinguished from the angels (⁶⁰⁰¹Revelation 5:1-14). They stand on the mercy seat of the ark, and *on that ground* become the habitation of God from which His glory is to shine upon the world. The different forms symbolize the different phases of the Church. So the quadriform Gospel, in which the incarnate Savior has lodged the revelation of Himself in a fourfold aspect, and from which His glory shines on the Christian world, answers to the emblematic throne from which He shone on the Jewish Church.

2. *he* — Jehovah; He who sat on the “throne.”

the man — the Messenger of mercy becoming the Messenger of judgment (see on ^{<3012>}Ezekiel 9:2). *Human* agents of destruction shall fulfill the will of “the Man,” who is Lord of men.

wheels — *Hebrew, galgal*, implying *quick* revolution; so *the impetuous onset of the foe* (compare ^{<3024>}Ezekiel 23:24 ^{<26:10>}26:10); whereas “*ophan*,” in ^{<3015>}Ezekiel 1:15,16 implies mere revolution.

coals of fire — the wrath of God about to *burn the city*, as His sword had previously *slain* its guilty inhabitants. This “fire,” how different from *the fire on the altar never going out* (^{<3062>}Leviticus 6:12,13), whereby, in type, peace was made with God! Compare ^{<3332>}Isaiah 33:12,14. It is therefore not taken from the altar of reconciliation, but from between the wheels of the cherubim, representing the providence of God, whereby, and not by chance, judgment is to fall.

3. right ... of ... house — The scene of the locality whence judgment emanates is the temple, to mark God’s vindication of His holiness injured there. The cherubim here are not those in the holy of holies, for the latter had not “wheels.” They stood on “the right of the house,” that is, the south, for the Chaldean power, guided by them, had already advanced from the north (the direction of Babylon), and had destroyed *the men in the temple*, and was now proceeding to destroy the *city*, which lay south and west.

the cherubim ... the man — There was perfect concert of action between the cherubic representative of the angels and “the Man,” to minister to whom they “stood” there (^{<3007>}Ezekiel 10:7).

cloud — emblem of God’s displeasure; as the “glory” or “brightness” (^{<3004>}Ezekiel 10:4) typifies His majesty and clearness in judgment.

4. The court outside was full of the Lord’s *brightness*, while it was only the *cloud* that filled the *house inside*, the scene of idolatries, and therefore of God’s displeasure. God’s throne was *on the threshold*. The temple, once filled with brightness, is now darkened with cloud.

5. sound of ... wings — prognostic of great and awful changes.

voice of ... God — the thunder (^{<3003>}Psalms 29:3, etc.).

6. went in — not into the temple, but between the cherubim. Ezekiel sets aside the Jews’ boast of the presence of God with them. The cherubim, once the ministers of grace, are now the ministers of vengeance. When “commanded,” He without delay obeys (^{<3005>}Psalms 40:8 ^{<3007>}Hebrews 10:7).

7. See on ^{<3003>}Ezekiel 10:3.

one cherub — one of the four cherubim.

his hand — (²⁰⁰⁸Ezekiel 1:8).

went out — to burn the city.

8. The “wings” denote alacrity, the “hands” efficacy and aptness, in executing the functions assigned to them.

9. **wheels** — (See on ²⁰¹⁵Ezekiel 1:15,16). The things which, from ²⁰⁰⁸Ezekiel 10:8 to the end of the chapter, are repeated from the first chapter are expressed more decidedly, now that he gets a nearer view: the words “as it were,” and “as if,” so often occurring in the first chapter, are therefore mostly omitted. The “wheels” express the manifold changes and revolutions in the world; also that in the chariot of His providence God transports the Church from one place to another and everywhere can preserve it; a truth CALCULATED to alarm the people in Jerusalem and to console the exiles [POLANUS].

10. **four had one likeness** — In the wonderful variety of God’s works there is the greatest harmony: —

*“In human works, though labored on with pain,
One thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;
In God’s one single doth its end produce,
Yet serves to second, too, some other use.
(See on ²⁰¹⁶Ezekiel 1:16).*

wheel ... in ... a wheel — cutting one another at right angles, so that the whole might move in any of the four directions or quarters of the world. God’s doings, however involved they seem to us, cohere, so that lower causes subserve the higher.

11. (See on ²⁰¹⁷Ezekiel 1:17).

turned not — without accomplishing their course (²⁵¹¹Isaiah 55:11) [GROTIUS]. Rather, “they moved *straight on* without turning” (so ²⁰⁰⁹Ezekiel 1:9). Having a face towards each of the four quarters, they needed not to turn around when changing their direction.

whither ... head looked — that is, “whither the head” of the animal cherub-form, belonging to and directing each wheel, “looked,” thither the wheel “followed.” The wheels were not guided by some external adventitious impetus, but by some secret divine impulse of the cherubim themselves.

12. **body** — literally, “flesh,” because a body consists of flesh.

wheels ... full of eyes — The description (^{<3018>}Ezekiel 1:18) attributes eyes to the “wheels” alone; here there is added, on closer observation, that the *cherubim* themselves had them. The “eyes” imply that God, by His wisdom, beautifully reconciles seeming contrarities (compare ^{<3462>}2 Chronicles 16:9 ^{<3153>}Proverbs 15:3 ^{<3040>}Zechariah 4:10).

13. *O wheel* — rather, “they were called, whirling,” that is, they were *most rapid in their revolutions* [MAURER]; or, better, “It was cried unto them, The whirling” [FAIRBAIRN]. *Galgal* here used for “wheel,” is different from *ophan*, the simple word for “wheel.” *Galgal* is the whole *wheelwork* machinery with its *whirlwind-like rotation*. Their being so addressed is in order to call them immediately to put themselves in rapid motion.

14. *cherub* — but in ^{<3010>}Ezekiel 1:10 it is *an ox*. The chief of the four cherubic forms was not the *ox*, *but man*. Therefore “cherub” cannot be synonymous with “ox.” Probably Ezekiel, standing in front of one of the cherubim (namely, that which handed the coals to the man in linen), saw of him, not merely the ox-form, but the *whole fourfold* form, and therefore calls him simply “cherub”; whereas of the other three, having only a side view, he specifies the form of each which met his eye [FAIRBAIRN]. As to the likelihood of the lower animals sharing in “the restoration of all things,” see ^{<3106>}Isaiah 11:6 ^{<3525>}65:25 ^{<6101>}Romans 8:20,21; this accords with the animal forms combined with the human to typify redeemed man.

15. The repeated declaration of the identity of the vision with that at the Chebar is to arouse attention to it (^{<3022>}Ezekiel 10:22 3:23).

the living creature — used collectively, as in ^{<3007>}Ezekiel 10:17,20 1:20.

16. (See on ^{<3011>}Ezekiel 10:11; ^{<3019>}Ezekiel 1:19).

lifted up ... wings — to depart, following “the glory of the Lord” which was on the point of departing (^{<3008>}Ezekiel 10:18).

17. (^{<3012>}Ezekiel 1:12,20,21).

stood — God never *stands* still (^{<6171>}John 5:17), therefore neither do the angels; but to human perceptions He seems to do so.

18. The departure of the symbol of God’s presence from the temple preparatory to the destruction of the city. Foretold in ^{<6117>}Deuteronomy 31:17. Woe be to those from whom God departs (^{<3012>}Hosea 9:12)! Compare ^{<6285>}1 Samuel 28:15,16 4:21: “I-chabod, Thy glory is departed.” Successive steps are marked in His departure; so slowly and reluctantly does the merciful God leave His house. First He leaves the sanctuary (^{<3018>}Ezekiel 9:3); He elevates His throne above the threshold of the house

(^{<300>}Ezekiel 10:1); leaving the cherubim He sits on the throne (^{<300>}Ezekiel 10:4); He and the cherubim, after *standing* for a time *at the door of the east gate* (where was the exit to the lower court of the people), leave the house altogether (^{<300>}Ezekiel 10:18,19), not to return till ^{<300>}Ezekiel 43:2.

20. *I knew ... cherubim* — By the second sight of the cherubim, he learned to identify them with the angelic forms situated above the ark of the covenant in the temple, which as a priest, he “knew” about from the high priest.

21. The repetition is in order that the people about to live without the temple might have, instead, the knowledge of the temple mysteries, thus preparing them for a future restoration of the covenant. So perverse were they that they would say, “Ezekiel fancies he saw what has no existence.” He, therefore, repeats it over and over again.

22. *straight forward* — intent upon the object they aimed at, not deviating from the way nor losing sight of the end (^{<300>}Luke 9:52).

CHAPTER 11

~~2102~~ EZEKIEL 11:1-25.

PROPHECY OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CORRUPT “PRINCES OF THE PEOPLE;” PELATIAH DIES; PROMISE OF GRACE TO THE BELIEVING REMNANT; DEPARTURE OF THE GLORY OF GOD FROM THE CITY; EZEKIEL’S RETURN TO THE CAPTIVES.

1. *east gate* — to which the glory of God had moved itself (~~2309~~Ezekiel 10:19), the chief entrance of the sanctuary; the portico or porch of Solomon. The Spirit moves the prophet thither, to witness, in the presence of the divine glory, a new scene of destruction.

five and twenty men — The same as the twenty-five (that is, twenty-four heads of courses, and the high priest) sun-worshippers seen in ~~2316~~Ezekiel 8:16. The leading *priests* were usually called “princes of the sanctuary” (~~2363~~Isaiah 43:28) and “chiefs of the priests” (~~3434~~2 Chronicles 36:14); but here two of them are called “princes of the people,” with irony, as using their priestly influence to be ringleaders of the people in sin (~~2310~~Ezekiel 11:2). Already the wrath of God had visited the *people* represented by the *elders* (~~2106~~Ezekiel 9:6); also the glory of the Lord had left its place in the holy of holies, and, like the cherubim and flaming sword in Eden, had occupied the gate into the deserted sanctuary. The judgment on the representatives of the *priesthood* naturally follows here, just as the *sin* of the priests had followed in the description (~~2102~~Ezekiel 8:12,16) after the sin of the elders.

Jaazaniah — signifying “God hears.”

son of Azur — different from Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan (~~2181~~Ezekiel 8:11). *Azur* means “help.” He and Pelatiah (“God delivers”), son of Benaiah (“God builds”), are singled out as Jaazaniah, son of Shaphan, in the case of the seventy elders (~~2181~~Ezekiel 8:11,12), because their names ought to have reminded them that “God” would have “heard” had they sought His “help” to “deliver” and “build” them up. But, neglecting this, they incurred the heavier judgment by the very relation in which they stood to God [FAIRBAIRN].

2. *he* — the Lord sitting on the cherubim (~~2302~~Ezekiel 10:2).

wicked counsel — in opposition to the prophets of God (^{<2310B>}Ezekiel 11:3).

3. *It is not near* — namely, the destruction of the city; therefore “let us build houses,” as if there was no fear. But the *Hebrew* opposes *English Version*, which would require the infinitive absolute. Rather, “Not at hand is the building of houses.” They sneer at Jeremiah’s letter to the captives, among whom Ezekiel lived (^{<2310B>}Jeremiah 29:5). “*Build ye houses, and dwell in them,*” that is, do not fancy, as many persuade you, that your sojourn in Babylon is to be short; it will be for seventy years (^{<2310B>}Jeremiah 25:11,12 29:10); therefore build houses and settle quietly there. The scorners in Jerusalem reply, Those far off in exile may build if they please, but it is *too remote* a concern for us to trouble ourselves about [FAIRBAIRN], (Compare ^{<2310B>}Ezekiel 12:22,27 ^{<2310B>}2 Peter 3:4).

this city ... caldron ... we ... flesh — sneering at ^{<2310B>}Jeremiah 1:13, when he compared the city to a caldron with its mouth towards the north. “Let Jerusalem be so if you will, and we the flesh, exposed to the raging foe from the north, still its fortifications will secure us from the flame of war outside; the city must stand for our sakes, just as the pot exists for the safety of the flesh in it.” In opposition to this God says (^{<2310B>}Ezekiel 11:11), “This city shall not be your caldron, to defend you *in* it from the foe *outside*: nay, ye shall be driven out of your imaginary sanctuary and slain *in the border of the land*. “But,” says God, in ^{<2310B>}Ezekiel 11:7, “your slain are the flesh, and this city the caldron; but (not as you fancy, shall ye be kept safe *inside*) I will bring you forth *out of the midst of it*”; and again, in ^{<2310B>}Ezekiel 24:3, “Though not a caldron in *your* sense, Jerusalem shall be so in the sense of its being exposed to a consuming foe, and you yourselves in it and with it.”

4. *prophecy ... prophecy* — The repetition marks emphatic earnestness.

5. *Spirit ... fell upon me* — stronger than “entered into me” (^{<2310B>}Ezekiel 2:2 3:24), implying the zeal of the Spirit of God roused to immediate indignation at the contempt of God shown by the scorners.

I know — (^{<2310B>}Psalms 139:1-4). Your scornful jests at My word escape not My notice.

6. *your slain* — those on whom you have brought ruin by your wicked counsels. Bloody crimes within the city brought on it a bloody foe from without (^{<2310B>}Ezekiel 7:23,24). They had made it a caldron in which to boil the flesh of God’s people (^{<2310B>}Micah 3:1-3), and eat it by unrighteous oppression; therefore God will make it a caldron in a different sense, one not wherein they may be safe in their guilt, but “out of the midst of” which they shall be “brought forth” (^{<2310B>}Jeremiah 34:4,5).

7. The city is a caldron to them, but it shall not be so to you. Ye shall meet your doom on the frontier.

8. The Chaldean sword, to escape which ye abandoned your God, shall be brought on you by God because of that very abandonment of Him.

9. *out of the midst thereof* — that is, of the city, as captives led into the open plain for judgment.

10. *in the border of Israel* — on the frontier: at Riblah, in the land of Hamath (compare ^{<259>}2 Kings 25:19-21, with ^{<108>}1 Kings 8:65).

ye shall know that I am the Lord — by the judgments I inflict (^{<496>}Psalm 9:16).

11. (See on ^{<310>}Ezekiel 11:3).

12. (^{<623>}Deuteronomy 12:30,31).

13. *Pelaliah* — probably the ringleader of the scorers (^{<310>}Ezekiel 11:1) was an earnest of the destruction of the rest of the twenty-five, as Ezekiel had foretold, as also of the general ruin.

fell ... upon ... face — (See on ^{<408>}Ezekiel 9:8).

wilt thou make a full end of the remnant — Is Pelatiah's destruction to be the token of the destruction of all, even of the remnant? The people regarded Pelatiah as a mainstay of the city. His name (derived from a *Hebrew* root, "a remnant," or else "God delivers") suggested hope. Is that hope, asks Ezekiel, to be disappointed?

15. *thy brethren ... brethren* — The repetition implies, "Thy real brethren" are no longer the priests at Jerusalem with whom thou art connected by the *natural* ties of blood and common temple service, but thy fellow exiles on the Chebar, and the house of Israel whosoever of them. belong to the remnant to be spared.

men of thy kindred — literally, "of thy redemption," that is, the nearest relatives, whose duty it was to do the part of Goel, or vindicator and redeemer of a forfeited inheritance (^{<825>}Leviticus 25:25). Ezekiel, seeing the priesthood doomed to destruction, as a priest, felt anxious to vindicate their cause, as if they were his nearest kinsmen and he their Goel. But he is told to look for his true kinsmen in those, his fellow exiles, whom his natural kinsmen at Jerusalem despised, and he is to be their vindicator. Spiritual ties, as in the case of Levi (^{<539>}Deuteronomy 33:9), the type of Messiah (^{<124>}Matthew 12:47-50) are to supersede natural ones where the two clash. The hope of better days was to rise from the despised exiles. The gospel

principle is shadowed forth here, that the despised of men are often the chosen of God and the highly esteemed among men are often an abomination before Him (^{<21615>}Luke 16:15 ^{<41015>}1 Corinthians 1:26-28). “No door of hope but in the valley of Achor” (“trouble,” ^{<3015>}Hosea 2:15), [FAIRBAIRN].

Get you far ... unto us is this land — the contemptuous words of those left still in the city at the carrying away of Jeconiah to the exiles, “However far ye be outcasts from the Lord and His temple, *we* are secure in our possession of the land.”

16. Although — anticipating the objection of the priests at Jerusalem, that the exiles were “cast far off.” Though this be so, and they are far from the outer temple at Jerusalem, I will be their asylum or sanctuary instead (^{<3900>}Psalm 90:1 91:9 ^{<2384>}Isaiah 8:14). My shrine is the humble heart: a preparation for gospel catholicity when the local and material temple should give place to the spiritual (^{<2575>}Isaiah 57:15 66:1 Malachi 1:1 ^{<6011>}1 John 4:21-24 ^{<4178>}Acts 7:48,49). The trying discipline of the exile was to chasten the outcasts so as to be meet recipients of God’s grace, for which the carnal confidence of the priests disqualified them. The dispersion served the end of spiritualizing and enlarging the views even of the better Jews, so as to be able to worship God *everywhere* without a material temple; and, at the same time, it diffused some knowledge of God among the greatest Gentile nations, thus providing materials for the gathering in of the Christian Church among the Gentiles; so marvellously did God overrule a present evil for an ultimate good. Still more does all this hold good in the present much longer dispersion which is preparing for a more perfect and universal restoration (^{<2102>}Isaiah 2:2-4 ^{<2416>}Jeremiah 3:16-18). Their long privation of the temple will prepare them for appreciating the more, but without Jewish narrowness, the temple that is to be (^{<3501>}Ezekiel 40:1-44:31).

a little — rather, “for a little season”; No matter how long the captivity may be, the seventy years will be but as a little season, compared with their long subsequent settlement in their land. This holds true only partially in the case of the first restoration; but as in a few centuries they were dispersed again, the full and permanent restoration is yet future (^{<2416>}Jeremiah 24:6).

17. (^{<3325>}Ezekiel 28:25 34:13 36:24).

18. They have eschewed every vestige of idolatry ever since their return from Babylon. But still the Shekinah glory had departed, the ark was not restored, nor was the second temple strictly inhabited by God until He came who made it more glorious than the first temple (Haggai 2:9); even then His stay was short, and ended in His being rejected; so that the full realization of the promise must still be future.

19. *I will give them* — lest they should claim to *themselves* the praise given them in ^{<3118>}Ezekiel 11:18, God declares it is to be *the free gift of His Spirit*.

one heart — not *singleness*, that is, uprightness, but *oneness* of heart in all, *unanimously* seeking Him in contrast to their state at that time, when only single scattered individuals sought God (^{<3429>}Jeremiah 32:39 ^{<3429>}Zephaniah 3:9) [HENGSTENBERG]. Or, “content with *one God*,” not distracted with “the many detestable things” (^{<3118>}Ezekiel 11:18 ^{<1182>}1 Kings 18:21 ^{<3802>}Hosea 10:2) [CALVIN].

new spirit — (^{<3510>}Psalms 51:10 ^{<3633>}Jeremiah 31:33). Realized fully in the “new creature” of the New Testament (^{<4057>}2 Corinthians 5:17); having new motives, new rules, new aims.

stony heart — like “adamant” (^{<3872>}Zechariah 7:12); the natural heart of every man.

heart of flesh — impressible to what is good, tender.

20. *walk in my statutes* — Regeneration shows itself by its fruits (^{<482>}Galatians 5:22,25).

they ... my people, ... I ... their God — (^{<3441>}Ezekiel 14:11 36:28 37:27 ^{<3441>}Jeremiah 24:7). In its fullest sense still future (Zechariah 13:9).

21. *whose heart ... after ... heart of ... detestable things* — The repetition of “heart” is emphatic, signifying that the heart of those who so obstinately clung to idols, impelled itself to fresh superstitions in one continuous tenor [CALVIN]. Perhaps it is implied that they and their idols are much alike in character (^{<4858>}Psalms 115:8). The *heart* walks astray first, the feet follow.

recompense ... way upon ... heads — They have abandoned Me, so will I abandon them; they profaned My temple, so will I profane it by the Chaldeans (^{<3690>}Ezekiel 9:10).

23. The Shekinah glory now moves from the east gate (^{<3604>}Ezekiel 10:4,19) to the Mount of Olives, altogether abandoning the temple. The mount was chosen as being the height whence the missiles of the foe were about to descend on the city. So it was from it that Jesus ascended to heaven when about to send His judgments on the Jews; and from it He predicted its overthrow before His crucifixion (^{<4243>}Matthew 24:3). It is also to be the scene of His return in person to deliver His people (Zechariah 14:4), when He shall come by the same way as He went, “the way of the east” (^{<3882>}Ezekiel 43:2).

24. *brought me in a vision* — not in actual fact, but in ecstatic vision. He had been as to the outward world all the time before the elders (^{300B}Ezekiel 8:3) in Chaldea; he now reports what he had witnessed with the inner eye.

25. *things ... showed me* — literally, “words”; an appropriate expression; for the word communicated to him was not simply a word, but one clothed with outward symbols “shown” to him as in the sacrament, which AUGUSTINE terms “the visible word” [CALVIN].

CHAPTER 12

EZEKIEL 12:1-28.

EZEKIEL'S TYPICAL MOVING TO EXILE: PROPHECY OF ZEDEKIAH'S CAPTIVITY AND PRIVATION OF SIGHT: THE JEWS' UNBELIEVING SURMISE AS TO THE DISTANCE OF THE EVENT REPROVED.

1, 2. *eyes to see, and see not, ... ears to hear, and hear not* — fulfilling the prophecy of ⁽⁴⁵²⁰⁾Deuteronomy 29:4, here quoted by Ezekiel (compare ⁽²¹⁶⁹⁾Isaiah 6:9 ⁽²¹⁶²⁾Jeremiah 5:21). Ezekiel needed often to be reminded of the people's perversity, lest he should be discouraged by the little effect produced by his prophecies. Their "not seeing" is the result of perversity, not incapacity. They are wilfully blind. The persons most interested in this prophecy were those dwelling at Jerusalem; and it is among them that Ezekiel was transported in spirit, and performed in vision, not outwardly, the typical acts. At the same time, the symbolical prophecy was designed to warn the exiles at Chebar against cherishing hopes, as many did in opposition to God's revealed word, of returning to Jerusalem, as if that city was to stand; externally living afar off, their hearts dwelt in that corrupt and doomed capital.

3. *stuff for removing* — rather, "an exile's outfit," the articles proper to a person going as an exile, a staff and knapsack, with a supply of food and clothing; so "instruments of captivity," ⁽³⁴⁶⁹⁾Jeremiah 46:19, *Margin*, that is, the needful equipments for it. His simple announcements having failed, he is symbolically to give them an ocular demonstration conveyed by a word-painting of actions performed in vision.

consider — (⁽⁴⁶²⁹⁾Deuteronomy 32:29).

4. *by day* — in broad daylight, when all can see thee.

at even — not contradicting the words "by day." The baggage was to be sent before *by day*, and Ezekiel was to follow *at nightfall* [GROTIUS]; or, the preparations were to be made by day, the actual departure was to be effected at night [HENDERSON].

as they that go forth into captivity — literally, "as the goings forth of the captivity," that is, of the captive band of exiles, namely, amid the silent

darkness: typifying Zedekiah's flight by night on the taking of the city (²³⁰⁸Jeremiah 39:4 52:7).

5. Dig — as Zedekiah was to escape like one digging through a wall, furtively to effect an escape (²³²²Ezekiel 12:12).

carry out — namely, “thy stuff” (²³²⁶Ezekiel 12:4).

thereby — by the opening in the wall. Zedekiah escaped “by the gate betwixt the two walls” (²³⁰⁸Jeremiah 39:4).

6. in ... twilight — rather, “in the dark.” So in ⁰¹⁵⁷Genesis 15:17, “it” refers to “thy stuff.”

cover thy face — as one who muffles his face, afraid of being recognized by anyone meeting him. So the Jews and Zedekiah should make their exit stealthily and afraid to look around, so hurried should be their fight [CALVIN].

sign — rather, “a portent,” namely, for evil.

9. What doest thou? — They ask not in a docile spirit, but making a jest of his proceedings.

10. burden — that is, weighty oracle.

the prince — The very man Zedekiah, in whom they trust for safety, is to be the chief sufferer. JOSEPHUS [*Antiquities*, 10.7] reports that Ezekiel sent a copy of this prophecy to Zedekiah. As Jeremiah had sent a letter to the captives at the Chebar, which was the means of calling forth at first the agency of Ezekiel, so it was natural for Ezekiel to send a message to Jerusalem confirming the warnings of Jeremiah. The prince, however, fancying a contradiction between ²³²³Ezekiel 12:13; “he shall not see Babylon,” and ²³⁰⁸Jeremiah 24:8,9, declaring he should be carried to Babylon, believed neither. Seeming discrepancies in Scripture on deeper search prove to be hidden harmonies.

11. sign — *portent of evil* to come (²³⁰⁷Ezekiel 24:27 Zechariah 3:8, *Margin*). Fulfilled (¹²⁵¹2 Kings 25:1-7 ²³¹³Jeremiah 52:1-11).

12. prince ... among them — literally, “that is in the midst of them,” that is, on whom the eyes of all are cast, and “under whose shadow” they hope to live (²³⁰²Lamentations 4:20).

shall bear — namely, his “stuff for removing”; his equipments for his journey.

cover his face, that he see not the ground — See on ^{<2626>}Ezekiel 12:6; the symbol in ^{<2616>}Ezekiel 12:6 is explained in this verse. He shall muffle his face so as not to be recognized: a humiliation for a king!

13. My net — the Chaldean army. He shall be inextricably entangled in it, as in the meshes of a net. It is *God's* net (^{<4896>}Job 19:6). Babylon was God's instrument (^{<2305>}Isaiah 10:5). Called "a net" (^{<3014>}Habakkuk 1:14-16).

bring him to Babylon ... ; yet shall he not see it — because he should be deprived of sight before he arrived there (^{<2521>}Jeremiah 52:11).

14. all ... about him — his satellites: his bodyguard.

bands — literally, "the wings" of an army (^{<2388>}Isaiah 8:8).

draw out ... sword after them — (See on ^{<3616>}Ezekiel 5:2; ^{<3612>}Ezekiel 5:12).

16. I will leave a few ... that they may declare ... abominations — God's purpose in scattering a remnant of Jews among the Gentiles; namely, not only that they themselves should be weaned from idolatry (see ^{<3225>}Ezekiel 12:15), but that by their own *word*, as also *by their whole state as exiles*, they should make God's righteousness manifest among the Gentiles, as vindicated in their punishment for their sins (compare ^{<2300>}Isaiah 43:10 ^{<3883>}Zechariah 8:13).

18. Symbolical representation of the famine and fear with which they should eat their scanty morsel, in their exile, and especially at the siege.

19. people of the land — the Jews "in the land" of Chaldea who thought themselves miserable as being exiles and envied the Jews left in Jerusalem as fortunate.

land of Israel — contrasted with "the people in the land" of Chaldea. So far from being fortunate as the exiles in Chaldea regarded them, the Jews in Jerusalem are truly miserable, for the worst is before them, whereas the exiles have escaped the miseries of the coming siege.

land ... desolate from all that is therein — literally "that the land (namely, Judea) may be despoiled of the fullness thereof"; emptied of the inhabitants and abundance of flocks and corn with which it was filled.

because of ... violence — (^{<3973>}Psalm 107:34).

20. the cities — left in Judea after the destruction of Jerusalem.

22. proverb — The infidel scoff, that the threatened judgment was so long in coming, it would not come at all, had by frequent repetition come to be a "proverb" with them. This skeptical habit contemporary prophets testify to

(^{<3475>}Jeremiah 17:15 ^{<3012>}20:7 ^{<3012>}Zephaniah 1:12). Ezekiel, at the Chebar, thus sympathizes with Jeremiah and strengthens his testimony at Jerusalem. The *tendency* to the same scoff showed itself in earlier times, but had not then developed into a settled “proverb” (^{<3159>}Isaiah 5:19 ^{<3158>}Amos 5:18). It shall again be the characteristic of the last times, when “faith” shall be regarded as an antiquated thing (^{<2988>}Luke 18:8), seeing that it remains stationary, whereas worldly arts and sciences progress, and when the “continuance of all things from creation” will be the argument against the possibility of their being suddenly brought to a standstill by the coming of the Lord (^{<2965>}Isaiah 66:5 ^{<3002>}2 Peter 3:3,4). The very long-suffering of God, which ought to lead men to repentance, is made an argument against His word (^{<2081>}Ecclesiastes 8:11 ^{<3068>}Amos 6:3).

days ... prolonged ... vision faileth — their twofold argument:

- (1) The predictions shall not come to pass till long after our time.
- (2) They shall fail and prove vain shadows. God answers both in ^{<3123>}Ezekiel 12:23,25.

23. effect — literally, “the word,” namely, fulfilled; that is, the effective fulfillment of whatever the prophets have spoken is at hand.

24. no more ... vain vision ... flattering divination — All those false prophets (^{<2924>}Lamentations 2:14), who “flattered” the people with promises of peace and safety, shall be detected and confounded by the event itself.

25. word ... shall come to pass — in opposition to their scoff “the vision faileth” (^{<3122>}Ezekiel 12:22). The repetition, “I will speak ... speak,” etc. (or as FAIRBAIRN, “For I, Jehovah, will speak whatever word I shall speak, and it shall be done”) implies that whenever God speaks, the effect must follow; for God, who speaks, is not divided in Himself (^{<3123>}Ezekiel 12:28 ^{<2551>}Isaiah 55:11 ^{<2192>}Daniel 9:12 ^{<2133>}Luke 21:33).

no more prolonged — in opposition to the scoff (^{<3122>}Ezekiel 12:22), “The days are prolonged.”

in your days — while you are living (compare ^{<1284>}Matthew 24:34).

27. Not a mere repetition of the scoff (^{<3122>}Ezekiel 12:22); there the *scoffers* asserted that the evil was so often threatened and postponed, it must have no reality; here *formalists* do not go so far as to deny that a day of evil is coming, but assert it is still far off (^{<3068>}Amos 6:3). The transition is easy from this carnal security to the gross infidelity of the former class.

CHAPTER 13

EZEKIEL 13:1-23.

DENUNCIATION OF FALSE PROPHETS AND PROPHETESSES; THEIR FALSE TEACHINGS, AND GOD'S CONSEQUENT JUDGMENTS.

1. As the twelfth chapter denounced the false expectations of the people, so this denounces the false leaders who fed those expectations. As an independent witness, Ezekiel confirms at the Chebar the testimony of Jeremiah (²⁰²¹Jeremiah 29:21,31) in his letter from Jerusalem to the captive exiles, against the false prophets; of these some were conscious knaves, others fanatical dupes of their own frauds; for example, Ahab, Zedekiah, and Shemaiah. Hananiah must have believed his own lie, else he would not have specified so *circumstantial* details (²⁰²³Jeremiah 28:2-4). The conscious knaves gave only *general* assurances of peace (²⁴⁵³Jeremiah 5:31 6:14 14:13). The language of Ezekiel has plain references to the similar language of Jeremiah (for example, ²⁰²⁹Jeremiah 23:9-38); the bane of false prophecy, which had its stronghold in Jerusalem, having in some degree extended to the Chebar; this chapter, therefore, is primarily intended as a message to those still in the Jewish metropolis; and, secondarily, for the good of the exiles at the Chebar.

2. *that prophesy* — namely, a speedy return to Jerusalem.

out of ... own hearts — alluding to the words of Jeremiah (²³³⁶Jeremiah 23:16,26); that is, what they prophesied was what they and the people *wished*; the wish was father to the thought. The people *wished* to be deceived, and so were deceived. They were inexcusable, for they had among them true prophets (who spoke not *their own* thoughts, but as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, ⁶⁰²²2 Peter 1:21), whom they might have known to be such, but they did not wish to know (⁴¹⁹⁹John 3:19).

3. *foolish* — though vaunting as though exclusively possessing “wisdom” (⁴¹⁹¹1 Corinthians 1:19-21); the fear of God being the only beginning of wisdom (⁴³¹⁰Psalms 111:10).

their own spirit — instead of the Spirit of God. A threefold distinction lay between the false and the true prophets:

(1) The source of their messages respectively; of the false, “their own hearts”; of the true, an object presented to the spiritual sense (named from the noblest of the senses, a *seeing*) by the Spirit of God as from without, not produced by their own natural powers of reflection. The word, the body of the thought, presented itself not audibly to the natural sense, but directly to the spirit of the prophet; and so the perception of it is properly called a *seeing*, he perceiving that which thereafter forms itself in his soul as the cover of the external word [DELITZSCH]; hence the peculiar expression, “seeing the word of God” (²¹⁰⁴Isaiah 2:1 13:1 ²¹⁰⁵Amos 1:1 ²¹⁰⁶Micah 1:1).

(2) The point aimed at; the false “walking after their own spirit”; the true, after the Spirit of God.

(3) The result; the false saw nothing, but spake as if they had seen; the true had a vision, not subjective, but objectively real [FAIRBAIRN]. A refutation of those who set the *inward* word above the *objective*, and represent the Bible as flowing subjectively from the inner light of its writers, not from the revelation of the Holy Ghost from without. “They are impatient to get possession of the kernel without its fostering shell — they would have Christ without the Bible” [BENGEL].

4. *foxes* — which cunningly “spoil the vines” (So 2:15), Israel being the vineyard (²¹⁰⁸Psalm 80:8-15 ²¹⁰⁹Isaiah 5:1-7 27:2 ²¹¹⁰Jeremiah 2:21); their duty was to have guarded it from being spoiled, whereas they themselves spoiled it by corruptions.

in ... deserts — where there is nothing to eat; whence the foxes become so ravenous and crafty in their devices to get food. So the prophets wander in Israel, a moral desert, unrestrained, greedy of gain which they get by craft.

5. *not gone up into ... gaps* — metaphor from *breaches* made in a wall, to which the defenders ought to betake themselves in order to repel the entrance of the foe. The breach is that made in the theocracy through the nation’s sin; and, unless it be made up, the vengeance of God will break in through it. Those who would advise the people to repentance are the restorers of the breach (²¹²³Ezekiel 22:30 ²¹²⁴Psalm 106:23,30).

hedge — the law of God (²¹⁰²Psalm 80:12 ²¹⁰³Isaiah 5:2,5); by violating it, the people stripped themselves of the *fence* of God’s protection and lay exposed to the foe. The false prophets did not try to repair the evil by bringing back the people to the law with good counsels, or by checking the bad with reproofs. These two duties answer to the double office of defenders in case of a breach made in a wall:

(1) To repair the breach from within;

(2) To oppose the foe from without.

to stand — that is, that the city may “stand.”

in ... day of ... Lord — In the day of the battle which God wages against Israel for their sins, ye do not try to stay God’s vengeance by prayers, and by leading the nation to repentance.

6. *made others to hope*, etc. — rather, “they *hoped*” to confirm (that is, ‘make good’) their word, by the event corresponding to their prophecy. The *Hebrew* requires this [HAVERNICK]. Also the parallel clause, “they have *seen* vanity,” implies that they believed their own lie (^{<301>}2 Thessalonians 2:11). Subjective revelation is false unless it rests on the objective.

8. *I am against you* — rather understand, “I *come* against you,” to punish your wicked profanation of My name (compare ^{<615>}Revelation 2:5,16).

9. *mine hand* — My power in vengeance.

not ... in ... assembly — rather, the “council”; “They shall not occupy the honorable office of *councillors* in the senate of elders after the return from Babylon” (^{<610>}Ezra 2:1,2).

neither ... written in ... Israel — They shall not even have a place in the *register* kept of all *citizens*’ names; they shall be erased from it, just as the names of those who died in the year, or had been deprived of citizenship for their crimes. were at the annual revisal erased. Compare ^{<217>}Jeremiah 17:13 ^{<210>}Luke 10:20 ^{<615>}Revelation 3:5, as to those *spiritually* Israelites; ^{<614>}John 1:47, and those not so. Literally fulfilled (^{<529>}Ezra 2:59,62; compare ^{<615>}Nehemiah 7:5 ^{<528>}Psalms 69:28).

neither ... enter ... land — They shall not so much as be allowed to come back at all to their country.

10. *Because, even because* — The repetition heightens the emphasis.

Peace — *safety* to the nation. Ezekiel confirms ^{<214>}Jeremiah 6:14 8:11.

one — literally, “this one”; said contemptuously, as in ^{<402>}2 Chronicles 28:22.

a wall — rather, “a loose wall.” Ezekiel had said that the false prophets did not “go up into the gaps, or make up the breaches” (^{<315>}Ezekiel 13:5), as good architects do; now he adds that they make a bustling show of anxiety about repairing the wall; but it is without right mortar, and therefore of no use.

one ... others — besides *individual* effort, they *jointly co-operated* to delude the people.

daubed ... with untempered mortar — as sand without lime, mud without straw [GROTIUS]. FAIRBAIRN translates, “plaster it with whitewash.” But besides the hypocrisy of merely *outwardly* “daubing” to make the wall look fair (⁴¹²⁷Matthew 23:27,29 ⁴²¹³Acts 23:3), there is implied the unsoundness of the wall from the absence of *true uniting cement*; the “untempered cement” answering to *the lie* of the prophets, who say, *in support of their prophecies*, “Thus saith the Lord, when the Lord hath not spoken” (³²²⁸Ezekiel 22:28).

11. overflowing — *inundating*; such as will at once wash away the mere clay mortar. The three most destructive agents shall co-operate against the wall — wind, rain, and hailstones. These last in the East are more out of the regular course of nature and are therefore often particularly specified as the instruments of God’s displeasure against His foes (¹⁰⁹⁸Exodus 9:18 ⁶⁰¹Joshua 10:11 ⁸⁸²Job 38:22 ¹⁹⁸¹²Psalms 18:12,13 ²³⁴¹⁷Isaiah 28:2 30:30 ⁶¹²¹Revelation 16:21). The *Hebrew* here is, literally, “stones of ice.” They fall in Palestine at times an inch thick with a destructive velocity. The personification heightens the vivid effect, “O ye hail stones.” The Chaldeans will be the violent agency whereby God will unmask and refute them, overthrowing their edifice of lies.

12. shall it not be said — Your vanity and folly shall be so manifested that it shall pass into a proverb, “Where is the daubing?”

13. God repeats, *in His own name*, as the Source of the coming calamity, what had been expressed generally in ³³³¹Ezekiel 13:11.

14. The repetition of the same threat (see on ³³³¹Ezekiel 13:11) is to awaken the people out of their dream of safety by the *certainty* of the event.

foundation — As the “wall” represents the security of the nation, so the “foundation” is *Jerusalem*, on the fortifications of which they rested their confidence. GROTIUS makes the “foundation” refer to *the false principles* on which they rested; ³³³⁶Ezekiel 13:16 supports the former view.

16. prophesy concerning Jerusalem — With all their “seeing visions of peace for her,” they cannot ensure peace or safety to themselves.

17. set thy face — put on a bold countenance, fearlessly to denounce them (³¹⁸⁸Ezekiel 3:8,9 ²³¹⁰⁷Isaiah 50:7).

daughters — the false prophetesses; alluded to only here; elsewhere the guilt specified in the women is the active share they took in maintaining

idolatry (^{<2084>}Ezekiel 8:14). It was only in extraordinary emergencies that God bestowed prophecy on women, for example on Miriam, Deborah, Huldah (^{<2150>}Exodus 15:20 ^{<1006>}Judges 4:4 ^{<2245>}2 Kings 22:14); so in the last days to come (^{<2128>}Joel 2:28). The rareness of such instances enhanced their guilt in pretending inspiration.

18. sew pillows to ... armholes — rather, *elbows and wrists*, for which the false prophetesses made cushions to lean on, as a symbolical act, typifying the perfect tranquility which they foretold to those consulting them. Perhaps they made their dupes rest on these cushions in a fancied state of ecstasy after they had made them at first *stand* (whence the expression, “every *stature*,” is used for “men of every *age*”). As the men are said to have built a wall (^{<2331>}Ezekiel 13:10), so the women are said to sew pillows, etc., both alike typifying the “peace” they promised the impenitent.

make kerchiefs — magical *veils*, which they put over the heads of those consulting them, as if to fit them for receiving a response, that they might be rapt in spiritual trance above the world.

head of every stature — “men of every age,” old and young, great and small, if only these had pay to offer them.

hunt souls — eagerly trying to allure them to the love of yourselves (^{<2069>}Proverbs 6:26 ^{<1014>}2 Peter 2:14), so as unwarily to become your prey.

will ye save ... souls ... that come unto you — Will ye haul after souls, and when they are yours (“come unto you”), will ye *promise them life*? “Save” is explained (^{<2632>}Ezekiel 13:22), “promising life” [GROTIUS]. CALVIN explains, “Will ye hunt My people’s souls and yet will ye save *your own* souls”; I, the Lord God, will not allow it. But “save” is used (^{<2339>}Ezekiel 13:19) of the false prophetesses *promising life* to the impenitent, so that *English Version* and GROTIUS explain it best.

19. handfuls — expressing the paltry gain for which they bartered immortal souls (compare ^{<3316>}Micah 3:5,11 ^{<3216>}Hebrews 12:16). They “polluted” God by making His name the cloak under which they uttered falsehoods.

among my people — an aggravation of their sin, that they committed it “among the people” whom God had chosen as peculiarly *His own*, and among whom He had His temple. It would have been a sin to have done so even among the Gentiles, who knew not God; much more so among the people of God (compare ^{<1820>}Proverbs 28:21).

slay ... souls that should not die, etc. — to *predict* the slaying or perdition of the godly whom I will save. As true ministers are said to save and slay

their hearers, according to the spirit respectively in which these receive their message (^{<4015>}2 Corinthians 2:15,16), so false ministers imitate them; but they promise safety to those on the broad way to ruin and predict ruin to those on the narrow way of God.

my people that hear your lies — who are therefore *wilfully* deceived, so that their guilt lies at their own door (^{<4119>}John 3:19).

20. I am against your pillows — that is, against your lying ceremonial tricks by which ye cheat the people.

to make them fly — namely, into their snares, as fowlers disturb birds so as to be suddenly caught in the net spread for them. “Fly” is peculiarly appropriate as to those lofty spiritual *flights* to which they pretended to raise their dupes when they veiled their heads with kerchiefs and made them rest on luxurious arm-cushions (^{<2638>}Ezekiel 13:18).

let ... souls go — “Ye make them fly” in order to destroy them; “I will let them go” in order to save them (^{<1911>}Psalms 91:3 ^{<2105>}Proverbs 6:5 ^{<3008>}Hosea 9:8).

21. in your hand — in your power. “My people” are the elect remnant of Israel to be saved.

ye shall know — by the judgments which ye shall suffer.

22. ye have made ... the righteous sad — by *lying* predictions of calamities impending ever the godly.

strengthened ... wicked — (^{<2634>}Jeremiah 23:14).

heart of ... righteous ... hands of ... wicked — *Heart* is applied to the righteous because the terrors foretold penetrated to their inmost feelings; *hands*, to the wicked because they were so hardened as not only to despise God in their minds, but also to manifest it in their whole *acts*, as if avowedly waging war with Him.

23. ye shall see no more vanity — The event shall confute your lies, involving yourselves in destruction (^{<2639>}Ezekiel 13:9 ^{<3418>}Ezekiel 14:8 15:7 ^{<3306>}Micah 3:6).

CHAPTER 14

~~340~~ EZEKIEL 14:1-23.

HYPOCRITICAL INQUIRERS ARE ANSWERED ACCORDING TO THEIR HYPOCRISY. THE CALAMITIES COMING ON THE PEOPLE; BUT A REMNANT IS TO ESCAPE.

1. *elders* — persons holding that dignity among the exiles at the Chebar. GROTIUS refers this to Seraiah and those sent with him *from Judea* (~~2619~~ Jeremiah 51:59). The prophet's reply, first, reflecting on the character of the inquirers, and, secondly, foretelling the calamities coming on Judea, may furnish an idea of the subject of their inquiry.

sat before me — not at once able to find a beginning of their speech; indicative of anxiety and despondency.

3. *heart ... face* — The *heart* is first corrupted, and then the *outward manifestation* of idol-worship follows; they set their idols *before their eyes*. With all their pretense of consulting God now, they have not even put away their idols *outwardly*; implying gross contempt of God. "Set up," literally, "aloft"; implying that their idols had gained the supreme *ascendancy* over them.

stumbling-block of ... iniquity — See ~~3182~~ Proverbs 3:21,23, "Let not them (God's laws) depart *from thine eyes*, then ... thy foot shall not *stumble*." Instead of God's law, which (by being kept before their eyes) would have saved them from stumbling, they set up their idols before their eyes, which proved a stumbling-block, causing them to stumble (~~3079~~ Ezekiel 7:19).

inquired of at all — literally, "should I with inquiry be inquired of" by such hypocrites as they are? (~~968~~ Psalm 66:18 ~~3159~~ Proverbs 15:29 28:9).

4. *and cometh* — *and yet cometh*, reigning himself to be a true worshipper of Jehovah.

him that cometh — so the *Hebrew Margin* reads. But the *Hebrew text* reading is, "according to it, according to the multitude of his idols"; the anticipative clause with the pronoun not being pleonastic, but increasing the emphasis of the following clause with the noun. "I will answer," literally, reflexively, "I will Myself (or *for Myself*) answer him."

according to ... idols — thus, “answering a fool according to his folly”; making the sinner’s sin his punishment; retributive justice (³¹⁰³Proverbs 1:31 26:5).

5. That I may take — that is, unveil and *overtake with punishment* the dissimulation and impiety of Israel hid *in their own heart*. Or, rather, “That I may punish them by answering them *after their own hearts*”; corresponding to “according to the multitude of his idols” (see on ³³⁴⁰Ezekiel 14:4); an instance is given in ³³⁴⁰Ezekiel 14:9 ⁸⁰³Romans 1:28 ³²¹2 Thessalonians 2:11, God giving them up in wrath to their own lie.

idols — though pretending to “inquire” of Me, “in their hearts” they are “estranged from Me,” and love “idols.”

6. Though God so threatened the people for their idolatry (³³⁴⁰Ezekiel 14:5), yet He would rather they should avert the calamity by “repentance.”

turn yourselves — CALVIN translates, “turn *others*” (namely, the stranger proselytes in the land). As ye have been the advisers of others (see ³³⁴⁰Ezekiel 14:7, “the stranger that sojourneth in Israel”) to idolatry, so bestow at least as much pains in turning them to the truth; the surest proof of repentance. But the parallelism to ³³⁴⁰Ezekiel 14:3,4 favors *English Version*. Their sin was twofold:

- (1) “In their *heart*” or *inner man*;
- (2) “Put before their *face*,” that is, exhibited *outwardly*.

So their repentance is generally expressed by “repent,” and is then divided into:

- (1) “Turn *yourselves* (inwardly) from your idols”;
- (2) “Turn away your *faces* (outwardly) from all your abominations.” It is not likely that an exhortation to convert others should come *between* the two affecting themselves.

7. stranger — the proselyte, tolerated in Israel only on condition of worshipping no God but Jehovah (⁶⁷⁰⁸Leviticus 17:8,9).

inquire of him concerning me — that is, concerning My will.

by myself — not by word, but by deed, that is, by *judgments, marking My hand and direct agency*; instead of answering him through the prophet he consults. FAIRBAIRN translates, as it is the same *Hebrew* as in the previous clause, “concerning Me,” it is natural that God should use *the same expression* in His reply as was used in the consultation of Him. But the

sense, I think, is the same. The hypocrite inquires of the prophet *concerning God*; and God, instead of replying through the prophet, replies for Himself *concerning Himself*.

8. *And I will set my face against that man* — (See on ^{<6770>}Leviticus 17:10).

and will make him a sign — literally, “I will destroy him so as to become a sign”; it will be no ordinary destruction, but such as will make him be an object pointed at with wonder by all, as Korah, etc. (^{<4230>}Numbers 26:10 ^{<6387>}Deuteronomy 28:37).

9. *I the Lord have deceived that prophet* — not directly, but through Satan and his ministers; not merely permissively, but by overruling their evil to serve the purposes of *His righteous judgment*, to be a touchstone to separate the precious from the vile, and to “prove” His people (^{<6313>}Deuteronomy 13:3 ^{<1223>}1 Kings 22:23 ^{<3040>}Jeremiah 4:10 ^{<3211>}2 Thessalonians 2:11,12). Evil comes not from God, though God overrules it to serve His will (^{<8126>}Job 12:16 ^{<5003>}James 1:3). This declaration of God is intended to answer their objection, “Jeremiah and Ezekiel are but two opposed to the many prophets who announce ‘peace to us.’” “Nay, deceive not yourselves, those prophets of yours are deluding you, and I permit them to do so as a righteous judgment on your wilful blindness.”

10. As they dealt deceitfully with God by seeking answers of peace without repentance, so God would let them be dealt with deceitfully by the prophets whom they consulted. God would chastise their sin with a corresponding sin; as they rejected the safe directions of the true light, He would send the pernicious delusions of a false one; prophets would be given them who should re-echo the deceitfulness that already wrought in their own bosom, to their ruin [FAIRBAIRN]. The people had themselves alone to blame, for they were long ago forewarned how to discern and to treat a false prophet (^{<6313>}Deuteronomy 13:3); the very existence of such deceivers among them was a sign of God’s judicial displeasure (compare in Saul’s case, ^{<9641>}Samuel 16:14 28:6,7). They and the prophet, being dupes of a common delusion, should be involved in a common ruin.

11. Love was the spring of God’s very judgments on His people, who were incurable by any other process (^{<3120>}Ezekiel 11:20 37:27).

12. The second part of the chapter: the effect which the presence of a few righteous persons was to have on the purposes of God (compare ^{<4184>}Genesis 18:24-32). God had told Jeremiah that the guilt of Judah was too great to be pardoned even for the intercession of Moses and Samuel (^{<3909>}Psalms 99:6 ^{<2442>}Jeremiah 14:2 15:1), which had prevailed formerly (^{<4231>}Exodus 32:11-14 ^{<0443>}Numbers 14:13-20 ^{<9008>}1 Samuel 7:8-12), implying

the extraordinary heinousness of their guilt, since in *ordinary* cases “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man (for others) availeth much” (^{2316F}James 5:16). Ezekiel supplements Jeremiah by adding that not only those two once successful *intercessors*, but not even the three pre-eminently *righteous* men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, could stay God’s judgments by their righteousness.

13. *staff of ... bread* — on which man’s existence is supported as on a staff (^{2304E}Ezekiel 4:16 5:16 ^{2303B}Leviticus 26:26 ^{2341S}Psalms 104:15 ^{2301E}Isaiah 3:1). I will send a famine.

14. *Noah, Daniel ... Job* — specified in particular as having been saved from overwhelming calamities for their personal righteousness. Noah had the members of his family alone given to him, amidst the general wreck. Daniel saved from the fury of the king of Babylon the three youths (^{2307E}Daniel 2:17,18,48,49). Though his *prophecies* mostly were later than those of Ezekiel, his *fame for piety and wisdom* was already established, and the events recorded in ^{2300E}Daniel 1:1-2:49 had transpired. The Jews would naturally, in their fallen condition, pride themselves on one who reflected such glory on his nation at the heathen capital, and would build vain hopes (here set aside) on his influence in averting ruin from them. Thus the objection to the authenticity of Daniel from this passage vanishes. “Job” forms the climax (and is therefore put out of chronological order), having not even been left a son or a daughter, and having had himself to pass through an ordeal of suffering before his final deliverance, and therefore forming the most simple instance of the righteousness of God, which would save the righteous themselves alone in the nation, and that after an ordeal of suffering, but not spare even a son or daughter for their sake (^{2344E}Ezekiel 14:16,18,20; compare ^{2307E}Jeremiah 7:16 11:14 14:11).

deliver ... souls by ... righteousness — (^{2300E}Proverbs 11:4); not the righteousness of works, but that of grace, a truth less clearly understood under the law (^{2300B}Romans 4:3).

15-21. The argument is cumulative. He first puts the case of the land sinning so as to fall under the judgment of a famine (^{2341E}Ezekiel 14:13); then (^{2341E}Ezekiel 14:15) “noisome beasts” (^{2302E}Leviticus 26:22); then “the sword”; then, worst of all, “pestilence.” The three most righteous of men should deliver only themselves in these several four cases. In ^{2341E}Ezekiel 14:21 he concentrates the whole in one mass of condemnation. If Noah, Daniel, Job, could not deliver the land, when deserving only *one* judgment, “how much more” when all *four* judgments combined are justly to visit the land for sin, shall these three righteous men not deliver it.

19. *in blood* — not literally. In *Hebrew*, “blood” expresses every premature kind of death.

21. *How much more* — literally, “Surely shall it be so now, when I send,” etc. If none could avert *the one only* judgment incurred, *surely now*, when all four are incurred by sin, *much more* impossible it will be to deliver the land.

22. *Yet ... a remnant* — not of righteous persons, but some of the guilty who should “come forth” from the destruction of Jerusalem to Babylon, to lead a, life of hopeless exile there. The reference here is to judgment, not mercy, as ^{<31423}Ezekiel 14:23 shows.

ye shall see their ... doings; and ... be comforted — Ye, the exiles at the Chebar, who now murmur at God’s judgment about to be inflicted on Jerusalem as harsh, when ye shall see the wicked “ways” and character of the escaped remnant, shall acknowledge that both Jerusalem and its inhabitants deserved their fate; his recognition of the righteousness of the judgment will reconcile you to it, and so ye shall be “comforted” under it [CALVIN]. Then would follow mercy to the elect remnant, though *that* is not referred to here, but in ^{<31443}Ezekiel 20:43.

23. *they shall comfort you* — not in words, but by your recognizing in their manifest guilt, that God had not been unjustly severe to them and the city.

CHAPTER 15

EZEKIEL 15:1-8.

THE WORTHLESSNESS OF THE VINE AS WOOD ESPECIALLY WHEN BURNT, IS THE IMAGE OF THE WORTHLESSNESS AND GUILT OF THE JEWS, WHO SHALL PASS FROM ONE FIRE TO ANOTHER.

This chapter represents, in the way of a brief introduction, what the sixteenth chapter details minutely.

2, 3. What has the *vine-wood* to make it pre-eminent above other forest-*wood*? Nothing. Nay, the reverse. Other trees yield useful timber, but vine-wood is soft, brittle, crooked, and seldom large; not so much as a “pin” (the large wooden peg used inside houses in the East to hang household articles on, ^{<3223>}Isaiah 22:23-25) can be made of it. Its sole excellency is that it should bear fruit; when it does not bear fruit, it is not only not better, but inferior to other trees: so if God’s people lose their distinctive excellency by not bearing fruits of righteousness, they are more unprofitable than the worldly (^{<6323>}Deuteronomy 32:32), for they are the vine; the sole end of their being is to bear fruit to His glory (^{<808>}Psalm 80:8,9 ^{<351>}Isaiah 5:1, etc. ^{<4021>}Jeremiah 2:21 ^{<3011>}Hosea 10:1 ^{<41233>}Matthew 21:33). In all respects, except in their being planted by God, the Jews were inferior to other nations, as Egypt, Babylon, etc., for example, in antiquity, extent of territory, resources, military power, attainments in arts and sciences.

or than a branch — rather, in apposition with “the vine tree.” Omit “*or than.*” What superiority has the vine *if it be but a branch among the trees of the forest*, that is, if, as having no fruit, it lies cut down among other woods of trees?

4. *cast into ... fire* — (^{<816>}John 15:6).

both the ends — the north kingdom having been already overturned by Assyria under Tiglath-pileser; the south being pressed on by Egypt (^{<12392>}Kings 23:29-35).

midst of it is burned — rather, “is on flame”; namely, Jerusalem, which had now caught the flame by the attack of Nebuchadnezzar.

Is it meet for any work — “it,” that is, the scorched part still remaining.

5. If useless before, much more so when almost wholly burnt.

6. So will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as being utterly unprofitable (^{<4233>}Matthew 21:33-41 25:30 ^{<4112>}Mark 11:12-14 ^{<236>}Luke 13:6-9) in answering God’s design that they should be witnesses for Jehovah before the heathen (^{<180>}Matthew 3:10 5:13).

7. *And I will set my face against them* — (See on ^{<870>}Leviticus 17:10).

from one fire ... another — (Compare ^{<2348>}Isaiah 24:18). “Fire” means here every kind of calamity (^{<362>}Psalms 66:12). The Jewish fugitives shall escape from the ruin of Jerusalem, only to fall into some other calamity.

8. *trespass* — rather, “they have perversely fallen into perverse rebellion.” The Jews were not merely *sinner*s as the other nations, but *revolters* and *apostates*. It is one thing to neglect what we know not, but quite another thing to despise what we profess to worship [JEROME], as the Jews did towards God and the law.

CHAPTER 16

EZEKIEL 16:1-63.

DETAILED APPLICATION OF THE PARABOLICAL DELINEATION OF THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER TO JERUSALEM PERSONIFIED AS A DAUGHTER.

- (1) Taken up by God's gratuitous favor from infancy (²³⁰⁷Ezekiel 16:1-7);
- (2) and, when grown up, joined to Him in spiritual marriage (²³⁰⁸Ezekiel 16:8-14);
- (3) her unfaithfulness, her sin (²³⁰⁵Ezekiel 16:15-34);
- (4) the judgment (²³⁰⁶Ezekiel 16:35-52);
- (5) her unlooked-for restoration (²³⁰³Ezekiel 16:53 to the close).

2. *cause Jerusalem to know* — Men often are so blind as not to perceive their guilt which is patent to all. "Jerusalem" represents the whole kingdom of Judah.

3. *birth ... nativity* — thy origin and birth; literally, "thy diggings" (compare ²⁵⁰¹Isaiah 51:1) "and thy bringings forth."

of ... Canaan — in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob sojourned before going to Egypt, and from which thou didst derive far more of thy innate characteristics than from the virtues of those thy progenitors (²⁶⁰³Ezekiel 21:30).

an Amorite ... an Hittite — These, being the most powerful tribes, stand for the whole of the Canaanite nations (compare ⁶⁰⁰⁶Joshua 1:4 ³⁰¹⁹Amos 2:9), which were so abominably corrupt as to have been doomed to utter extermination by God (⁰¹⁵⁴Leviticus 18:24,25,28 ⁰⁵⁸²Deuteronomy 18:12). Translate rather, "*the Amorite ... the Canaanite,*" that is, these two tribes personified; their wicked characteristics, respectively, were concentrated in the parentage of Israel (⁰¹⁵⁶Genesis 15:16). "The Hittite" is made their "mother"; alluding to Esau's wives, daughters of *Heth*, whose ways vexed Rebekah (⁰²³⁴Genesis 26:34,35 27:46), but pleased the degenerate

descendants of Jacob, so that these are called, in respect of morals, children of the Hittite (compare ^{<3165>}Ezekiel 16:45).

4. Israel's helplessness in her first struggling into national existence, under the image of an infant (^{<3088>}Hosea 2:3) cast forth without receiving the commonest acts of parental regard. Its very life was a miracle (^{<0115>}Exodus 1:15-22).

navel ... not cut — Without proper attention to the navel cord, the infant just born is liable to die.

neither ... washed in water to supple thee — that is, to make the skin soft. Rather, “for purification”; from an *Arabic* root [MAURER]. GESENIUS translates as the *Margin*, “that thou mightest (be presented to thy parents to) be *looked upon*,” as is customary on the birth of a child.

salted — Anciently they rubbed infants with salt to make the skin firm.

5. **cast ... in ... open field** — The exposure of infants was common in ancient times.

to the loathing of thy person — referring to the unsightly aspect of the exposed infant. FAIRBAIRN translates, “With contempt (or disdainful indifference) of thy *life*.”

6. **when I passed by** — as if a traveler.

polluted in ... blood — but PISCATOR, “ready to be trodden on.”

I said — In contrast to Israel's helplessness stands God's omnipotent word of grace which bids the outcast little one “live.”

in thy blood — Though thou wast foul with blood, I said, “Live” [GROTIUS]. “Live in thy blood,” that is, Live, but live a life exposed to many deaths, as was the case in the beginnings of Israel's national existence, in order to magnify the grace of God [CALVIN]. The former view is preferable. Spiritually, till the sinner is made sensible of his abject helplessness, he will not appreciate the provisions of God's grace.

7. **caused ... to multiply** — literally, “I ... made thee a myriad.”

bud of ... field — the produce of the field. In two hundred fifty years they increased from seventy-five persons to eight hundred thousand (^{<4074>}Acts 7:14) [CALVIN]. But see ^{<0125>}Exodus 12:37,38.

excellent ornaments — literally, “ornament of ornaments.”

naked ... bare — (^{<2018>}Hosea 2:3). Literally, “nakedness ... bareness” itself; more emphatic.

8. thy time of love — literally, “loves” (compare ^{<2101>}Song of Solomon 2:10-13). Thou wast of marriageable age, but none was willing to marry thee, naked as thou wast. I then regarded thee with a look of grace when the full time of thy deliverance was come (^{<0153>}Genesis 15:13,14 ^{<4006>}Acts 7:6,7). It is not she that makes the advance to God, but God to her; she has nothing to entitle her to such notice, yet He regards her not with mere benevolence, but with *love*, such as one cherishes to the person of his wife (So 1:3-6 ^{<2618>}Jeremiah 31:3 Malachi 1:2).

spread my skirt over thee — the mode of espousals (^{<0819>}Ruth 3:9). I betrothed thee (^{<0657>}Deuteronomy 4:37 10:15 ^{<2101>}Hosea 11:1). The cloak is often used as a bed coverlet in the East. God explains what He means, “I entered into ... covenant with thee,” that is, at Sinai. So Israel became “the wife of God’s covenant” (^{<2515>}Isaiah 54:5 ^{<2184>}Jeremiah 3:14 ^{<2129>}Hosea 2:19,20 ^{<3124>}Malachi 2:14).

thou ... mine — (^{<0915>}Exodus 19:5 ^{<2102>}Jeremiah 2:2).

9. washed I thee — as brides used to pass through a preparatory purification (^{<1012>}Esther 2:12). So Israel, before the giving of the law at Sinai (^{<0294>}Exodus 19:14); “Moses sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes.” So believers (^{<4011>}1 Corinthians 6:11).

oil — emblem of the Levitical priesthood, the type of Messiah (^{<0917>}Psalms 45:7).

10. ^{<0513>}Psalms 45:13,14, similarly describes the Church (Israel, the appointed mother of Christendom) adorned as a bride (so ^{<2310>}Isaiah 61:10). It is Messiah who provides the wedding garment (^{<6188>}Revelation 3:18 19:8).

badgers’ skin — *tahash*; others translate, “seal skins.” They formed the over-covering of the tabernacle, which was, as it were, the nuptial tent of God and Israel (^{<0234>}Exodus 26:14), and the material of the shoes worn by the Hebrews on festival days. (See on ^{<0235>}Exodus 25:5).

fine linen — used by the priests (^{<0810>}Leviticus 6:10); emblem of purity.

11. The marriage gifts to Rebekah (^{<0222>}Genesis 24:22,47).

12. jewel on thy forehead — rather, “a ring in thy nose” (^{<2121>}Isaiah 3:21).

a crown — at once the badge of a bride, and of her being made a queen, as being consort of the King; the very name *Israel* meaning “a prince of God.” So they are called “a kingdom of priests” (^{<0216>}Exodus 19:6; compare

^{<6006>}Revelation 1:6). Though the external blessings bestowed on Israel were great, yet not these, but the internal and spiritual, form the main reference in the kingly marriage to which Israel was advanced.

13. flour ... honey ... oil — These three mixed form the sweetest cakes; not dry bread and leeks as in Egypt. From raiment He passes to food (^{<6013>}Deuteronomy 32:13,14).

exceeding beautiful — ^{<6014>}Psalms 48:2, the city; also, ^{<6015>}Psalms 29:2, the temple.

prosper into a kingdom — exercising empire over surrounding nations.

14. thy renown ... among ... heathen — The theocracy reached its highest point under Solomon, when distant potentates heard of his “fame” (^{<6016>}1 Kings 10:1, etc.), for example, the queen of Sheba, Hiram, etc. (^{<6017>}Lamentations 2:15).

my comeliness — It was not thine own, but imparted by Me.

15. Instead of attributing the glory of her privileges and gifts to God, Israel prided herself on them as her own (^{<6018>}Deuteronomy 32:15 ^{<6019>}Jeremiah 7:4 ^{<6020>}Micah 3:11), and then wantonly devoted them to her idols (^{<6021>}Hosea 2:8; compare ^{<6022>}Luke 15:12,13).

playedst ... harlot because of thy renown — “didst play the wanton upon thy name” [FAIRBAIRN], namely, by allowing thy renown to lead thee into idolatry and leagues with idolaters (^{<6023>}Isaiah 1:21 57:8 ^{<6024>}Jeremiah 3:2,6). *English Version* is better, “because of thy renown,” that is, relying on it; answering to “thou didst trust in thine own beauty.”

his it was — Thy beauty was yielded up to every passer-by Israel’s zest for the worship of foul idols was but an anxiety to have the approbation of heaven for their carnal lusts, of which the idols were the personification; hence, too, their tendency to wander from Jehovah, who was a restraint on corrupt nature.

16. deckedst ... with divers colors — or, “didst make ... of divers colors” [FAIRBAIRN]; the metaphor and the literal are here mixed. The high places whereon they sacrificed to Astarte are here compared to *tents of divers colors*, which an impudent harlot would spread to show her house was open to all [CALVIN]. Compare as to “woven hangings for Astarte” (the right translation for “grove”) ^{<6025>}2 Kings 23:7.

the like ... shall not come, neither shall ... be — rather, “have not come, nor shall be.” These thy doings are unparalleled in the past, and shall be so in the future.

17. *my gold ... my silver* — (Haggai 2:8).

images of men — rather, “of the *phallus*,” the Hindu *lingam*, or *membrum virile* [HAVERNICK], deified as the emblem of fecundity; man making his lust his god. *English Version*, however, is appropriate; Israel being represented as a *woman* playing the harlot with “*male images*,” that is, images of male gods, as distinguished from female deities.

18. *tookest thy ... garments ... coveredst them* — that is, the idols, as if an adulteress were to cover her paramours with garments which she had received from the liberality of her husband.

my oil — the holy anointing oil sacred to God (^{<432>}Exodus 30:22-25). Also that used in sacrifices (^{<411>}Leviticus 2:1,2).

19. *My meat ... I gave* — (^{<388>}Hosea 2:8).

set it before them — as a *minchah* or “meat offering” (^{<411>}Leviticus 2:1).

a sweet savor — literally “a savor of rest,” that is, whereby they might be propitiated, and be at peace (“rest”) with you; how ridiculous to seek to propitiate gods of wood!

thus it was — The fact cannot be denied, for I saw it, and say it was so, saith Jehovah.

20, 21. *sons and ... daughters borne unto me* — Though “thy children,” yet they belong “unto Me,” rather than to thee, for they were born under the immutable covenant with Israel, which even Israel’s sin could not set aside, and they have received the sign of adoption as Mine, namely, circumcision. This aggravates the guilt of sacrificing them to Molech.

to be devoured — not merely to *pass through* the fire, as sometimes children were made to do (^{<432>}Leviticus 18:21) *without hurt*, but to pass through so as to be made *the food* of the flame in honor of idols (see on ^{<256>}Isaiah 57:5; ^{<473>}Jeremiah 7:31; ^{<415>}Jeremiah 19:5; ^{<425>}Jeremiah 32:35).

Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain my children — rather, “Were thy whoredoms a small matter (that is, not enough, but) that thou hast slain (that is, must also slay),” etc. As if thy unchastity was not enough, thou hast added this unnatural and sacrilegious cruelty (^{<317>}Micah 6:7).

22. *not remembered ... youth* — Forgetfulness of God's love is the source of all sins. Israel forgot her deliverance by God in the infancy of her national life. See ^{<3168>}Ezekiel 16:43, to which ^{<3169>}Ezekiel 16:60 forms a lovely contrast (^{<3170>}Jeremiah 2:2 ^{<3171>}Hosea 11:1).

23. *woe, woe unto thee*, etc. — This parenthetical exclamation has an awful effect coming like a lightning flash of judgment amidst the black clouds of Israel's guilt.

24. *eminent place* — rather, “a fornication-chamber,” often connected with the impure rites of idolatry; spiritual fornication, on “an eminent place,” answering to “fornication-chamber,” is mainly meant, with an allusion also to the literal fornication associated with it (^{<3172>}Jeremiah 2:20 3:2).

25. *at every head of the way* — in the most frequented places (^{<3173>}Proverbs 9:14).

thy beauty ... abhorred, ... opened ... feet to every one — The wanton advances were all on Israel's part; the idolatrous nations yielded to her nothing in return. She had yielded so much that, like a worn-out prostitute, her tempters became weary of her. When the Church lowers her testimony for God to the carnal tastes of the world, with a view to conciliation, she loses everything and gains nothing.

26. *fornication with ... Egyptians* — alliances with Egypt, cemented by sharing their idolatries.

great of flesh — of powerful virile parts; figuratively for the gross and lustful religion of Egypt (for example, Isis, etc.), which alone could satisfy the abominable lust of Israel (^{<3174>}Ezekiel 20:7,8 23:19,20,21).

to provoke me — wantonly and purposely.

27. The consequent judgments, which, however, proved of no avail in reforming the people (^{<3175>}Isaiah 9:13 ^{<3176>}Jeremiah 5:3).

delivered thee unto ... Philistines — (^{<3177>}2 Kings 16:6 ^{<3178>}2 Chronicles 28:18,19).

ashamed of thy lewd way — The Philistines were less wanton in idolatry, in that they did not, like Israel, adopt the idols of every foreign country but were content with their own (^{<3179>}Ezekiel 16:57 ^{<3180>}Jeremiah 2:11).

28. *unsatiable* — Not satisfied with whoredoms with neighbors, thou hast gone off to the distant Assyrians, that is, hast sought a league with them, and with it adopted their idolatries.

29. *multiplied ... fornication in ... Canaan unto Chaldea* — Thou hast multiplied thy idolatries “in Canaan” by sending “unto Chaldea” to borrow from thence the Chaldean rites, to add to the abominations already practiced “in Canaan,” before the carrying away of Jehoiachin to Chaldea. The name “Canaan” is used to imply that they had made Judea as much the scene of abominations as it was in the days of the corrupt Canaanites. The land had become utterly Canaanitish (^{23:14}Ezekiel 23:14, etc.).

30. *weak ... heart* — Sin weakens the *intellect* (“heart”) as, on the contrary, “the way of the Lord is strength to the upright” (^{10:29}Proverbs 10:29).

31. Repetition of ^{16:24}Ezekiel 16:24.

not ... as ... harlot ... thou scornest hire — Unlike an ordinary harlot thou dost prostitute thy person gratis, merely to satisfy thy lust. JEROME translates, “Thou hast not been as a harlot in scorning (that is, who ordinarily scorns) a hire offered,” *in order to get a larger one*: nay, thou hast offered hire thyself to thy lovers (^{16:33,34}Ezekiel 16:33,34). But these verses show *English Version* to be preferable, for they state that Israel prostituted herself, not merely for *any small reward without demanding more*, but for “no reward.”

32. *instead of her husband* — referring to ^{5:19,20,29}Numbers 5:19,20,29. FAIRBAIRN translates, “whilst under her husband.”

33, 34. Israel hired her paramours, instead of being, like other harlots, hired by them; she also followed them without their following her.

35. Here begins the threat of wrath to be poured out on her.

36. *filthiness* — literally, “brass”; metaphor for *the lowest part of the person* [CALVIN]. *English Version* is better: thy filthy lewdness is poured out without restraint (compare ^{13:27}Jeremiah 13:27). As silver is an emblem of purity, *brass* typifies “filthiness,” because it easily contracts rust. HENDERSON explains it, “Because thy *money* was lavished on thy lovers” (^{16:31,33,34}Ezekiel 16:31,33,34).

blood of thy children — (^{16:20}Ezekiel 16:20 ^{2:34}Jeremiah 2:34).

37. *thy lovers* — the Chaldeans and the Assyrians. The law of retribution is the more signally exemplified by God employing, as His instruments of judgment on Israel, those very nations whose alliance and idols Israel had so eagerly sought, besides giving her up to those who had been always her enemies. “God will make him, who leaves God for the world, disgraced even in the eyes of the world, and indeed the more so the nearer he

formerly stood to Himself” [HENGSTENBERG], (^{2347B}Isaiah 47:3 ^{2443B}Jeremiah 13:26 ^{2412B}Hosea 2:12 Na 3:5).

all ... thou hast hated — the Edomites and Philistines; also Moab and Ammon especially (^{4523B}Deuteronomy 23:3).

I ... will discover thy nakedness — punishment in kind, as she had “discovered her nakedness through whoredoms” (^{2366B}Ezekiel 16:36); the sin and its penalty corresponded. I will expose thee to public infamy.

38-40. judge thee, as women that break wedlock — (^{4800B}Leviticus 20:10; compare ^{2340B}Ezekiel 16:2). In the case of *individual* adulteresses, *stoning* was the penalty (^{4804B}John 8:4,5). In the case of *communities*, the *sword*. Also apostasy (^{4530B}Deuteronomy 13:10) and sacrificing children to Molech (^{4801B}Leviticus 20:1-5) incurred stoning. Thus the penalty was doubly due to Israel; so the other which was decreed against an apostate city (^{4835B}Deuteronomy 13:15,16) is added, “they shall stone thee with stones and thrust thee through with ... swords.” The Chaldeans hurled *stones* on Jerusalem at the siege and slew with the *sword* on its capture.

shed blood ... judged — (^{4000B}Genesis 9:6).

jealousy — image taken from the fury of a husband in jealousy shedding the blood of an unfaithful wife, such as Israel had been towards God, her husband spiritually. Literally, “I will *make thee* (to become) *blood* of fury and jealousy.”

39. thine eminent place — literally, “fornication-chamber” (see on ^{2366B}Ezekiel 16:24), the temple which Israel had converted into a place of spiritual fornication with idols, to please the Chaldeans (^{2334B}Ezekiel 23:14-17).

strip thee of ... clothes — (^{2326B}Ezekiel 23:26 ^{2408B}Hosea 2:3). They shall *dismantle* thy city of its walls.

fair jewels — literally, “vessels of thy fairness” or beauty; the vessels of the temple [GROTIUS]. All the gifts wherewith God hath adorned thee [CALVIN].

40. (^{2321B}Ezekiel 23:10,47). Compare as to the destruction under Titus, ^{2193B}Luke 19:43,44.

41. The result of the awful judgment shall be, when divine vengeance has run its course, it shall cease.

burn — (^{4836B}Deuteronomy 13:16 ^{4230B}2 Kings 25:9).

women — the surrounding Gentile nations to whom thou shalt be an object of mocking (^{<15007>}Psalm 137:7).

I will cause thee to cease ... harlot — (^{<26227>}Ezekiel 23:27). Thou shalt *no longer be able* to play the harlot through *My judgments*.

thou ... shall give ... no hire ... any more — Thou shalt have none to give.

42. my fury ... rest — when My justice has exacted the full penalty commensurate with thy awful guilt (see on ^{<31613>}Ezekiel 5:13). It is not a mitigation of the penalty that is here foretold, but such an utter destruction of *all* the guilty that there shall be no need of further punishment [CALVIN].

43. (^{<33622>}Ezekiel 16:22 ^{<19182>}Psalm 78:42). In gratitude for God's favors to her in her early history.

fretted me — (^{<25101>}Isaiah 63:10 ^{<40413>}Ephesians 4:30).

thou shalt not commit this lewdness above all thine abominations — that is, this the wickedness (compare Zechariah 5:8), peculiarly hateful to God, namely, spiritual unchastity or idolatry, over and “above” (that is, besides) all thine other abominations. I will put it out of thy power to commit it by cutting thee off. FAIRBAIRN translates, “I will not do what is scandalous (namely, encouraging thee in thy sin by letting it pass with impunity) upon all thine abominations”; referring to ^{<16129>}Leviticus 19:29, the conduct of a father who encouraged his daughter in harlotry. *English Version* is much better.

44. As ... mother ... her daughter — “*Is,*” and “*so is,*” are not in the original; the ellipsis gives the proverb (but two words in the *Hebrew*) epigrammatic brevity. Jerusalem proved herself a true daughter of the Hittite mother in sin (^{<33113>}Ezekiel 16:3).

45. mother's ... that loatheth her husband — that is, God (“haters of God,” ^{<61130>}Romans 1:30); therefore the knowledge of the true God had originally been in Canaan, handed down from Noah (hence we find Melchisedek, king of Salem, in Canaan, “priest of the most high God,” ^{<11418>}Genesis 14:18), but Canaan apostatized from it; this was what constituted the blackness of the Canaanites' guilt.

loathed ... children — whom she put to death in honor of Saturn; a practice common among the Phoenicians.

sister of thy sisters — Thou art akin in guilt to Samaria and Sodom, to which thou art akin by birth. Moab and Ammon, the incestuous children of Lot, nephew of Abraham, Israel's progenitor, had their origin from Sodom;

so Sodom might be called Judah's sister. Samaria, answering to the ten tribes of Israel, is, of course, sister to Judah.

46. elder sister ... Samaria — *older* than Sodom, to whom Judah was *less nearly related by kindred* than she was to Samaria. Sodom is therefore called her *younger* sister; Samaria, her “elder sister” [GROTIUS]. Samaria is called the “elder,” because *in a moral respect more nearly related* to Judah [FAIRBAIRN]. Samaria had made the calves at Daniel and Beth-el in imitation of the cherubim.

her daughters — the inferior towns subject to Samaria (compare ^{<0125>}Numbers 21:25, *Margin*).

left — The Orientals faced the east in marking the directions of the sky; thus the north was “left,” the south “right.”

Sodom ... daughters — Ammon and Moab, offshoots from Sodom; also the towns subject to it.

47. their abominations — Milcom and Chemosh, the “abominations of Ammon and Moab” (^{<1116>}1 Kings 11:5,7).

corrupted more than they — So it is expressly recorded of Manasseh (^{<1210>}2 Kings 21:9).

48. Sodom — (^{<0124>}Matthew 11:24). Judah's guilt was not positively, but *relatively*, greater than Sodom's; because it was in the midst of such higher privileges, and such solemn warnings; *a fortiori*, the guilt of unbelievers in the midst of the highest of all lights, namely, the Gospel, is the greatest.

49. pride — inherited by Moab, her offspring (^{<2316>}Isaiah 16:6 ^{<2435>}Jeremiah 48:26), and by Ammon (^{<2404>}Jeremiah 49:4). God, the heart-searcher, here specifies as Sodom's sin, not merely her notorious lusts, but the secret spring of them, “pride” flowing from “fullness of bread,” caused by the fertility of the soil (^{<0130>}Genesis 13:10), and producing “idleness.”

abundance of idleness — literally, “the secure carelessness of ease” or idleness.

neither did she strengthen ... the poor — Pride is always cruel; it arrogates to itself all things, and despises brethren, for whose needs it therefore has no feeling; as Moab had not for the outcast Jews (^{<2313>}Isaiah 16:3,4 ^{<2427>}Jeremiah 48:27 ^{<0169>}Luke 16:19-21 ^{<0101>}James 5:1-5).

50. haughty — puffed up with prosperity.

abomination before me — “sinners *before the Lord*” (⁽⁻⁰¹³³⁾Genesis 13:13); said of those whose sin is so heinous as to cry out to God for immediate judgments; presumptuous sins, daring God *to the face* (⁽⁻⁰¹⁸²⁾Genesis 18:20 19:5).

I took them away — (⁽⁻⁰¹⁸⁴⁾Genesis 19:24).

as I saw good — rather, “according to what I saw”; referring to ⁽⁻⁰¹⁸²⁾Genesis 18:21, where God says, “I will go down, and *see* whether they have done altogether *according* to the cry of it which is come unto Me.”

51. Samaria — the kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel less guilty than Judah; for Judah betrayed greater ingratitude, having greater privileges, namely, the temple, the priesthood, and the regular order of kings.

justified thy sisters — made them appear almost innocent by comparison with thy guilt (⁽⁻²⁴⁸¹⁾Jeremiah 3:11 ⁽⁻⁰¹²⁴⁾Matthew 12:41,42).

52. Thou ... which hast judged ... bear thine own — (⁽⁻⁴⁰⁰¹⁾Matthew 7:1,2 ⁽⁻⁴⁸¹⁸⁾Romans 2:1,17-23). Judah had judged Sodom (representing “the heathen nations”) and Samaria (Israel), saying they were justly punished, as if she herself was innocent (⁽⁻⁰²¹²⁾Luke 13:2).

thy shame — ignominious punishment.

53. Here follows a promise of restoration. Even the sore chastisements coming on Judah would fail to reform its people; God’s returning goodness alone would effect this, to show how entirely of grace was to be their restoration. The restoration of her erring sisters is mentioned before hers, even as their punishment preceded her punishment; so all self-boasting is excluded [FAIRBAIRN]. “Ye shall, indeed, at some time or other return, but Moab and Ammon shall return with you, and some of the ten tribes” [GROTIUS].

bring again ... captivity — that is, change the affliction into prosperity (so ⁽⁻⁴⁸²⁰⁾Job 42:10). Sodom itself was not so restored (⁽⁻²⁴¹⁶⁾Jeremiah 20:16), but Ammon and Moab (her representatives, as sprung from Lot who dwelt in Sodom) were (⁽⁻²⁴⁸⁷⁾Jeremiah 48:47 49:6); probably most of the ten tribes and the adjoining nations, Ammon and Moab, etc., were in part restored under Cyrus; but the full realization of the restoration is yet future; *the heathen nations* to be brought to Christ being typified by “Sodom,” whose sins they now reproduce (⁽⁻⁴⁸²²⁾Deuteronomy 32:32).

captivity of thy captives — literally, “of thy captivities.” However, the gracious promise rather begins with the “nevertheless” (⁽⁻²⁴⁶⁰⁾Ezekiel 16:60), not here; for ⁽⁻²⁴⁶⁹⁾Ezekiel 16:59 is a threat, not a promise. The sense here thus

is, Thou shalt be restored when Sodom and Samaria are, but not till then (²³⁶⁵Ezekiel 16:55), that is, *never*. This applies to the guilty who should be utterly destroyed (²³⁶⁴Ezekiel 16:41,42); but it does not contradict the subsequent promise of restoration to their posterity (⁴⁰⁴²Numbers 14:29-33), and to the elect remnant of grace [CALVIN].

54. *bear thine own shame* — by being put on a level with those whom thou hast so much despised.

thou art a comfort unto them — since they see thee as miserable as themselves. It is a kind of melancholy “comfort” to those chastised to see others as sorely punished as themselves (²³⁴²Ezekiel 14:22,23).

55. (See on ²³⁶⁵Ezekiel 16:53).

56. *Sodom was not mentioned* — literally, “was not for a report.” Thou didst not deign to mention her name as if her case could possibly apply as a warning to thee, but it did apply (⁶⁰⁰²2 Peter 2:6).

57. *Before thy wickedness was discovered* — manifested to all, namely, by the punishment inflicted on thee.

thy reproach of ... Syria and ... Philistines — the indignity and injuries done thee by Syria and the Philistines (⁴²⁶²2 Kings 16:5 ⁴⁴³⁸2 Chronicles 28:18 ²³⁹¹Isaiah 9:11,12).

58. *borne thy lewdness* — that is, the punishment of it (²³³⁹Ezekiel 23:49). I do not treat thee with excessive rigor. Thy sin and punishment are exactly commensurate.

59. *the oath* — the covenant between God and Israel (¹⁵⁹²Deuteronomy 29:12,14). As thou hast despised it, so will I despise thee. No covenant is one-sided; where Israel broke faith, God’s promise of favor ceased.

60. The promise here bursts forth unexpectedly like the sun from the dark clouds. With all her forgetfulness of God, God still remembers her; showing that her redemption is altogether of grace. Contrast “I will remember,” with “thou hast not remembered” (²³⁶²Ezekiel 16:22,43); also “My covenant,” with “Thy covenant” (²³⁶¹Ezekiel 16:61 ¹⁹⁴⁶Psalms 106:45); then the effect produced on her is (²³⁶³Ezekiel 16:63) “that thou mayest remember.” God’s promise was one of *promise* and of *grace*. The law, *in its letter*, was *Israel’s* (thy) *covenant*, and in this restricted view was long subsequent (⁴⁸⁸⁷Galatians 3:17). Israel interpreted it as a covenant of works, which she while boasting of, failed to fulfill, and so fell under its condemnation (⁴⁰⁰²2 Corinthians 3:3,6). The law, *in its spirit*, contains the germ of the Gospel; the New Testament is the full development of the Old,

the husk of the outer form being laid aside when the inner spirit was fulfilled in Messiah. God's covenant with Israel, in the person of Abraham, was the reason why, notwithstanding all her guilt, mercy was, and is, in store for her. Therefore the heathen or Gentile nations must come to her for blessings, not she to them.

everlasting covenant — (³⁵⁷⁶Ezekiel 37:26 ⁴²³⁵2 Samuel 23:5 ²⁸¹⁹Isaiah 55:3). The temporary forms of the law were to be laid aside, that in its permanent and “everlasting” spirit it might be established (²⁶³¹Jeremiah 31:31-37 32:40 50:4,5 ³⁸⁸⁸Hebrews 8:8-13).

61. thou shalt remember — It is God who first remembers her before she remembers Him and her own ways before Him (²³⁶⁰Ezekiel 16:60 ³⁷⁴⁸Ezekiel 20:43 36:31).

ashamed — the fruit of repentance (⁴⁷⁰²2 Corinthians 7:10,11). None please God unless those who displease themselves; a foretaste of the Gospel (²⁸⁸⁹Luke 18:9-14).

I will give them unto thee for daughters — (²⁵⁴¹Isaiah 54:1 60:3,4 ⁴⁰²³Galatians 4:26, etc.). All the heathen nations, not merely Sodom and Samaria, are meant by “thy sisters, elder and younger.” In Jerusalem first, *individual* believers were gathered into the elect Church. From Jerusalem the Gospel went forth to gather in *individuals* of the Gentiles; and Judah with Jerusalem shall also be the first *nation* which, as such, shall be converted to Christ; and to her the other *nations* shall attach themselves as believers in Messiah, Jerusalem's King (³⁸⁰²Psalms 110:2 ²³⁰²Isaiah 2:2,3). “The king's daughter” in ³⁶¹²Psalms 45:12-14 is Judah; her “companions,” as “the daughter of Tyre,” are the nations given to her as converts, here called “daughters.”

not by thy covenant — This does not set aside the Old Testament in its spirit, but in its mere letter on which the Jews had rested, while they broke it: the latter (“thy covenant”) was to give place to *God's* covenant of grace and promise in Christ who “fulfilled” the law. God means, “not that thou on thy part hast stood to the covenant, but that ‘I am the Lord, I change not’ (Malachi 3:6) from My original love to thee in thy youth” (see ⁴¹⁸⁸Romans 3:3).

62. (³⁰²⁹Hosea 2:19,20).

thou shalt know that I am the Lord — not, as elsewhere, by the judgments falling on thee, but by My so marvellously restoring thee through grace.

63. *never open thy mouth* — in vindication, or even palliation, of thyself, or expostulation with God for His dealings (<4159>Romans 3:19), when thou seest thine own exceeding unworthiness, and My superabounding grace which has so wonderfully overcome with love thy sin (<4160>Romans 5:20). “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” (<4131>1 Corinthians 11:31).

all that thou hast done — enhancing the grace of God which has pardoned so many and so great sins. Nothing so melts into love and humility as the sense of the riches of God’s pardoning grace (<4147>Luke 7:47).

CHAPTER 17

EZEKIEL 17:1-24.

PARABLE OF THE TWO GREAT EAGLES, AND THE CROPPING OF THE CEDAR OF LEBANON. JUDAH IS TO BE JUDGED FOR REVOLTING FROM BABYLON, WHICH HAD SET UP ZEDEKIAH INSTEAD OF JEHOIACHIN, TO EGYPT; GOD HIMSELF, AS THE RIVAL OF THE BABYLONIAN KING, IS TO PLANT THE GOSPEL CEDAR OF MESSIAH.

The date of the prophecy is between the sixth month of Zedekiah's sixth year of reign and the fifth month of the seventh year after the carrying away of Jehoiachin, that is, five years before the destruction of Jerusalem [HENDERSON].

2. riddle — a continued allegory, expressed enigmatically, requiring more than common acumen and serious thought. The *Hebrew* is derived from a root, “sharp,” that is, calculated to stimulate attention and whet the intellect. Distinct from “fable,” in that it teaches not fiction, but fact. Not like the ordinary riddle, designed to puzzle, but to instruct. The “riddle” is here identical with the “parable,” only that the former refers to the obscurity, the latter to the likeness of the figure to the thing compared.

3. eagle — the king of birds. The literal *Hebrew* is, “the great eagle.” The symbol of the Assyrian supreme god, *Nisroch*; so applied to “the great king” of Babylon, his vicegerent on earth (²⁴⁸⁰Jeremiah 48:40 49:22). His “wings” are his great forces. Such symbols were familiar to the Jews, who saw them portrayed on the great buildings of Babylon; such as are now seen in the Assyrian remains.

long-winged — implying the wide extent of his empire.

full of feathers — when they have been renewed after moulting; and so in the full freshness of renovated youth (^{2431B}Psalms 103:5 ^{2418B}Isaiah 40:31). Answering to the many peoples which, as tributaries, constituted the strength of Babylon:

divers colors — the golden Eagle, marked with star-like spots, supposed to be the largest of eagles [BOCHART]. Answering to the variety of languages, habits, and costumes of the peoples subject to Babylon.

came unto Lebanon — continuing the metaphor: as the eagle frequents mountains, not cities. The temple at Jerusalem was called “Lebanon” by the Jews [EUSEBIUS], because its woodwork was wholly of cedars of Lebanon. “The mountain of the Lord’s house” (^{<2310>}Isaiah 2:2). *Jerusalem*, however, is chiefly meant, the chief seat of civil honor, as Lebanon was of external elevation.

took the highest branch — King Jeconiah, then but eighteen years old, and many of the chiefs and people with him (^{<1218>}2 Kings 24:8,12-16). The *Hebrew* for “highest branch” is, properly, the *fleece-like tuft* at the top of the tree. (So in ^{<3518>}Ezekiel 31:3-14). The cedar, as a tall tree, is the symbol of highest elevation (compare ^{<2010>}Daniel 4:10-12).

4. land of traffic ... merchants — Babylon (^{<1215>}2 Kings 24:15,16), famous for its transport traffic on the Tigris and Euphrates. Also, by its connection with the Persian Gulf, it carried on much commerce with India.

5. seed of the land — not a foreign production, but one native in the region; a son of the soil, not a foreigner: Zedekiah, uncle of Jehoiachin, of David’s family.

in a fruitful field — literally, a “field of seed”; that is, fit for propagating and continuing the seed of the royal family.

as a willow — derived from a *Hebrew* root, “to overflow,” from its fondness for water (^{<2340>}Isaiah 44:4). Judea was “a land of brooks of water and fountains” (^{<1810>}Deuteronomy 8:7-9; compare ^{<1823>}John 3:23).

6. vine of low stature — not now, as before, a stately “cedar”; the kingdom of Judah was to be prosperous, but not elevated.

branches turned toward him — expressing the fealty of Zedekiah as a vassal looking up to Nebuchadnezzar, to whom Judah owed its peace and very existence as a separate state. The “branches” mean his sons and the other princes and nobles.

The roots ... under him — The stability of Judah depended on Babylon. The repetition “branches” and “springs” is in order to mark the ingratitude of Zedekiah, who, not content with moderate prosperity, revolted from him to whom he had sworn allegiance.

7. another ... eagle — the king of Egypt (^{<2575>}Ezekiel 17:15). The “long-winged” of ^{<2578>}Ezekiel 17:3 is omitted, as Egypt had not such a wide empire and large armies as Babylon.

vine ... bend ... roots towards him — literally, “thirsted after him with its roots”; expressing the longings after Egypt in the Jewish heart. Zedekiah sought the alliance of Egypt, as though by it he could throw off his dependence on Babylon (^{<1210>}2 Kings 24:7,20 ^{<14813>}2 Chronicles 36:13 ^{<2675>}Jeremiah 37:5,7).

water it by ... furrows of ... plantation — that is, *in* the garden beds (Judea) wherein (the vine) it was planted. Rather, “*by*” or “*out of* the furrows.” It refers to the waters of Egypt, the Nile being made to water the fields by means of small canals or “furrows”; these waters are the figure of the auxiliary forces wherewith Egypt tried to help Judah. See the same figure, ^{<2381>}Isaiah 8:7. But see on ^{<2370>}Ezekiel 17:10, “furrows *where it grew*.”

8. It was planted in a good soil — It was not want of the necessities of life, nor oppression on the part of Nebuchadnezzar, which caused Zedekiah to revolt: it was gratuitous ambition, pride, and ingratitude.

9. Shall it prosper? — Could it be that gratuitous treason should prosper? God will not allow it. “It,” that is, the vine.

he ... pull up — that is, the first eagle, or Nebuchadnezzar.

in all ... leaves of her spring — that is, all its springing (sprouting) leaves.

without great power or many — It shall not need all the forces of Babylon to destroy it; a small division of the army will suffice because God will deliver it into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand (^{<2570>}Jeremiah 37:10).

10. being planted — that is, “*though* planted.”

east wind — The east wind was noxious to vegetation in Palestine; a fit emblem of Babylon, which came from the northeast.

wither in ... furrows where it grew — Zedekiah was taken at Jericho, on Jewish soil (^{<2618>}Jeremiah 52:8). “It shall wither, although it has furrows from which it expects continual waterings” [CALVIN], (^{<2692>}Ezekiel 19:12 ^{<2815>}Hosea 13:15).

12. Know ye not — He upbraided them with moral, leading to intellectual, stupidity.

hath taken the king — Jeconiah or Jehoiachin (^{<12411>}2 Kings 24:11,12-16).

13. the king’s seed — Zedekiah, Jeconiah’s uncle.

taken ... oath of him — swearing fealty as a vassal to Nebuchadnezzar (^{<14813>}2 Chronicles 36:13).

also taken the mighty — as hostages for the fulfillment of the covenant; whom, therefore, Zedekiah exposed to death by his treason.

14. *That the kingdom might be base* — that is, low as to national elevation by being Nebuchadnezzar's dependent; but, at the same time, safe and prosperous, if faithful to the "oath." Nebuchadnezzar dealt sincerely and openly in proposing conditions, and these moderate ones; therefore Zedekiah's treachery was the baser and was a counterpart to their treachery towards God.

15. *he rebelled* — God permitted this because of His wrath against Jerusalem (^{<230>}2 Kings 24:20).

horses — in which Egypt abounded and which were forbidden to Israel to seek from Egypt, or indeed to "multiply" at all (^{<4570>}Deuteronomy 17:16 ^{<2301>}Isaiah 31:1,3; compare ^{<2309>}Isaiah 36:9). DIODORUS SICULUS [1.45] says that the whole region from Thebes to Memphis was filled with royal stalls, so that twenty thousand chariots with two horses in each could be furnished for war.

Shall he prosper? — The third time this question is asked, with an indignant denial understood (^{<2570>}Ezekiel 17:9,10). Even the heathen believed that breakers of an oath would not "escape" punishment.

16. *in the place where the king dwelleth* — righteous retribution. He brought on himself in the worst form the evil which, in a mild form, he had sought to deliver himself from by perjured treachery, namely, vassalage (^{<2213>}Ezekiel 12:13 ^{<2415>}Jeremiah 32:5 34:3 52:11).

17. *Pharaoh* — Pharaoh-hophra (^{<2470>}Jeremiah 37:7 44:30), the successor of Necho (^{<1239>}2 Kings 23:29).

Neither ... make for him — literally, "effect (anything) with him," that is, be of any avail to Zedekiah. Pharaoh did not *act in concert with him*, for he was himself compelled to retire to Egypt.

by casting up mounts, etc. — So far from Pharaoh doing so for Jerusalem, this was what Nebuchadnezzar did *against* it (^{<2570>}Jeremiah 52:4). CALVIN MAURER, etc., refer it to *Nebuchadnezzar*, "when Nebuchadnezzar shall cast up mounts."

18. *given his hand* — in ratification of the oath (^{<1205>}2 Kings 10:15 ^{<4509>}Ezra 10:19), and also in token of subjection to Nebuchadnezzar (^{<1324>}1 Chronicles 29:24, *Margin*; ^{<4108>}2 Chronicles 30:8, *Margin*; ^{<2166>}Lamentations 5:6).

19. mine oath — The “covenant” being sworn in God’s name was really *His* covenant; a new instance in relation to man of the treacherous spirit which had been so often betrayed in relation to God. God Himself must therefore avenge the violation of *His covenant* “on the head” of the perjurer (compare ^{<3076>}Psalm 7:16).

20. my net — (^{<3023>}Ezekiel 12:13 32:3). God entraps him as he had tried to entrap others (^{<3075>}Psalm 7:15). This was spoken at least upwards of three years before the fall of Jerusalem (compare ^{<3001>}Ezekiel 8:1, with ^{<3010>}Ezekiel 20:1).

21. all his fugitives — the soldiers that accompany him in his flight.

22. When the state of Israel shall seem past recovery, Messiah, Jehovah Himself, will unexpectedly appear on the scene as Redeemer of His people (^{<2335>}Isaiah 63:5).

I ... also — God opposes Himself to Nebuchadnezzar: “*He* took of the seed of the land and planted it (^{<3073>}Ezekiel 17:3,5), so will *I*, but with better success than he had. The branch he plucked (Zedekiah) and planted, flourished but for a time, to perish at last; *I* will plant a scion of the same tree, the house of David, to whom the kingdom belongs by an everlasting covenant, and it shall be the shelter of the whole world, and shall be for ever.”

branch — the peculiar title of Messiah (Zechariah 3:8 6:12 ^{<2310>}Isaiah 11:1 4:2 ^{<2325>}Jeremiah 23:5 33:15).

a tender one — Zerubbabel never reigned as a universal (^{<3072>}Ezekiel 17:23) king, nor could the great things mentioned here be said of him, except as a type of Messiah. Messiah alone can be meant: originally “a *tender* plant and root out of a dry ground” (^{<2310>}Isaiah 53:2); the beginning of His kingdom being humble, His reputed parents of lowly rank, though King David’s lineal representatives; yet, even then, God here calls Him, in respect to His everlasting purpose, “the highest ... of the high” (^{<3027>}Psalm 89:27).

I ... will plant it upon an high mountain — Zion; destined to be the *moral* center and eminence of grace and glory shining forth to the world, out-topping all mundane elevation. The kingdom, typically begun at the return from Babylon, and the rebuilding of the temple, fully began with Christ’s appearing, and shall have its highest manifestation at His reappearing to reign on Zion, and thence over the whole earth (^{<3006>}Psalm 2:6,8 ^{<2310>}Isaiah 2:2,3 ^{<2317>}Jeremiah 3:17).

23. under it ... all fowl — the Gospel “mustard tree,” small at first, but at length receiving all under its covert (^{<4032>}Matthew 13:32); the antithesis to

Antichrist, symbolized by Assyria, of which the same is said (^{<2610>}Ezekiel 31:6), and Babylon (^{<2012>}Daniel 4:12). Antichrist assumes in mimicry the universal power really belonging to Christ.

24. I ... *brought down the high* — the very attribute given to God by the virgin mother of Him, under whom this was to be accomplished.

high ... low tree — that is, princes elevated ... lowered. All the empires of the world, represented by Babylon, once flourishing (“green”), shall be brought low before the once depressed (“dry”), but then exalted, kingdom of Messiah and His people, the head of whom shall be Israel (^{<2714>}Daniel 2:44).

CHAPTER 18

~~2480~~ EZEKIEL 18:1-32.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOUR GRAPES REPROVED.

Vindication of God's moral government as to His retributive righteousness from the Jewish imputation of injustice, as if they were suffering, not for their own sin, but for that of their fathers. As in the seventeenth chapter he foretold Messiah's happy reign in Jerusalem, so now he warns them that its blessings can be theirs only upon their individually turning to righteousness.

2. *fathers ... eaten sour grapes, ... children's teeth ... set on edge* — Their unbelieving calumnies on God's justice had become so common as to have assumed a proverbial form. The sin of Adam in eating the forbidden fruit, visited on his posterity, seems to have suggested the peculiar form; noticed also by Jeremiah (~~2482~~Jeremiah 31:29); and explained in ~~2481~~Lamentations 5:7, "Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities." They mean by "the children," *themselves*, as though they were innocent, whereas they were far from being so. The partial reformation effected since Manasseh's wicked reign, especially among the exiles at Chebar, was their ground for thinking so; but the improvement was only superficial and only fostered their self-righteous spirit, which sought anywhere but in themselves the cause of their calamities; just as the modern Jews attribute their present dispersion, not to their own sins, but to those of their forefathers. It is a universal mark of corrupt nature to lay the blame, which belongs to ourselves, on others and to arraign the justice of God. Compare ~~2483~~Genesis 3:12, where Adam transfers the blame of his sin to Eve, and even to God, "The *woman* whom *thou* gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."

3. *ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb* — because I will let it be seen by the whole world in the very fact that you are not righteous, as ye fancy yourselves, but wicked, and that you suffer only the just penalty of your guilt; while the elect righteous remnant alone escapes.

4. *all souls are mine* — Therefore I can deal with all, being My own creation, as I please (~~2486~~Jeremiah 18:6). As the Creator of all alike I can have no reason, but the principle of equity, according to men's works, to

make any difference, so as to punish some, and to save others (^{<1825>}Genesis 18:25). “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” The curse descending from father to son assumes guilt shared in by the son; there is a natural tendency in the child to follow the sin of his father, and so he shares in the father’s punishment: hence the principles of God’s government, involved in ^{<1215>}Exodus 20:5 and ^{<2154>}Jeremiah 15:4, are justified. The sons, therefore (as the Jews here), cannot complain of being unjustly afflicted by God (^{<2107>}Lamentations 5:7); for they filled up the guilt of their fathers (^{<1232>}Matthew 23:32,34-36). The same God who “recompenses the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children,” is immediately after set forth as “giving to every man according to his ways” (^{<2128>}Jeremiah 32:18,19) which “visited the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation” (where the explanation is added, “of them that *hate me*,” that is, the *children hating God*, as well as their fathers: the former being too likely to follow their parents, sin going down with cumulative force from parent to child), we find (^{<1516>}Deuteronomy 24:16), “the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither the children for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.” The inherited guilt of sin in infants (^{<1514>}Romans 5:14) is an awful *fact*, but one met by the atonement of Christ; but it is of adults that he speaks here. Whatever penalties fall on *communities* for connection with sins of their fathers, *individual* adults who repent shall escape (^{<1225>}2 Kings 23:25,26). This was no new thing, as some misinterpret the passage here; it had been *always* God’s principle to punish only the guilty, and not also the innocent, for the sins of their fathers. God does not here *change* the principle of His administration, but is merely about to *manifest* it so personally to each that the Jews should no longer throw on God and on their fathers the blame which was their own.

soul that sinneth, it shall die — and it *alone* (^{<1523>}Romans 6:23); not also the innocent.

5. Here begins the illustration of God’s impartiality in a series of supposed cases. The first case is given in ^{<2107>}Ezekiel 18:5-9, the just man. The excellencies are selected in reference to the prevailing sins of the age, from which such a one stood aloof; hence arises the omission of some features of righteousness, which, under different circumstances, would have been desirable to be enumerated. Each age has *its own* besetting temptations, and the just man will be distinguished by his guarding against the peculiar defilements, inward and outward, of his age.

just ... lawful ... right — the duties of the second table of the law, which flow from the fear of God. Piety is the root of all charity; to render to each his own, as well to our neighbor, as to God.

6. *not eaten upon ... mountains* — the high places, where altars were reared. A double sin: sacrificing elsewhere than at the temple, where only God sanctioned sacrifice (^{<6213>}Deuteronomy 12:13,14); and this to idols instead of to Jehovah. “Eaten” refers to the feasts which were connected with the sacrifices (see ^{<6316>}Exodus 32:6 ^{<6528>}Deuteronomy 32:38 ^{<6027>}Judges 9:27 ^{<6184>}1 Corinthians 8:4,10 10:7).

lifted ... eyes to — namely, in adoration (^{<801>}Psalms 121:1). The superstitious are compared to harlots; their eyes go eagerly after spiritual lusts. The righteous man not merely refrains from the act, but from the *glance* of spiritual lust (^{<8313>}Job 31:1 ^{<6133>}Matthew 5:28).

idols of ... Israel — not merely those of the Gentiles, but even those of Israel. The fashions of his countrymen could not lead him astray.

defiled ... neighbour's wife — Not only does he shrink from spiritual, but also from carnal, adultery (compare ^{<6168>}1 Corinthians 6:18).

neither ... menstruous woman — Leprosy and elephantiasis were said to be the fruit of such a connection [JEROME]. Chastity is to be observed even towards one's own wife (^{<6189>}Leviticus 18:19 20:18).

7. *restored ... pledge* — that which the poor debtor absolutely needed; as his raiment, which the creditor was bound to restore before sunset (^{<622>}Exodus 22:26,27), and his millstone, which was needed for preparing his food (^{<6346>}Deuteronomy 24:6,10-13).

bread to ... hungry ... covered ... naked — (^{<2807>}Isaiah 58:7 ^{<6135>}Matthew 25:35,36). After duties of justice come those of benevolence. It is not enough to refrain from doing a wrong to our neighbor, we must also do him good. The bread owned by a man, though “his,” is given to him, not to keep to himself, but to impart to the needy.

8. *usury* — literally, “biting.” The law forbade the Jew to take interest from brethren but permitted him to do so from a foreigner (^{<6225>}Exodus 22:25 ^{<6529>}Deuteronomy 23:19,20 ^{<6161>}Nehemiah 5:7 ^{<9157>}Psalms 15:5). The letter of the law was restricted to the Jewish polity, and is not binding now; and indeed the principle of taking interest was even then sanctioned, by its being allowed in the case of a foreigner. The *spirit* of the law still binds us, that we are not to take advantage of our neighbor's necessities to enrich ourselves, but be satisfied with moderate, or even no, interest, in the case of the needy.

increase — in the case of *other* kinds of wealth; as “usury” refers to *money* (^{<6256>}Leviticus 25:36).

withdrawn ... hand, etc. — Where he has the opportunity and might find a plausible plea for promoting his own gain at the cost of a wrong to his neighbor, he keeps back his hand from what selfishness prompts.

judgment — justice.

9. *truly* — with integrity.

surely live — literally, “live in life.” Prosper in this life, but still more in the life to come (^{<3101>}Proverbs 3:1,2 ^{<3104>}Amos 5:4).

10-13. The second case is that of an impious son of a pious father. His pious parentage, so far from excusing, aggravates his guilt.

robber — or literally, “a breaker,” namely, through all constraints of right.

doeth the like to any one — The *Hebrew* and the parallel (^{<3308>}Ezekiel 18:18) require us to translate rather, “doeth to his *brother* any of these things,” namely, the things which follow in ^{<3301>}Ezekiel 18:11, etc. [MAURER].

11. *those duties* — which his father did (^{<3305>}Ezekiel 18:5,9).

12. *oppressed the poor* — an aggravation to his oppressions, that they were practiced against *the poor*; whereas in ^{<3307>}Ezekiel 18:7 the expression is simply “oppressed *any*.”

abomination — singular number referring to the particular one mentioned at the end of ^{<3306>}Ezekiel 18:6.

13. *shall he ... live?* — because of the merits of his father; answering, by contrast, to “die for the iniquity of his father” (^{<3307>}Ezekiel 18:17).

his blood shall be upon him — The cause of his bloody death shall rest with himself; God is not to blame, but is vindicated as just in punishing him.

14-18. The third case: a son who walks not in the steps of an unrighteous father, but in the ways of God; for example, Josiah, the pious son of guilty Amon; Hezekiah, of Ahaz (^{<2102>}2 Kings 16:1-20 18:1-37 21:1-22:20).

seeth ... and considereth — The same *Hebrew* stands for both verbs, “seeth ... yea, seeth.” The repetition implies the attentive observation needed, in order that the son may not be led astray by his father’s bad example; as sons generally are blind to parents sins, and even imitate them as if they were virtues.

17. *taken off his hand from the poor* — that is, *abstained* from oppressing the poor, when he had the opportunity of doing so with

impunity. The different sense of the phrase in ³³⁶⁹Ezekiel 16:49, in reference to *relieving* the poor, seems to have suggested the reading followed by FAIRBAIRN, but not sanctioned by the *Hebrew*, “hath *not* turned his hand from,” etc. But ³³⁷²Ezekiel 20:22 uses the phrase in a somewhat similar sense to *English Version* here, *abstained from hurting*.

19. Here the Jews object to the prophet’s word and in their objection seem to seek a continuance of that very thing which they had originally made a matter of complaint. Therefore translate, “Wherefore doth not the son bear the iniquity of his father?” It now would seem a consolation to them to think the son might suffer for his father’s misdeeds; for it would soothe their self-love to regard themselves as innocent sufferers for the guilt of others and would justify them in their present course of life, which they did not choose to abandon for a better. In reply, Ezekiel reiterates the truth of each being dealt with according to his own merits [FAIRBAIRN]. But GROTIUS supports *English Version*, wherein the Jews contradict the prophet, “Why (sayest thou so) doth not the son (often, as in our case, though innocent) bear (that is, suffer for) the iniquity of their father?” Ezekiel replies, It is not as you say, but as I in the name of God say: “When the son hath done,” etc. *English Version* is simpler than that of FAIRBAIRN.

20. *son shall not bear ... iniquity of ... father* — (⁴²⁴⁶Deuteronomy 24:16 ²⁴⁶2 Kings 14:6).

righteousness ... wickedness — that is, the reward for righteousness ... the punishment of wickedness. “Righteousness” is not used as if any were *absolutely* righteous; but, of such as have it *imputed* to them for Christ’s sake, though not under the Old Testament themselves understanding the ground on which they were regarded as righteous, but sincerely seeking after it in the way of God’s appointment, so far as they then understood this way.

21-24. Two last cases, showing the equity of God:

- (1) The penitent sinner is dealt with according to his new obedience, not according to his former sins.
- (2) The righteous man who turns from righteousness to sin shall be punished for the latter, and his former righteousness will be of no avail to him.

he shall surely live — Despair drives men into hardened recklessness; God therefore allures men to repentance by holding out hope [CALVIN].

*“To threats the stubborn sinner oft is hard,
Wrapt in his crimes, against the storm prepared,
But when the milder beams of mercy play,
He melts, and throws the cumbrous cloak away.”*

Hitherto the cases had been of a change from bad to good, or vice versa, in one generation compared with another. Here it is such a change in one and the same individual. This, as practically affecting the persons here addressed, is properly put last. So far from God laying on men the penalty of others' sins, He will not even punish them for their own, if they turn from sin to righteousness; but if they turn from righteousness to sin, they must expect in justice that their former goodness will not atone for subsequent sin (^{<S008>}Hebrews 10:38,39 ^{<G020>}2 Peter 2:20-22). The exile in Babylon gave a season for repentance of those sins which would have brought death on the perpetrator in Judea while the law could be enforced; so it prepared the way for the Gospel [GROTIUS].

22. *in his righteousness ... he shall live* — *in* it, not *for* it, as if that atoned for his former sins; but “*in his righteousness*” he shall live, as the *evidence* of his being already in favor with God through the merit of Messiah, who was to come. The Gospel clears up for us many such passages (^{<A012>}1 Peter 1:12), which were dimly understood at the time, while men, however, had light enough for salvation.

23. (^{<S008>}1 Timothy 2:4 ^{<G009>}2 Peter 3:9). If men perish, it is because they *will not* come to the Lord for salvation; not that the Lord is not willing to save them (^{<B040>}John 5:40). They trample on not merely justice, but mercy; what farther hope can there be for them, when even mercy is against them? (^{<S008>}Hebrews 10:26-29).

24. *righteous* — one *apparently* such; as in ^{<A008>}Matthew 9:13, “I came not to call the righteous,” etc., that is, those who fancy themselves righteous. Those alone are true saints who by the grace of God persevere (^{<A043>}Matthew 24:13 ^{<G002>}1 Corinthians 10:12 ^{<G008>}John 10:28,29).

turneth away from ... righteousness — an utter apostasy; not like the exceptional offenses of the godly through infirmity or heedlessness, which they afterwards mourn over and repent of.

not be mentioned — not be taken into account so as to save them.

his trespass — utter apostasy.

25. Their plea for saying, “The way of the Lord is not equal,” was that God treated different classes in a different way. But it was really their way that was unequal, since living in sin they expected to be dealt with as if they

were righteous. God's way was invariably to deal with different men according to their deserts.

26-28. The two last instances repeated in inverse order. God's emphatic statement of His principle of government needs no further proof than the simple statement of it.

in them — in the actual *sins*, which are the manifestations of the principle of "iniquity," mentioned just before.

27. *he shall save his soul* — that is, he shall have it saved upon his repentance.

28. *considereth* — the first step to repentance; for the ungodly do not consider either God or themselves (^{<3629>}Deuteronomy 32:29 ^{<3639>}Psalms 119:59,60 ^{<3657>}Luke 15:17,18).

29. Though God's justice is so plainly manifested, sinners still object to it because they do not wish to see it (^{<3307>}Micah 2:7 ^{<3418>}Matthew 11:18,19).

30-32. As God is to judge them "according to their ways" (^{<3031>}Proverbs 1:31), their only hope is to "repent"; and this is a sure hope, for God takes no delight in judging them in wrath, but graciously desires their salvation on repentance.

I will judge you — Though ye cavil, it is a sufficient answer that I, your Judge, declare it so, and will judge you according to My will; and then your cavils must end.

Repent — *inward* conversion (^{<3015>}Revelation 2:5). In the *Hebrew* there is a play of like sounds, "Turn ye and return."

turn yourselves, etc. — the *outward* fruits of repentance. Not as the *Margin*, "turn *others*"; for the parallel clause (^{<3631>}Ezekiel 18:31) is, "cast away from *you* all *your* transgressions." Perhaps, however, the omission of the object after the verb in the *Hebrew* implies that *both* are included: Turn alike *yourselves* and *all whom you can influence*.

from all ... transgressions — not as if believers are perfect; but they sincerely *aim* at perfection, so as to be habitually and wilfully on terms with no sin (^{<3061>}John 3:6-9):

your ruin — literally, "your snare," entangling you in ruin.

31. *Cast away from you* — for the cause of your evil rests with yourselves; your sole way of escape is to be reconciled to God (^{<3402>}Ephesians 4:22,23).

make you a new heart — This shows, not what men *can* do, but what they *ought* to do: what God requires of us. God alone can make us a new heart (^{<3119>}Ezekiel 11:19 36:26,27). The command to do what men cannot themselves do is designed to drive them (instead of laying the blame, as the Jews did, elsewhere rather than on themselves) to feel their own helplessness, and to seek God’s Holy Spirit (^{<3511>}Psalm 51:11,12). Thus the outward exhortation is, as it were, the organ or instrument which God uses for conferring grace. So we may say with AUGUSTINE, “Give what thou requirest, and (then) require what thou wilt.” Our strength (which is weakness in itself) shall suffice for whatever He exacts, if only He gives the supply [CALVIN].

spirit — the *understanding*: as the “heart” means *the will and affections*. The root must be changed before the fruit can be good.

why will ye die — bring on your own selves your ruin. God’s decrees are secret to us; it is enough for us that He invites all, and will reject none that seek Him.

32. (^{<2133>}Lamentations 3:33 ^{<6111>}2 Peter 3:9). God is “slow to anger”; punishment is “His strange work” (^{<2321>}Isaiah 28:21).

CHAPTER 19

EZEKIEL 19:1-14.

ELEGY OVER THE FALL OF DAVID'S HOUSE.

There is a tacit antithesis between this lamentation and that of the Jews for their own miseries, into the causes of which, however, they did not inquire.

1. *princes of Israel* — that is, Judah, whose “princes” alone were recognized by prophecy; those of the ten tribes were, in respect to the theocracy, usurpers.

2. *thy mother* — the mother of Jehoiachin, the representative of David's line in exile with Ezekiel. The “mother” is Judea: “a lioness,” as being fierce in catching prey (^{390B}Ezekiel 19:3), referring to her heathenish practices. Jerusalem was called Ariel (the lion of God) in a good sense (^{230E}Isaiah 29:1); and Judah “a lion's whelp ... a lion ... an old lion” (^{040B}Genesis 49:9), to which, as also to ^{023B}Numbers 23:24 24:9, this passage alludes.

nourished ... among young lions — She herself had “lain” among lions, that is, had intercourse with the corruptions of the surrounding heathen and had brought up the royal young ones similarly: utterly degenerate from the stock of Abraham.

Lay down — or “couched,” is appropriate to the lion, the Arab name of which means “the coucher.”

3. *young lion* — Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, carried captive from Riblah to Egypt by Pharaoh-necho (^{1238E}2 Kings 23:33).

4. *The nations* — Egypt, in the case of Jehoahaz, who probably provoked Pharaoh by trying to avenge the death of his father by assailing the bordering cities of Egypt (^{1239E}2 Kings 23:29,30).

in their pit — image from the *pitfalls* used for catching wild beasts (^{321E}Jeremiah 22:11,12).

chains — or hooks, which were fastened in the noses of wild beasts (see on ^{390B}Ezekiel 19:9).

5. *saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost* — that is, that her long-awaited-for hope was disappointed, Jehoahaz not being restored to her from Egypt.

she took another of her whelps — Jehoiakim, brother of Jehoahaz, who was placed on the throne by Pharaoh (^{<12734>}2 Kings 23:34), according to the wish of Judah.

6. *went up and down among the lions* — imitated the recklessness and tyranny of the surrounding kings (^{<12713>}Jeremiah 22:13-17).

catch ... prey — to do evil, gratifying his lusts by oppression (^{<12737>}2 Kings 23:37).

7. *knew ... desolate palaces* — that is, *claimed as his own* their palaces, which he then proceeded to “desolate.” The *Hebrew*, literally “widows”; hence *widowed palaces* (^{<23122>}Isaiah 13:22). VATABLUS (whom FAIRBAIRN follows) explains it, “He knew (carnally) the widows of those whom he devoured” (^{<23116>}Ezekiel 19:6). But thus the metaphor and the literal reality would be blended: the *lion* being represented as *knowing widows*. The reality, however, often elsewhere thus breaks through the veil.

fullness thereof — all that it contained; its inhabitants.

8. *the nations* — the Chaldeans, Syrians, Moab, and Ammon (^{<12412>}2 Kings 24:2).

9. *in chains* — (^{<14116>}2 Chronicles 36:6 ^{<21218>}Jeremiah 22:18). *Margin*, “hooks”; perhaps referring to the hook often passed through the nose of beasts; so, too, through that of captives, as seen in the Assyrian sculptures (see on ^{<23114>}Ezekiel 19:4).

voice — that is, his roaring.

no more be heard upon the mountains — carrying on the metaphor of the lion, whose roaring on the mountains frightens all the other beasts. The insolence of the prince, not at all abated though his kingdom was impaired, was now to cease.

10. A new metaphor taken from the *vine*, the chief of the fruit-bearing trees, as the *lion* is of the beasts of prey (see ^{<23116>}Ezekiel 17:6).

in thy blood — “planted when thou wast in thy blood,” that is, in thy very infancy; as in ^{<23116>}Ezekiel 16:6, when thou hadst just come from the womb, and hadst not yet the blood washed from thee. The Jews from the first were planted in Canaan to take root there [CALVIN]. GROTIUS translates as the *Margin*, “in thy quietness,” that is, in the period when Judah had not yet

fallen into her present troubles. *English Version* is better. GLASSIUS explains it well, retaining the metaphor, which CALVIN'S explanation breaks, "in the blood of thy grapes," that is, in her full strength, as the red wine is the strength of the grape. ^{<1491>}Genesis 49:11 is evidently alluded to.

many waters — the well-watered land of Canaan (^{<1831>}Deuteronomy 8:7-9).

11. strong rods — princes of the royal house of David. The vine shot forth her branches like so many scepters, not creeping lowly on the ground like many vines, but trained aloft on a tree or wall. The mention of their former royal dignity, contrasting sadly with her present sunken state, would remind the Jews of their sins whereby they had incurred such judgments.

stature — (^{<2701>}Daniel 4:11).

among the thick branches — that is, the central stock or trunk of the tree shot up highest "among its own branches" or offshoots, surrounding it. Emblematic of the numbers and resources of the people. HENGSTENBERG translates, "among the clouds." But ^{<2318>}Ezekiel 31:3,10,14, supports *English Version*.

12. plucked up — not *gradually* withered. The *sudden* upturning of the state was designed to awaken the Jews out of their torpor to see the hand of God in the national judgment.

east wind — (See on ^{<2370>}Ezekiel 17:10).

13. planted — that is, transplanted. Though already "dried up" in regard to the nation generally, the vine is said to be "transplanted" as regards God's mercy to the remnant in Babylon.

dry ... ground — Chaldea was well-watered and fertile; but it is the condition of the captive people, not that of the land, which is referred to.

14. fire ... out of a rod of her branches — The Jews' disaster was to be ascribed, not so much to the Chaldeans as to *themselves*; the "fire out of the rod" is *God's wrath* kindled by the perjury of Zedekiah (^{<2378>}Ezekiel 17:18). "The anger of the Lord" against Judah is specified as the cause why Zedekiah was permitted to rebel against Babylon (^{<1221>}2 Kings 24:20; compare ^{<1095>}Judges 9:15), thus bringing Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem.

no strong rod ... scepter to rule — No more kings of David's stock are now to rule the nation. Not at least until "the Lord shall send the rod of His strength ("Messiah," ^{<1810>}Psalms 110:2 ^{<2110>}Isaiah 11:1) out of Zion," to reign first as a spiritual, then hereafter as a literal king.

is ... and shall be for a lamentation — Part of the lamentation (that as to Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim) was matter of history as already accomplished; part (as to Zedekiah) was yet to be fulfilled; or, this prophecy both is a subject for lamentation, and shall be so to distant posterity.

CHAPTER 20

EZEKIEL 20:1-49.

REJECTION OF THE ELDERS' APPLICATION TO THE PROPHET: EXPOSURE OF ISRAEL'S PROTRACTED REBELLIONS, NOTWITHSTANDING GOD'S LONG- SUFFERING GOODNESS: YET WILL GOD RESTORE HIS PEOPLE AT LAST.

1. *seventh year*, etc. — namely, from the carrying away of Jeconiah (^{300E}Ezekiel 1:2 8:1). This computation was calculated to make them cherish the more ardently the hope of the restoration promised them in seventy years; for, when prospects are hopeless, years are not computed [CALVIN].

elders ... came to inquire — The object of their inquiry, as in ^{340E}Ezekiel 14:1, is not stated; probably it was to ascertain the cause of the national calamities and the time of their termination, as their false prophets assured them of a speedy restoration.

3. The chapter falls into two great parts: ^{320E}Ezekiel 20:1-32, the recital of the people's rebellions during five distinct periods: in Egypt, the wilderness, on the borders of Canaan when a new generation arose, in Canaan, and in the time of the prophet.

I will not be inquired of by you — because their moral state precluded them from capability of knowing the will of God (^{668E}Psalms 66:18 ^{1089E}Proverbs 28:9 ^{407E}John 7:17).

4. *Wilt thou judge? ... judge* — The emphatical repetition expresses, "Wilt thou *not* judge? yes, judge them. There is a loud call for immediate judgment." The *Hebrew* interrogative here is a *command*, not a prohibition [MAURER]. Instead of spending time in *teaching* them, tell them of the abomination of their fathers, of which their own are the complement and counterpart, and which call for *judgment*.

5, 6. The thrice lifting up of God's hand (the sign of His *oath*, ^{605E}Revelation 10:5,6 ^{1068E}Exodus 6:8, *Margin*; ^{404E}Numbers 14:30; to which passages the form of words here alludes) implies the solemn earnestness of God's purpose of grace to them.

made myself known unto them — proving Myself faithful and true by the actual fulfillment of My promises (^{<0061>}Exodus 4:31 6:3); revealing Myself as “Jehovah,” that is, not that the *name* was unknown before, but that then first the *force* of that name was manifested in the promises of God then being realized in performances.

6. espied for them — as though God had spied out all other lands, and chose Canaan as the best of all lands (^{<0061>}Deuteronomy 8:7,8). See ^{<0719>}Daniel 8:9 11:16,41, “the glorious land”; see *Margin*, “land of delight,” or, *ornament*”; “the pleasant land,” or “land of desire,” ^{<0074>}Zechariah 7:14, *Margin*.

glory of all lands — that is, *Canaan* was “the beauty of all lands”; the most lovely and delightful land; “milk and honey” are not the antecedents to “which.”

7. Moses gives no formal statement of idolatries practiced by Israel in Egypt. But it is implied in their readiness to worship the golden calf (resembling the Egyptian ox, Apis) (^{<0206>}Exodus 32:4), which makes it likely they had worshipped such idols in Egypt. Also, in ^{<0177>}Leviticus 17:7, “They shall *no more* offer their sacrifices unto devils (literally, *seirim*, ‘he-goats,’ the symbol of the false god, Pan), after whom they have gone awhoring.” The call of God by Moses was as much to them to separate from idols and follow Jehovah, as it was to Pharaoh to let them go forth. ^{<0066>}Exodus 6:6,7 and ^{<0314>}Joshua 24:14, expressly mention their idolatry “in Egypt.” Hence the need of their being removed out of the contagion of Egyptian idolatries by the exodus.

every man — so universal was the evil.

of his eyes — It was not fear of their Egyptian masters, but their own *lust of the eye* that drew them to idols (^{<0069>}Ezekiel 6:9 18:6).

8, 9. then I said, I will ... But, etc. — that is, (God speaking in condescension to human modes of conception) their spiritual degradation *deserved* I should destroy them, “but I wrought (namely, the deliverance ‘out of ... Egypt’) for My name’s sake”; not for their merits (a rebuke to their national pride). God’s “name” means the sum-total of His perfections. To manifest these, His gratuitous mercy abounding above their sins, yet without wrong to His justice, and so to set forth His glory, was and is the ultimate end of His dealings (^{<0314>}Ezekiel 20:14,22 ^{<0023>}2 Samuel 7:23 ^{<0370>}Isaiah 63:12 ^{<0177>}Romans 9:17).

11. which if a man do, he shall ... five in them — not “by them,” as though they could justify a man, seeing that man cannot render the faultless

obedience required (^{<R16>}Leviticus 18:5 ^{<R12>}Galatians 3:12). “By them” is the expression indeed in ^{<S15>}Romans 10:5; but there the design is to show that, *if man could* obey all God’s laws, he would be justified “by them” (^{<R12>}Galatians 3:21); but he cannot; he therefore needs to have justification by “the Lord our righteousness” (^{<R18>}Jeremiah 23:6); then, having thus received life, he “lives,” that is, maintains, enjoys, and exercises this life only in so far as he walks “*in*” the laws of God. So ^{<R15>}Deuteronomy 30:15,16. The Israelites, *as a nation*, had life already freely given to them by God’s covenant of promise; the laws of God were designed to be the means of the outward expression of their spiritual life. As the natural life has its healthy manifestation in the full exercise of its powers, so their spiritual being as a nation was to be developed in vigor, or else decay, according as they did, or did not, walk in God’s laws.

12. *sabbaths, ... a sign between me and them* — a kind of sacramental pledge of the covenant of adoption between God and His people. The Sabbath is specified as a sample of the whole law, to show that the law is not merely precepts, but privileges, of which the Sabbath is one of the highest. Not that the Sabbath was first instituted at Sinai, as if it were an exclusively Jewish ordinance (^{<R11>}Genesis 2:2,3), but it was then more formally enacted, when, owing to the apostasy of the world from the original revelation, one people was called out (^{<R15>}Deuteronomy 5:15) to be the covenant-people of God.

sanctify them — The observance of the Sabbath contemplated by God was not a mere *outward* rest, but a *spiritual* dedication of the day to the glory of God and the good of man. Otherwise it would not be, as it is made, the pledge of universal *sanctification* (^{<R13>}Exodus 31:13-17 ^{<R13>}Isaiah 58:13,14). Virtually it is said, all sanctity will flourish or decay, according as this ordinance is observed in its full spirituality or not.

13. *in the wilderness* — They “rebelled” in the very place where death and terror were on every side and where they depended on My miraculous bounty every moment!

15. I swore against them (^{<R11>}Psalm 95:11 106:26) that I would not permit the generation that came out of Egypt to enter Canaan.

16. The *special* reason is stated by Moses (^{<R13>}Numbers 13:32,33 14:4) to be that they, through fear arising from the false report of the spies, wished to return to Egypt; the *general* reasons are stated here which lay at the root of their rejection of God’s grace; namely, contempt of God and His laws, and love of idols.

their heart — The fault lay in it (^{<R13>}Psalm 78:37).

17. *Nevertheless* — How marvellous that God should spare such sinners! His everlasting covenant explains it, His long-suffering standing out in striking contrast to their rebellions (^{<4938>}Psalm 78:38 ^{<2811>}Jeremiah 30:11).

18. *I said unto their children* — being unwilling to speak any more to the fathers as being incorrigible.

Walk ye not in ... statutes of ... fathers — The traditions of the fathers are to be carefully weighed, not indiscriminately followed. He forbids the imitation of not only their gross sins, but even their plausible statutes [CALVIN].

19. It is an indirect denial of God, and a robbing Him of His due, to add man's inventions to His precepts.

20. (^{<2472>}Jeremiah 17:22).

21. Though warned by the judgment on their fathers, the next generation also rebelled against God. The “kindness of Israel’s youth and love of her espousals in the wilderness” (^{<2410>}Jeremiah 2:2,3) were only comparative (the corruption in later times being more general), and confined to the minority; as a whole, Israel at no time fully served God. The “children” it was that fell into the fearful apostasy on the plains of Moab at the close of the wilderness sojourn (^{<4251>}Numbers 25:1,2 ^{<4512>}Deuteronomy 31:27).

23. It was to that generation the threat of dispersion was proclaimed (^{<4564>}Deuteronomy 28:64; compare ^{<3204>}Ezekiel 29:4).

25. *I gave them ... statutes ... not good* — Since they would not follow My statutes that were good, “I gave them” their own (^{<2618>}Ezekiel 20:18) and their fathers’ “which were not good”; statutes spiritually corrupting, and, finally, as the consequence, destroying them. Righteous retribution (^{<4812>}Psalm 81:12 ^{<2811>}Hosea 8:11 ^{<4512>}Romans 1:24 ^{<2112>}2 Thessalonians 2:11). ^{<2739>}Ezekiel 20:39 proves this view to be correct (compare ^{<2617>}Isaiah 63:17). Thus on the plains of Moab (^{<4251>}Numbers 25:1-18), in chastisement for the secret unfaithfulness to God in their hearts, He permitted Baal’s worshippers to tempt them to idolatry (the ready success of the tempters, moreover, proving the inward unsoundness of the tempted); and this again ended necessarily in punitive judgments.

26. *I polluted them* — not directly; “but I judicially *gave them up* to pollute themselves.” A just retribution for their “polluting My sabbaths” (^{<2614>}Ezekiel 20:24). This ^{<2615>}Ezekiel 20:26 is explanatory of ^{<2615>}Ezekiel 20:25. Their own sin I made their punishment.

caused to pass through the fire — FAIRBAIRN translates, “In their *presenting* (literally, ‘the causing to pass over’) all their first-born,” namely, *to the Lord*; referring to the command (^{ⲉⲃⲓⲛⲉ}Exodus 13:12, *Margin*, where the very same expression is used). The lustration of children by passing through the fire was a *later abomination* (^{ⲉⲃⲓⲛⲉ}Ezekiel 20:31). The evil here spoken of was the admixture of heathenish practices. with Jehovah’s worship, which made Him regard all as “polluted.” Here, “to the Lord” is omitted purposely, to imply, “They kept up the outward service indeed, but I did not own it as done unto Me, since it was mingled with such *pollutions*.” But *English Version* is supported by the similar phraseology in ^{ⲉⲃⲓⲛⲉ}Ezekiel 20:31, see on ^{ⲉⲃⲓⲛⲉ}Ezekiel 20:31. They made *all* their children pass through the fire; but he names the *first-born*, in aggravation of their guilt; that is, “I had willed that the first-born should be redeemed as being Mine, but they imposed on themselves the cruel rites of offering them to Molech” (^{ⲉⲃⲓⲛⲉ}Deuteronomy 18:10).

might know ... the Lord — that they may be compelled to know Me as a powerful Judge, since they were unwilling to know Me as a gracious Father.

27-29. The next period, namely, that which followed the settlement in Canaan: the fathers of the generation existing in Ezekiel’s. time walked in the same steps of apostasy as the generation in the wilderness.

Yet in this — Not content with past rebellions, and not moved with gratitude for God’s goodness, “yet in this,” *still further* they rebelled.

blasphemed — “have insulted me” [CALVIN]. Even those who did not sacrifice to heathen gods have offered “their sacrifices” (^{ⲉⲃⲓⲛⲉ}Ezekiel 20:28) in forbidden places.

28. provocation of their offering — an offering as it were purposely made to provoke God.

sweet savor — What ought to have been *sweet* became offensive by their corruptions. He specifies the various kinds of offerings, to show that in *all* alike they violated the law.

29. What is the high place whereunto ye go? — What is the meaning of this name? For My *altar* is not so called. What excellence do ye see in it, that ye go there, rather than to My temple, the only lawful place of sacrificing? The very name, “high place,” convicts you of sinning, not from ignorance but perverse rebellion.

is called ... unto this day — whereas this name ought to have been long since laid aside, along with the custom of sacrificing on high places which it

represents, being borrowed from the heathen, who so called their places of sacrifice (the Greeks, for instance, called them by a cognate term, *Bomoi*), whereas I call mine *Mizbeaach*, “altar.” The very name implies the place is not that sanctioned by Me, and therefore your sacrifices even to ME there (much more those you offer to idols) are only a “provocation” to Me (^{ⲉⲛⲉⲙ}Ezekiel 20:28 ^{ⲉⲛⲉⲙ}Deuteronomy 12:1-5). David and others, it is true, sacrificed to God on high places, but it was under exceptional circumstances, and before the altar was set up on Mount Moriah.

30. The interrogation implies a strong affirmation, as in ^{ⲉⲛⲉⲙ}Ezekiel 20:4, “Are ye *not* polluted ... ? Do ye *not* commit?” etc. Or, connecting this verse with ^{ⲉⲛⲉⲙ}Ezekiel 20:31, “Are ye thus polluted ... and yet (do ye expect that) I shall be inquired of by you?”

31. *through the fire* — As “the fire” is omitted in ^{ⲉⲛⲉⲙ}Ezekiel 20:26, FAIRBAIRN represents the generation here referred to (namely, that of Ezekiel’s day) as attaining the climax of guilt (see on ^{ⲉⲛⲉⲙ}Ezekiel 20:26), in making their children pass through the fire, which that former generation did not. The reason, however, for the omission of “the fire” in ^{ⲉⲛⲉⲙ}Ezekiel 20:26 is, perhaps, that there it is implied the children only “*passed through the fire*” for purification, whereas here they are actually *burnt to death* before the idol; and therefore “the fire” is specified in the latter, not in the former case (compare ^{ⲉⲛⲉⲙ}2 Kings 3:27).

32. *We will be as the heathen* — and so escape the odium to which we are exposed, of having a peculiar God and law of our own. “We shall live. on better terms with them by having a similar worship. Besides, we get from God nothing but threats and calamities, whereas the heathen, Chaldeans, etc., get riches and power from their idols.” How literally God’s words here (“that ... shall not be at all”) are fulfilled in the modern Jews! Though the Jews seemed so likely (had Ezekiel spoken as an uninspired man) to have blended with the rest of mankind and laid aside their distinctive peculiarities, as was their wish at that time, yet they have remained for eighteen centuries dispersed among all nations and without a home, but still distinct: a standing witness for the truth of the prophecy given so long ago.

33. Here begins the second division of the prophecy. Lest the covenant people should abandon their distinctive hopes and amalgamate with the surrounding heathen, He tells them that, as the wilderness journey from Egypt was made subservient to discipline and also to the taking from among them the rebellious, so a severe discipline (such as the Jews are now for long actually undergoing) should be administered to them during the next exodus for the same purpose (^{ⲉⲛⲉⲙ}Ezekiel 20:38), and so to prepare them for the restored possession of their land (^{ⲉⲛⲉⲙ}Hosea 2:14,15). This was

only partially fulfilled before, and at the return from Babylon: its full and final accomplishment is future.

with a mighty hand, ... will I rule over you — I will assert My right over you in spite of your resistance (^{אֶזְכִּיאל}Ezekiel 20:32), as a master would in the case of his slave, and I will not let you be wrested from Me, because of My regard to My covenant.

34. The Jews in exile might think themselves set free from the “rule” of God (^{אֶזְכִּיאל}Ezekiel 20:33); therefore, He intimates, He will reassert His right over them by chastening judgments, and these, with an ultimate view, not to destroy, but to restore them.

people — rather, “peoples.”

35. wilderness of the people — rather, “peoples,” the various *peoples* among whom they were to be scattered, and about whom God saith (^{אֶזְכִּיאל}Ezekiel 20:34), “I will bring you out.” In contrast to the literal “wilderness of Egypt” (^{אֶזְכִּיאל}Ezekiel 20:36), “the wilderness of the peoples” is their *spiritual* wilderness period of trial, discipline, and purification while exiled among the nations. As the state when they are “brought into the wilderness of the peoples” and that when they were among the peoples “from” which God was to “bring them out” (^{אֶזְכִּיאל}Ezekiel 20:34) are distinguished, the wilderness state probably answers partially to the transition period of discipline from the first decree for their restoration by Cyrus to the time of their complete settlement in their land, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. But the full and final fulfillment is future; the wilderness state will comprise not only the transition period of their restoration, but the beginning of their occupancy of Palestine, a time in which they shall endure the sorest of all their chastisements, to “purge out the rebels” (^{אֶזְכִּיאל}Ezekiel 20:38 ^{דָּנִיֵּאל}Daniel 12:1); and then the remnant (Zechariah 13:8,9 14:2,3) shall “all serve God in the land” (^{אֶזְכִּיאל}Ezekiel 20:40). Thus the wilderness period does not denote *locality*, but their *state* intervening between their rejection and future restoration.

plead — bring the matter in debate between us to an issue. Image is from a plaintiff in a law court meeting the defendant “face to face.” Appropriate, as God in His dealings acts not arbitrarily, but in most *righteous justice* (^{אֶזְכִּיאל}Jeremiah 2:9 Micah 6:2).

36. (^{בְּרָאשִׁית}Numbers 14:21-29). Though God saved them out of Egypt, He afterwards destroyed in the wilderness them that believed not (^{אֶזְכִּיאל}Jude 1:5); so, though He brought the exiles out of Babylon, yet their wilderness state of chastening discipline continued even after they were again in Canaan.

37. *pass under the rod* — metaphor from a shepherd who makes his sheep *pass under his rod* in counting them (^{<0273>}Leviticus 27:32 ^{<4313>}Jeremiah 33:13). Whether you will or not, ye shall be counted as Mine, and so shall be subjected to My chastening discipline (^{<3074>}Micah 7:14), with a view to My ultimate saving of the chosen remnant (compare ^{<6127>}John 10:27-29).

bond of ... covenant — I will constrain you by sore chastisements to submit yourselves to the *covenant* to which ye are lastingly *bound*, though now you have cast away God's bond from you. Fulfilled in part, ^{<608>}Nehemiah 9:8,26,32-38 10:1-39; fully hereafter (^{<2540>}Isaiah 54:10-13 52:1,2).

38. (Zechariah 13:9 14:2).

purge out — or, “separate.” *Hebrew, barothi*, forming a designed alliteration with “*berith*,” *the covenant*; not a promise of grace, but a threat against those Jews who thought they could in exile escape the observation and “rule” of God.

land of Israel — Though brought out of the country of their sojourn or exile (Babylon formerly, and the various lands of their exile hereafter) into the literal land of *Palestine*, even it shall be to them an exile state, “they shall not enter into the land of *Israel*,” that is, the spiritual state of restored favor of God to His covenant people, which shall only be given to the remnant to be saved (Zechariah 13:8,9).

39. Equivalent to, “I would rather have you open idolaters than hypocrites, fancying you can worship Me and yet at the same time serve idols” (^{<3025>}Amos 5:21,22,25,26; compare ^{<1182>}1 Kings 18:21 ^{<1274>}2 Kings 17:41 ^{<1025>}Matthew 6:24 ^{<615>}Revelation 3:15,16).

Go ye, serve — This is not a *command* to serve idols, but a judicial declaration of God's giving up of the half-idol, half-Jehovah worshippers to utter idolatry, if they will not serve Jehovah alone (^{<5812>}Psalms 81:12 ^{<621>}Revelation 22:11).

hereafter also — God anticipates the same apostasy *afterwards*, as *now*.

40. *For* — Though ye, the rebellious portion, withdraw from My worship, others, even the believing remnant, will succeed after you perish, and will serve Me purely.

in mine holy mountain — (^{<2102>}Isaiah 2:2,3). Zion, or Moriah, “the height of Israel” (pre-eminent above all mountains because of the manifested presence of God there with *Israel*), as opposed to their “high places,” the worship on which was an abomination to God.

all — not merely individuals, such as constitute the elect Church now; but the whole *nation*, to be followed by the conversion of the Gentile *nations* (^{2310E}Isaiah 2:2, “all nations;” ^{4512E}Romans 11:26 ^{6611E}Revelation 11:15).

with — rather, “in all your holy things” [MAURER].

41. with — that is, in respect to your sweet savor (literally, “savor of rest,” see on ^{2369E}Ezekiel 16:19). Or, I will accept you (your worship) “as a sweet savor” [MAURER], (^{408E}Ephesians 5:2 ^{304E}Philippians 4:18). God first accepts the *person* in Messiah, then the *offering* (^{2340E}Ezekiel 20:40 ^{4004E}Genesis 4:4).

bring ... out from ... people, etc. — the same words as in ^{2318E}Ezekiel 20:34; but there applied to the bringing forth of the hypocrites, as well as the elect; here restricted to the saved remnant, who alone shall be at last restored literally and spiritually in the fullest sense.

sanctified in you before ... heathen — (^{2319E}Jeremiah 33:9). All the nations will acknowledge My power displayed in restoring you, and so shall be led to seek Me (^{2368E}Isaiah 66:18 ^{3344E}Zechariah 14:16-19).

43. there — not merely in exile when suffering punishment which makes even reprobates sorry for sin, but when received into favor *in your own land*.

remember — (^{236E}Ezekiel 16:61,63). The humiliation of Judah (^{430E}Nehemiah 9:1-38) is a type of the future penitence of the whole nation (^{231E}Hosea 5:15 6:1 ^{3320E}Zechariah 12:10-14). God’s goodness realized by the sinner is the only thing that leads to true repentance (^{238E}Hosea 3:5 ^{415E}Luke 7:37,38).

44. The *English Version* chapter ought to have ended here, and the twenty-first chapter begun with “Moreover,” etc. as in the *Hebrew Bible*.

for my name’s sake — (^{2322E}Ezekiel 36:22). Gratuitously; according to My compassion, not your merits. After having commented on this verse, CALVIN was laid on his death bed, and his commentary ended.

45-49. An introductory brief description in enigma of the destruction by fire and sword, detailed more explicitly in ^{2301E}Ezekiel 21:1-32.

46. south ... south ... south — three different *Hebrew* words, to express the certainty of the divine displeasure resting on the region specified. The third term is from a root meaning “dry,” referring to the sun’s heat in the south; representing the burning judgments of God on the southern parts of Judea, of which Jerusalem was the capital.

set thy face — determinately. The prophets used to turn themselves towards those who were to be the subjects of their prophecies.

drop — as the rain, which *flows* in a continuous stream, sometimes gently (^{<463E}Deuteronomy 32:2), sometimes violently (^{<307G}Amos 7:16 ^{<308B}Micah 2:6, *Margin*), as here.

forest — the densely populated country of Judea; trees representing people.

47. fire — every kind of judgment (^{<269D}Ezekiel 19:12 21:3, “my sword”; ^{<2214J}Jeremiah 21:14).

green tree ... dry — fit and unfit materials for fuel alike; “the righteous and the wicked,” as explained in ^{<320B}Ezekiel 21:3,4 ^{<423E}Luke 23:31. Unsparing universality of the judgment!

flaming flame — one continued and unextinguished flame. “The glowing flame” [FAIRBAIRN].

faces — persons; here the metaphor is merged in the reality.

49. Ezekiel complains that by this parabolic form of prophecy he only makes himself and it a jest to his countrymen. God therefore in ^{<320B}Ezekiel 21:1-32 permits him to express the same prophecy more plainly.

CHAPTER 21

EZEKIEL 21:1-32.

PROPHECY AGAINST ISRAEL AND JERUSALEM, AND AGAINST AMMON.

2. *the holy places* — the three parts of the temple: the courts, the holy place, and the holiest. If “synagogues” existed before the Babylonian captivity, as ^(1974B)Psalm 74:8 seems to imply, they and the *proseuchae*, or oratories, may be included in the “holy places” here.

3. *righteous ... wicked* — not contradictory of ^(2380H)Ezekiel 18:4,9 and ^(1182B)Genesis 18:23. Ezekiel here views the mere *outward* aspect of the indiscriminate universality of the national calamity. But *really* the same captivity to the “righteous” would prove a blessing as a wholesome discipline, which to the “wicked” would be an unmitigated punishment. The godly were sealed with a mark (^(2400H)Ezekiel 9:4), not for outward exemption from the common calamity, but as marked for the secret interpositions of Providence, overruling even evil to their good. The godly were by comparison so few, that not their salvation but the universality of the judgment is brought into view here.

4. The “sword” did not, literally, *slay* all; but the *judgments* of God by the foe swept through the land “from the south to the north.”

6. *with the breaking of thy loins* — as one afflicted with pleurisy; or as a woman, in labor-throes, clasps her loins in pain, and heaves and sighs till *the girdle of the loins is broken* by the violent action of the body (^(2300H)Jeremiah 30:6).

7. The abrupt sentences and mournful repetitions imply violent emotions.

9. *sword* — namely, of God (^(1624H)Deuteronomy 32:41). The Chaldeans are His instrument.

10. *to make a sore slaughter* — literally, “that killing it may kill.”

glitter — literally, “glitter as the lightning flash”: flashing terror into the foe.

should we ... make mirth — It is no time for levity when such a calamity is impending (^(2320D)Isaiah 22:12,13).

it contemneth the rod of my son, etc. — The sword has no more respect to the trivial “rod” or scepter of Judah (^{<0490>}Genesis 49:10) than if it were any common “tree.” “Tree” is the image retained from ^{<2047>}Ezekiel 20:47; explained in ^{<2102>}Ezekiel 21:2,3. God calls Judah “My son” (compare ^{<0022>}Exodus 4:22 ^{<2101>}Hosea 11:1). FAIRBAIRN arbitrarily translates, “Perchance the scepter of My son rejoiceth; it (the sword) despiseth every tree.”

11. *the slayer* — the Babylonian king in this case; in general, *all* the instruments of God’s wrath (^{<0615>}Revelation 19:15).

12. *terrors by reason of the sword*, etc. — rather, “they (the princes of Israel) are *delivered up to* the sword together with My people” [GLASSIUS].

smite ... upon ... thigh — a mark of grief (^{<2619>}Jeremiah 31:19).

13. *it is a trial* — rather, “There is a trial” being made: the sword of the Lord will subject all to the ordeal. “What, then, if it condemn even the rod” (scepter of Judah)? Compare as to a similar scourge of unsparing trial, ^{<0823>}Job 9:23.

it shall be no more — the scepter, that is, *the state*, must necessarily then come to an end. Fulfilled in part at the overthrow of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, but fully at the time of “Shiloh’s” (Messiah’s) coming (^{<0490>}Genesis 49:10), when Judea became a Roman province.

14. *smite ... hands together* — (^{<0240>}Numbers 24:10), indicative of the indignant fury with which God will “smite” the people.

sword ... doubled the third time — referring to the threefold calamity: —

- (1) The taking of Zedekiah (to whom the “rod,” or scepter, may refer);
- (2) the taking of the city;
- (3) the removal of all those who remained with Gedaliah.

“Doubled” means “multiplied” or “repeated.” The stroke shall be doubled and even trebled.

of the slain — that is, by which many are slain. As the *Hebrew* is *singular*, FAIRBAIRN makes it refer to the king, “the sword of the great one that is slain,” or “pierced through.”

entereth ... privy chambers — (^{<2421>}Jeremiah 9:21). The sword shall overtake them, not merely in the open battlefield, but in the chambers whither they flee to hide themselves (^{<1120>}1 Kings 20:30 22:25). MAURER

translates, “which *besieged* them”; FAIRBAIRN, “which penetrates to them.” *English Version* is more literal.

15. *point* — “the *whirling glance* of the sword” [FAIRBAIRN]. “The *naked* (bared) sword” [HENDERSON].

ruins — literally, “stumbling-blocks.” Their own houses and walls shall be stumbling-blocks in their way, whether they wish to fight or flee.

made bright — made to glitter.

wrapped, etc. — namely, in the hand of him who holds the hilt, or in its scabbard, that the edge may not be blunt when it is presently drawn forth to strike. GESENIUS, translates, “sharpened,” etc.

16. Apostrophe to the sword.

Go ... one way — or, “*Concentrate* thyself”; “*Unite* thy forces on the right hand” [GROTIUS]. The sword is commanded to take the nearest route for Jerusalem, “whither their face was set,” whether south or north (“right hand or left”), according to where the several parts of the Chaldean host may be.

or other, ... on the left — rather “*set thyself* on the left.” The verbs are well-chosen. The main “*concentration*” of forces was to be on “the right hand,” or *south*, the part of Judea in which Jerusalem was, and which lay south in marching from Babylon, whereas the Chaldean forces advancing on Jerusalem from Egypt, of which Jerusalem was north, were fewer, and therefore “set thyself” is the verb used.

17. Jehovah Himself smites His hands together, doing what He had commanded Ezekiel to do (see on ³²¹⁴Ezekiel 21:14), in token of His smiting Jerusalem; compare the similar symbolical action (¹²³⁸2 Kings 13:18,19).

cause ... fury to rest — give it full vent, and so satisfy it (²⁴⁵³Ezekiel 5:13).

19. *two ways* — The king coming from Babylon is represented in the graphic style of Ezekiel as reaching the point where the road branched off in two ways, one leading by the south, by Tadmor or Palmyra, to Rabbath of Ammon, east of Jordan; the other by the north, by Riblah in Syria, to Jerusalem — and hesitating which way to take. Ezekiel is told to “appoint the two ways” (as in ³⁰⁰³Ezekiel 4:1); for Nebuchadnezzar, though knowing no other control but his own will and superstition, had really this path “appointed” for him by the all-ruling God.

out of one land — namely, Babylon.

choose ... a place — literally “a hand.” So it is translated by FAIRBAIRN, “make a *finger-post*,” namely, at the head of the two ways, the hand post pointing Nebuchadnezzar to the way to Jerusalem as the way he should select. But MAURER rightly supports *English Version*. Ezekiel is told to “choose the place” where Nebuchadnezzar should do as is described in ⁽⁻⁰¹²⁰⁾Ezekiel 21:20,21; so entirely does God order by the prophet every particular of place and time in the movements of the invader.

20. Rabbath of the Ammonites — distinct from Rabbah in Judah (⁽⁻⁰¹²⁶⁾2 Samuel 12:26). Rabbath is put first, as it was from her that Jerusalem, that doomed city, had borrowed many of her idols.

to Judah in Jerusalem — instead of simply putting “Jerusalem,” to imply the sword was to come not merely to Judah, but to its people *within* Jerusalem, defended though it was; its defenses on which the Jews relied so much would not keep the foe out.

21. parting — literally, “mother of the way.” As “head of the two ways” follows, which seems tautology after “parting of the way,” HAVERNICK translates, according to *Arabic* idiom, “the highway,” or principal road. *English Version* is not tautology, “head of the two ways” defining more accurately “parting of the way.”

made ... bright — rather, “shook,” from an *Arabic* root.

arrows — Divination by arrows is here referred to: they were put into a quiver marked with the names of particular places to be attacked, and then *shaken* together; whichever came forth first intimated the one selected as the first to be attacked [JEROME]. The same usage existed among the Arabs, and is mentioned in the Koran. In the Nineveh sculptures the king is represented with a cup in his right hand, his left resting on a bow; also with two arrows in the right, and the bow in the left, probably practising divination.

images — *Hebrew*, “teraphim”; household gods, worshipped as family talismans, to obtain direction as to the future and other blessings. First mentioned in Mesopotamia, whence Rachel brought them (⁽⁻⁰¹³¹⁹⁾Genesis 31:19,34); put away by Jacob (⁽⁻⁰¹³³⁰⁾Genesis 35:4); set up by Micah as his household gods (⁽⁻⁰¹⁷⁰⁸⁾Judges 17:5); stigmatized as idolatry (⁽⁻⁰¹⁸⁵²⁾1 Samuel 15:23, *Hebrew*; Zechariah 10:2, *Margin*).

liver — They judged of the success, or failure, of an undertaking by the healthy, or unhealthy, state of the liver and entrails of a sacrifice.

22. Rather, “*In his right hand was [is] the divination,*” that is, he holds up in his right hand the arrow marked with “*Jerusalem,*” to encourage his army to march for it.

captains — The *Margin*, “*battering-rams,*” adopted by FAIRBAIRN, is less appropriate, for “*battering-rams*” follow presently after [GROTIUS].

open the mouth in ... slaughter — that is, commanding slaughter: raising the war cry of death. Not as GESENIUS, “*to open the mouth with the war shout.*”

23. Unto *the Jews*, though credulous of divinations when in their favor, Nebuchadnezzar’s divination “*shall be (seen) as false.*” This gives the reason which makes the Jews fancy themselves safe from the Chaldeans, namely, that they “*have sworn*” to the latter “*oaths*” of allegiance, forgetting that they had violated them (²⁶⁷¹³Ezekiel 17:13,15,16,18).

but he, etc. — *Nebuchadnezzar* will remember in consulting his idols that he swore to Zedekiah by them, but that Zedekiah broke the league [GROTIUS]. Rather, *God* will remember against them (⁶⁶⁶⁹Revelation 16:19) their violating their oath sworn by the true God, whereas Nebuchadnezzar kept his oath sworn by a false god; ²⁷²⁴Ezekiel 21:24 confirms this.

24. Their unfaithfulness to Nebuchadnezzar was a type of their general unfaithfulness to their covenant God.

with the hand — namely, of the king of Babylon.

25. *profane* — as having desecrated by idolatry and perjury his office as the Lord’s anointed. HAVERNICK translates, as in ²⁷¹⁴Ezekiel 21:14, “*slain,*” that is, not literally, but virtually; to Ezekiel’s idealizing view Zedekiah was the grand victim “*pierced through*” by God’s sword of judgment, as his sons were slain before his eyes, which were then put out, and he was led a captive in chains to Babylon. *English Version* is better: so GESENIUS (⁴⁸¹³²Chronicles 36:13 ⁴⁸¹⁰Jeremiah 52:2).

when iniquity shall have an end — (²⁷²⁹Ezekiel 21:29). When thine iniquity, having reached its last stage of guilt, shall be put an end to by judgment (⁴⁸¹⁵Ezekiel 35:5).

26. *diadem* — rather, “*the miter*” of the holy priest (⁴²⁸⁰Exodus 28:4 Zechariah 3:5). His priestly emblem as representative of the priestly people. Both this and “*the crown,*” the emblem of the kingdom, were to be removed, until they should be restored and united in the Mediator, Messiah (⁴⁸¹⁰²Psalms 110:2,4 ⁴⁸¹⁰³Zechariah 6:13), [FAIRBAIRN]. As, however, King

Zedekiah alone, not the high priest also, is referred to in the context, *English Version* is supported by GESENIUS.

this shall not be the same — The diadem shall not be as it was [ROSENMULLER]. Nothing shall remain what it was [FAIRBAIRN].

exalt ... low, ... abase ... high — not the general truth expressed (^{318B}Proverbs 3:34 ^{415E}Luke 1:52 ^{300E}James 4:6 ^{418E}1 Peter 5:5); but specially referring to Messiah and Zedekiah contrasted together. The “tender plant ... out of the dry ground” (^{250E}Isaiah 53:2) is to be “exalted” in the end (^{327E}Ezekiel 21:27); the now “high” representative on David’s throne, Zedekiah, is to be “abased.” The *outward* relations of things shall be made to change places in just retaliation on the people for having so perverted the *moral* relations of things [HENGSTENBERG].

27. Literally, “An overturning, overturning, overturning, will I make it.” The threefold repetition denotes the awful *certainty* of the event; not as ROSENMULLER explains, the overthrow of the *three*, Jehoiakim, Jeconiah, and Zedekiah; for Zedekiah alone is referred to.

it shall be no more, until he come whose fight it is — strikingly parallel to ^{440E}Genesis 49:10. Nowhere shall there be rest or permanence; all things shall be in fluctuation until He comes who, as the rightful Heir, shall restore the throne of David that fell with Zedekiah. The *Hebrew* for “right” is “judgment”; it perhaps includes, besides the *right* to rule, the idea of His rule being one in *righteousness* (^{474E}Psalms 72:2 ^{200E}Isaiah 9:6,7 11:4 ^{691E}Revelation 19:11). Others (Nebuchadnezzar, etc.), who held the rule of the earth delegated to them by God, abused it by unrighteousness, and so forfeited the “right.” He both has the truest “right” to the rule, and exercises it in “right.” It is true the *tribal* “scepter” continued with Judah “till Shiloh came” (^{440E}Genesis 49:10); but there was no *kingly* scepter till Messiah came, as the *spiritual* King then (^{483E}John 18:36,37); this spiritual kingdom being about to pass into the *literal, personal* kingdom over Israel at His second coming, when, and not before, this prophecy shall have its exhaustive fulfillment (^{413E}Luke 1:32,33 ^{248E}Jeremiah 3:17 10:7; “To thee doth it appertain”).

28. Lest Ammon should think to escape because Nebuchadnezzar had taken the route to Jerusalem, Ezekiel denounces judgment against Ammon, without the prospect of a restoration such as awaited Israel. ^{240E}Jeremiah 49:6, it is true, speaks of a “bringing again of its captivity,” but this probably refers to its *spiritual* restoration under Messiah; or, if referring to it *politically*, must refer to but a partial restoration at the downfall of Babylon under Cyrus.

their reproach — This constituted a leading feature in their guilt; they treated with proud contumely the covenant-people after the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (^{<328>}Ezekiel 25:3,6 Zephaniah 2:9,10), and appropriated Israel's territory (^{<340>}Jeremiah 49:1 ^{<3100>}Amos 1:13-15).

furbished, to consume — MAURER punctuates thus, "Drawn for the slaughter, it is furbished to devour ('consume'), to glitter." *English Version*, "to consume because of the glittering," means, "to consume *by reason of the lightning, flash-like rapidity* with which it falls." Five years after the fall of Jerusalem, Ammon was destroyed for aiding Ishmael in usurping the government of Judea against the will of the king of Babylon (^{<255>}2 Kings 25:25 ^{<3415>}Jeremiah 41:15) [GROTIUS].

29. *see vanity ... divine a lie* — Ammon, too, had false diviners who flattered them with assurances of safety; the only result of which will be to "bring Ammon upon the necks," etc., that is, to add the Ammonites to the *headless trunks* of the slain of Judah, whose bad example Ammon followed, and "whose day" of visitation for their guilt "is come."

when their iniquity shall have an end — See on ^{<3025>}Ezekiel 21:25.

30. *Shall I cause it to return into his sheath* — namely, without first destroying Ammon. Certainly not (^{<3405>}Jeremiah 47:6,7). Others, as the *Margin*, less suitably read it imperatively, "Cause it to return," that is, after it has done the work appointed to it.

in the land of thy nativity — Ammon was not to be carried away captive as Judah, but to perish in his own land.

31. *blow against thee in*, etc. — rather, "blow upon thee with the fire," etc. Image from smelting metals (^{<3221>}Ezekiel 22:20,21).

brutish — ferocious.

skillful to destroy — literally, "artificers of destruction"; alluding to ^{<2546>}Isaiah 54:16.

32. *thy blood shall be* — that is, shall flow.

be no more remembered — be consigned as a nation to oblivion.

CHAPTER 22

EZEKIEL 22:1-31.

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE SINFULNESS OF JERUSALEM.

Repetition of the charges in the twentieth chapter only that there they were stated in an historical review of the *past* and present; here the *present* sins of the nation exclusively are brought forward.

2. See ^{<3104>}Ezekiel 20:4; that is, “Wilt thou *not* judge?” etc. (compare ^{<3236>}Ezekiel 23:36).

the bloody city — literally, “the city of bloods”; so called on account of murders perpetrated in her, and sacrifices of children to Molech (^{<3218>}Ezekiel 22:3,4,6,9 24:6,9).

3. **sheddeth blood ... that her time may come** — Instead of deriving advantage from her bloody sacrifices to idols, she only thereby brought on herself “the time” of her punishment.

against herself — (^{<3089>}Proverbs 8:36).

4. **thy days** — the shorter period, namely, that of the *siege*.

thy years — the longer period of the *captivity*. The “days” and “years” express that she is ripe for punishment.

5. **infamous** — They mockingly call thee, “Thou polluted one in name (*Margin*), and full of confusion” [FAIRBAIRN], (referring to the tumultuous violence prevalent in it). Thus the nations “far and near” mocked her as at once sullied in character and in actual fact lawless. What a sad contrast to the Jerusalem once designated “the holy city!”

6. Rather, “The princes ... each according to his power, were in thee, to shed blood” (as if this was the only object of their existence). “Power,” literally, “arm”; they, who ought to have been patterns of justice, made their own arm of might their only law.

7. **set light by** — Children have made light of, disrespected, father ... (^{<3276>}Deuteronomy 27:16). At ^{<3217>}Ezekiel 22:7-12 are enumerated the sins committed in violation of Moses’ law.

9. **men that carry tales** — *informers*, who by misrepresentations cause innocent blood to be shed (⁴⁸⁹⁶Leviticus 19:16). Literally, “one who goes to and fro as a *merchant*.”
10. **set apart for pollution** — that is, set apart *as unclean* (⁴⁸⁸⁹Leviticus 18:19).
11. **forgotten me** — (⁴⁵²⁸Deuteronomy 32:18 ⁴¹²⁹Jeremiah 2:32 3:21).
12. **smitten mine hand** — in token of the indignant vengeance which I will execute on thee (see on ⁴²¹⁷Ezekiel 21:17).
13. (⁴²¹⁰Ezekiel 21:7).
14. **consume thy filthiness out of thee** — the object of God in scattering the Jews.
15. **take thine inheritance in thyself** — Formerly thou wast Mine inheritance; but now, full of guilt, thou art no longer Mine, but *thine own inheritance to thyself*; “in the sight of the heathen,” that is, even they shall see that, now that thou hast become a captive, thou art no longer owned as Mine [VATABLUS]. FAIRBAIRN and others needlessly take the *Hebrew* from a different root, “thou shalt be *polluted by* (‘in,’ [HENDERSON]) *thyself*,” etc.; the heathen shall regard thee as a polluted thing, who hast brought thine own reproach on thyself.
16. **dross ... brass** — Israel has become a worthless compound of the dross of silver (implying not merely corruption, but *degeneracy* from good to bad, ⁴²¹²Isaiah 1:22, especially offensive) and of the baser metals. Hence the people must be thrown into the furnace of judgment, that the bad may be consumed, and the good separated (⁴¹⁶⁹Jeremiah 6:29,30).
17. From this verse to the end he shows the general corruption of all ranks.
18. **land ... not cleansed** — not cleared or cultivated; all a scene of desolation; a fit emblem of the moral wilderness state of the people.
- nor rained upon** — a mark of divine “indignation”; as the early and latter rain, on which the productiveness of the land depended, was one of the great covenant blessings. Joel (⁴¹²³Joel 2:23) promises the return of the former and latter rain, with the restoration of God’s favor.
19. **conspiracy** — The false prophets have conspired both to propagate error and to oppose the messages of God’s servants. *They* are mentioned first, as their bad influence extended the widest.

prey — Their aim was greed of gain, “treasure, and precious things” (^{<3069>}Hosea 6:9 ^{<3069>}Zephaniah 3:3,4 ^{<3069>}Matthew 23:14).

made ... many widows — by occasioning, through false prophecies, the war with the Chaldeans in which the husbands fell.

26. Her priests — whose “lips should have kept knowledge” (Malachi 2:7).

violated — not simply *transgressed*; but, *have done violence to* the law, by wresting it to wrong ends, and putting wrong constructions on it.

put no difference between the holy and profane, etc. — made no distinction between the clean and unclean (^{<3000>}Leviticus 10:10), the Sabbath and other days, sanctioning violations of that holy day. “Holy” means, *what is dedicated to God*; “profane,” *what is in common use*; “unclean,” *what is forbidden to be eaten*; “clean,” *what is lawful to be eaten*.

I am profaned among them — They abuse My name to false or unjust purposes.

27. princes — who should have employed the influence of their position for the people’s welfare, made “gain” their sole aim.

wolves — notorious for fierce and ravening cruelty (^{<3000>}Micah 3:2,3,9-11 ^{<3000>}John 10:12).

28. Referring to the false assurances of peace with which the prophets flattered the people, that they should not submit to the king of Babylon (see on ^{<3000>}Ezekiel 13:10; ^{<3000>}Ezekiel 21:29 ^{<3000>}Jeremiah 6:14 23:16,17 27:9,10).

29. The people — put last, after the mention of those in office. Corruption had spread downwards through the whole community.

wrongfully — that is, “without cause,” gratuitously, without the stranger proselyte giving any just provocation; nay, he of all others being one who ought to have been won to the worship of Jehovah by kindness, instead of being alienated by oppression; especially as the Israelites were commanded to remember that they themselves had been “strangers in Egypt” (^{<0222>}Exodus 22:21 23:9).

30. the hedge — the wall (see on ^{<3000>}Ezekiel 13:5); image for *leading the people to repentance*.

the gap — the breach (^{<0463>}Psalms 106:23); image for *interceding between the people and God* (^{<0207>}Genesis 20:7 ^{<0207>}Exodus 32:11 ^{<0468>}Numbers 16:48).

I found none — (^{2410E}Jeremiah 5:1) — not that literally there was not a righteous man in the city. For Jeremiah, Baruch, etc., were still there; but Jeremiah had been forbidden to pray for the people (^{2411E}Jeremiah 11:14), as being doomed to wrath. None now, of the godly, knowing the desperate state of the people, and God’s purpose as to them, was *willing* longer to interpose between God’s wrath and them. And none “among them,” that is, among those just enumerated as guilty of such sins (^{2422E}Ezekiel 22:25-29), was morally *able* for such an office.

31. *their own way ... recompensed upon their heads* — (^{2430E}Ezekiel 9:10 11:21 16:43 ^{2403E}Proverbs 1:31 ^{2481E}Isaiah 3:11 ^{2469E}Jeremiah 6:19).

CHAPTER 23

EZEKIEL 23:1-49.

ISRAEL'S AND JUDAH'S SIN AND PUNISHMENT ARE PARABOLICALLY PORTRAYED UNDER THE NAMES AHOLAH AND AHOLIBAH.

The imagery is similar to that in the sixteenth chapter; but here the reference is not as there so much to the breach of the spiritual marriage covenant with God by the people's *idolatries*, as by their *worldly spirit*, and their trusting to alliances with the heathen for safety, rather than to God.

2. *two ... of one mother* — Israel and Judah, one nation by birth from the same ancestress, Sarah.

3. Even so early in their history as their Egyptian sojourn, they committed idolatries (see on ^{<3310>}Ezekiel 20:6-8; ^{<6344>}Joshua 24:14).

in their youth — an aggravation of their sin. It was at the very time of their receiving extraordinary favors from God (^{<2361>}Ezekiel 16:6,22).

they bruised — namely, the Egyptians.

4. *Aholah* — that is, “*Her tent*” (put for *worship*, as the first worship of God in Israel was in a *tent* or tabernacle), as contrasted with Aholibah, that is, “*My tent in her.*” The Beth-el worship of Samaria was of *her own* devising, not of God's appointment; the temple-worship of Jerusalem was expressly *appointed by Jehovah*, who “dwelt” there, “setting up His tabernacle among the people as His” (^{<0238>}Exodus 25:8 ^{<0331>}Leviticus 26:11,12 ^{<0529>}Joshua 22:19 ^{<0703>}Psalms 76:2).

the elder — Samaria is called “the elder” because she preceded Judah in her apostasy and its punishment.

they were mine — Previous to apostasy under Jeroboam, Samaria (Israel, or the ten tribes), equally with Judah, worshipped the true God. God therefore never renounced the right over Israel, but sent prophets, as Elijah and Elisha, to declare His will to them.

5. *when ... mine* — literally, “under Me,” that is, subject to Me as her lawful husband.

neighbors — On the northeast the kingdom of Israel bordered on that of Assyria; for the latter had occupied much of Syria. Their neighborhood in locality was emblematical of their being near in corruption of morals and worship. The *alliances* of Israel with Assyria, which are the chief subject of reprobation here, tended to this (^{<1259>}2 Kings 15:19 16:7,9 17:3 ^{<2089>}Hosea 8:9).

6. blue — rather, “purple” [FAIRBAIRN]. As a lustful woman’s passions are fired by showy dress and youthful appearance in men, so Israel was seduced by the pomp and power of Assyria (compare ^{<2089>}Isaiah 10:8).

horsemen — cavaliers.

7. all their idols — There was nothing that she refused to her lovers.

8. whoredoms brought from Egypt — the calves set up in Daniel and Beth-el by Jeroboam, answering to the Egyptian bull-formed idol Apis. Her *alliances* with Egypt *politically* are also meant (^{<2302>}Isaiah 30:2,3 31:1). The ten tribes probably resumed the Egyptian rites, in order to enlist the Egyptians against Judah (^{<4422>}2 Chronicles 12:2-4).

9. God, in righteous retribution, turned their objects of trust into the instruments of their punishment: Pul, Tiglath-pileser, Esar-haddon, and Shalmaneser (^{<1259>}2 Kings 15:19,29 17:3,6,24 ^{<1504>}Ezra 4:2,10). “It was their sin to have sought after such lovers, and it was to be their punishment that these lovers should become their destroyers” [FAIRBAIRN].

10. became famous — literally, “she became a name,” that is, as notorious by her punishment as she had been by her sins, so as to be quoted as a *warning* to others.

women — that is, neighboring peoples.

11. Judah, the southern kingdom, though having the “warning” (see on ^{<2520>}Ezekiel 23:10) of the northern kingdom before her eyes, instead of profiting by it, went to even greater lengths in corruption than Israel. Her greater spiritual privileges made her guilt the greater (^{<2564>}Ezekiel 16:47,51 ^{<2481>}Jeremiah 3:11).

12. (^{<2236>}Ezekiel 23:6,23).

most gorgeously — literally, “to perfection.” GROTIUS translates, “wearing a crown,” or “chaplet,” such as lovers wore in visiting their mistresses.

13. one way — both alike forsaking God for heathen confidences.

14. *vermilion* — the peculiar color of the Chaldeans, as purple was of the Assyrians. In striking agreement with this verse is the fact that the Assyrian sculptures lately discovered have painted and colored bas-reliefs in red, blue, and black. The Jews (for instance Jehoiakim, ^{<2014>}Jeremiah 22:14) copied these (compare ^{<180>}Ezekiel 8:10).

15. *exceeding in dyed attire* — rather, “in ample dyed *turbans*”; literally, “redundant with dyed turbans.” The Assyrians delighted in ample, flowing, and richly colored tunics, scarfs, girdles, and head-dresses or turbans, varying in ornaments according to the rank.

Chaldea, ... land of their nativity — between the Black and Caspian Seas (see on ^{<2313>}Isaiah 23:13).

princes — literally, a first-rate military class that fought by threes in the chariots, one guiding the horses, the other two fighting.

16. *sent messengers ... into Chaldea* — (^{<3169>}Ezekiel 16:29). It was she that solicited the Chaldeans, not they her. Probably the occasion was when Judah sought to strengthen herself by a Chaldean alliance against a menaced attack by Egypt (compare ^{<2392>}2 Kings 23:29-35 24:1-7). God made the object of their sinful desire the instrument of their punishment. Jehoiakim, probably by a stipulation of tribute, enlisted Nebuchadnezzar against Pharaoh, whose tributary he previously had been; failing to keep his stipulation, he brought on himself Nebuchadnezzar’s vengeance.

17. *alienated from them* — namely, from the Chaldeans: turning again to the Egyptians (^{<3319>}Ezekiel 23:19), trying by their help to throw off her solemn engagements to Babylon (compare ^{<3175>}Jeremiah 37:5,7 ^{<2417>}2 Kings 24:7).

18. *my mind was alienated from her* — literally, “was broken off from her.” Just retribution for “her mind being alienated (broken off) from the Chaldeans” (^{<3317>}Ezekiel 23:17), to whom she had sworn fealty (^{<3372>}Ezekiel 17:12-19). “Discovered” implies the open shamelessness of her apostasy.

19. Israel first “called” her lusts, practiced when in Egypt, “to her (fond remembrance,” and then actually returned to them. Mark the danger of suffering the memory to dwell on the pleasure felt in past sins.

20. *their paramours* — that is, her paramours *among them* (the Egyptians); she doted upon their persons as her paramours (^{<3316>}Ezekiel 23:5,12,16).

flesh — the *membrum virile* (very large in the ass). Compare ^{<1831D>}Leviticus 15:2, *Margin*; ^{<3369>}Ezekiel 16:26.

issue of horses — the seminal issue. The horse was made by the Egyptians the hieroglyphic for a lustful person.

21. *calledst to remembrance* — “didst repeat” [MAURER].

in bruising — in suffering ... to be bruised.

22. *lovers ... alienated* — (²³¹⁷Ezekiel 23:17). Illicit love, soon or late, ends in open hatred (¹⁰³⁵²Samuel 13:15). The Babylonians, the objects formerly of their God-forgetting love, but now, with characteristic fickleness, objects of their hatred, shall be made by God the instruments of their punishment.

23. *Pekod*, etc. — (²⁸²¹Jeremiah 50:21). Not a geographical name, but descriptive of Babylon. “Visitation,” peculiarly the *land of “judgment”*; in a double sense: *actively*, the inflicter of judgment on Judah; *passively*, as about to be afterwards herself the object of judgment.

Shoa ... Koa — “rich ... noble”; descriptive of Babylon in her prosperity, having all the world’s wealth and dignity at her disposal. MAURER suggests that, as descriptive appellatives are subjoined to the proper name, “all the Assyrians” in the second hemistich of the verse (as the verse ought to be divided at “Koa”), so Pekod, Shoa, and Koa must be appellatives descriptive of “The Babylonians and ... Chaldeans” in the first hemistich; “Pekod” meaning “prefects”; Shoa ... Koa, “rich ... princely.”

desirable young men — strong irony. Alluding to ²³¹²Ezekiel 23:12, these “desirable young men” whom thou didst so “dote upon” for their manly vigor of appearance, shall by that very vigor be the better able to chastise thee.

24. *with chariots* — or, “with armaments”; so the *Septuagint*; “axes” [MAURER]; or, joining it with “wagons,” translate, “with *scythe-armed* wagons,” or “chariots” [GROTIUS].

weels — The unusual height of these increased their formidable appearance (²¹¹⁶Ezekiel 1:16-20).

their judgments — which awarded barbarously severe punishments (²⁸¹⁹Jeremiah 52:9 29:22).

25. *take away thy nose ... ears* — Adulteresses were punished so among the Egyptians and Chaldeans. Oriental beauties wore ornaments in the ear and nose. How just the retribution, that the features most bejewelled should be mutilated! So, allegorically as to Judah, the spiritual adulteress.

26. *strip ... of ... clothes* — whereby she attracted her paramours (²³⁶⁹Ezekiel 16:39).

27. Thus ... make ... lewdness to cease — The captivity has made the Jews ever since abhor idolatry, not only on their return from Babylon, but for the last nineteen centuries of their dispersion, as foretold (^{<3804>}Hosea 3:4).

28. (^{<3237>}Ezekiel 23:17,18 16:37).

29. take away ... thy labor — that is, the fruits of thy labor.

leave thee naked — as captive females are treated.

31. her cup — of punishment (^{<5106>}Psalm 11:6 75:8 ^{<2515>}Jeremiah 25:15, etc.). Thy guilt and that of Israel being alike, your punishment shall be alike.

34. break ... sherds — So greedily shalt thou suck out every drop like one drinking to madness (the effect invariably ascribed to drinking God's cup of wrath, ^{<2517>}Jeremiah 51:7 ^{<3126>}Habakkuk 2:16) that thou shalt crunch the very shreds of it; that is, there shall be no evil left which thou shalt not taste.

pluck off thine own breasts — enraged against them as the ministers to thine adultery.

35. forgotten me — (^{<2423>}Jeremiah 2:32 13:25).

cast me behind thy back — (^{<1149>}1 Kings 14:9 ^{<3625>}Nehemiah 9:26).

bear ... thy lewdness — that is, its penal consequences (^{<2033>}Proverbs 1:31).

36-44. A summing up of the sins of the two sisters, especially those of Judah.

wilt thou judge — Wilt thou (not) judge (see on ^{<2304>}Ezekiel 20:4)?

38. the same day — On the very day that they had burned their children to Molech in the valley of Gehenna, they shamelessly and hypocritically presented themselves as worshippers in Jehovah's temple (^{<2008>}Jeremiah 7:9,10).

40. messenger was sent — namely, by Judah (^{<2516>}Ezekiel 23:16 ^{<2509>}Isaiah 57:9).

paintedst ... eyes — (^{<1282>}2 Kings 9:30, *Margin*; ^{<2403>}Jeremiah 4:30). Black paint was spread on the eyelids of beauties to make the white of the eye more attractive by the contrast, so Judah left no seductive art untried.

41. bed — divan. While men reclined at table, women sat, as it seemed indelicate for them to lie down (^{<3104>}Amos 6:4) [GROTIUS].

table — that is, the idolatrous altar.

mine incense — which I had given thee, and which thou oughtest to have offered to Me (^{<3168>}Ezekiel 16:18,19 ^{<3168>}Hosea 2:8; compare ^{<3177>}Proverbs 7:17).

42. *Sabeans* — Not content with the princely, handsome Assyrians, the sisters brought to themselves the rude robber hordes of *Sabeans* (^{<3115>}Job 1:15). The *Keri*, or *Margin*, reads “drunkards.”

upon their hands — upon the hands of the sisters, that is, they allured Samaria and Judah to worship their gods.

43. *Will they*, etc. — Is it possible that paramours will desire any longer to commit whoredoms with so worn-out an old adulteress?

45. *the righteous men* — the Chaldeans; the executioners of God’s righteous vengeance (^{<3168>}Ezekiel 16:38), not that they were “righteous” in themselves (Habakkuk 1:3,12,13).

46. *a company* — properly, “a council of judges” passing sentence on a criminal [GROTIUS]. The “removal” and “spoiling” by the Chaldean army is the execution of the judicial sentence of God.

47. *stones* — the legal penalty of the adulteress (^{<3164>}Ezekiel 16:40,41 ^{<3165>}John 8:5). Answering to the *stones* hurled by the Babylonians from engines in besieging Jerusalem.

houses ... fire — fulfilled (^{<3172>}2 Chronicles 36:17,19).

48. (^{<3227>}Ezekiel 23:27).

that all ... may be taught not to do, etc. — (^{<3131>}Deuteronomy 13:11).

49. *bear the sins of your idols* — that is, the punishment of your idolatry.

know that I am the Lord God — that is, know it to your cost ... by bitter suffering.

CHAPTER 24

EZEKIEL 24:1-27.

VISION OF THE BOILING CALDRON, AND OF THE DEATH OF EZEKIEL'S WIFE.

1, 2. Ezekiel proves his divine mission by announcing the very day, (“this same day”) of the beginning of the investment of the city by Nebuchadnezzar; “the ninth year,” namely, of Jehoiachin’s captivity, “the tenth day of the tenth month”; though he was three hundred miles away from Jerusalem among the captives at the Chebar (^{2K}2 Kings 25:1 ^JJeremiah 39:1).

2. *set himself* — *laid siege*; “lay against.”

3. *pot* — caldron. Alluding to the self-confident proverb used among the people, ^EEzekiel 11:3 (see on ^EEzekiel 11:3), “This city is the caldron and we be the flesh”; your proverb shall prove awfully true, but in a different sense from what you intend. So far from the city proving an iron, caldron-like defense from the fire, it shall be as a caldron set on the fire, and the people as so many pieces of meat subjected to boiling heat. See ^JJeremiah 1:13.

4. *pieces thereof* — those which properly *belong to it, as its own*.

every good piece ... choice bones — that is the most distinguished of the people. The “choice bones” *in* the pot have flesh adhering to them. The bones *under* the pot (^EEzekiel 24:5) are those having no flesh and used as fuel, answering to the poorest who suffer first, and are put out of pain sooner than the rich who endure what answers to the slower process of boiling.

5. *burn ... bones* — rather, “*pile* the bones.” Literally, “Let there be a *round* pile of the bones.”

therein — literally, “in the midst of it.”

6. *scum* — not ordinary, but *poisonous scum*, that is, the people’s all-pervading wickedness.

bring it out piece by piece — “it,” the contents of the pot; its flesh, that is, “I will destroy the people of the city, not all at the same time, but by a series of successive attacks.” Not as FAIRBAIRN, “on its every piece let it (the poisonous scum) go forth.”

let no lot fall upon it — that is, no lot, such as is sometimes cast, to decide who are to be destroyed and who saved (^{<082>}2 Samuel 8:2 ^{<2983>}Joel 3:3 ^{<3011>}Obadiah 1:11 Na 3:10). In former carryings away of captives, lots were cast to settle who were to go, and who to stay, but now all alike are to be cast out without distinction of rank, age, or sex.

7. upon the top of a rock — or, “the dry, bare, exposed rock,” so as to be conspicuous to all. Blood poured on a rock is not so soon absorbed as blood poured on the earth. The law ordered the blood even of a beast or fowl to be “covered with the dust” (^{<08713>}Leviticus 17:13); but Jerusalem was so shameless as to be at no pains to cover up the blood of innocent men slain in her. *Blood*, as the consummation of all sin, presupposes every other form of guilt.

8. That it might cause — God *purpose*ly let her so shamelessly pour the blood on the bare rock, “*that it might*” the more loudly and openly cry for vengeance from on high; and that the connection between the guilt and the punishment might be the more palpable. The blood of Abel, though the ground received it, still cries to heaven for vengeance (^{<00410>}Genesis 4:10,11); much more blood shamelessly exposed on the bare rock.

set her blood — She *shall* be paid back in kind (^{<402>}Matthew 7:2). She openly shed blood, and her blood shall openly be shed.

9. the pile for fire — the hostile materials for the city’s destruction.

10. spice it well — that the meat may be the more palatable, that is, I will make the foe delight in its destruction as much as one delights in well-seasoned, savory meat. GROTIUS, needlessly departing from the obvious sense, translates, “Let it be boiled down to a compound.”

11. set it empty ... that ... brass ... may burn, ... that ... scum ... may be consumed — Even the consumption of the contents is not enough; the caldron itself which is infected by the poisonous scum must be destroyed, that is, the city itself must be destroyed, not merely the inhabitants, just as the very house infected with leprosy was to be destroyed (^{<1848>}Leviticus 14:34-45).

12. herself — rather, “she hath wearied *Me* out with lies”; or rather, “with vain labors” on My part to purify her without being obliged to have recourse to judgments (compare ^{<2438>}Isaiah 43:24 ^{<3017>}Malachi 2:17)

[MAURER]. However, *English Version* gives a good sense (compare ²³⁷¹³Isaiah 47:13 57:10).

13. *lewdness* — determined, deliberate wickedness; from a *Hebrew* root, “to purpose.”

I have purged thee — that is, I have left nothing untried which would tend towards purging thee, by sending prophets to invite thee to repentance, by giving thee the law with all its promises, privileges, and threats.

thou shalt not be purged ... any more — that is, by My gracious interpositions; thou shalt be left to thine own course to take its fatal consequences.

14. *go back* — desist; relax [FAIRBAIRN].

15. Second part of the vision; announcement of the death of Ezekiel’s wife, and prohibition of the usual signs of mourning.

16. *desire of ... eyes* — his wife: representing the sanctuary (²³²⁰¹Ezekiel 24:21) in which the Jews so much gloried. The energy and subordination of Ezekiel’s whole life to his prophetic office is strikingly displayed in this narrative of his wife’s death. It is the only memorable event of his personal history which he records, and this only in reference to his soul-absorbing work. His natural tenderness is shown by that graphic touch, “the desire of thine eyes.” What amazing subjection, then, of his individual feeling to his prophetic duty is manifested in the simple statement (²³²⁴⁸Ezekiel 24:18), “So I spake ... in the morning; and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.”

stroke — a sudden visitation. The suddenness of it enhances the self-control of Ezekiel in so entirely merging individual feeling, which must have been especially acute under such trying circumstances, in the higher claims of duty to God.

17. *Forbear to cry* — or, “Lament in silence”; not forbidding sorrow, but the *loud expression* of it [GROTIUS].

no mourning — typical of the universality of the ruin of Jerusalem, which would preclude mourning, such as is usual where calamity is but partial. “The dead” is purposely put in the *plural*, as referring ultimately to the *dead* who should perish at the taking of Jerusalem; though the *singular* might have been expected, as Ezekiel’s wife was the immediate subject referred to: “make no mourning,” *such as is usual*, “for *the dead*, and such as shall be hereafter in Jerusalem” (²³⁴⁰⁵Jeremiah 16:5-7).

tire of thine head — thy headdress [FAIRBAIRN]. JEROME explains, “Thou shalt retain the hair which is usually cut in mourning.” The fillet, binding the hair about the temples like a chaplet, was laid aside at such times. Uncovering the head was an ordinary sign of mourning in priests; whereas others covered their heads in mourning (⁴⁰⁵⁹2 Samuel 15:30). The reason was, the priests had their headdress of fine twined linen given them for ornament, and as a badge of office. The high priest, as having on his head the holy anointing oil, was forbidden in *any* case to lay aside his headdress. But the priests might do so in the case of the death of the nearest relatives (⁴⁸¹⁰Leviticus 21:2,3,10). They then put on inferior attire, sprinkling also on their heads dust and ashes (compare ⁴⁸⁰⁹Leviticus 10:6,7).

shoes upon thy feet — whereas mourners went “barefoot” (⁴⁰⁵⁹2 Samuel 15:30).

cover not ... lips — rather, the “upper lip,” with the moustache (⁴⁸³⁴Leviticus 13:45 ⁴³⁰⁷Micah 3:7).

bread of men — the bread usually brought to mourners by friends in token of sympathy. So the “cup of consolation” brought (²⁴⁰⁷Jeremiah 16:7). “Of men” means such as is usually furnished *by men*. So ⁴³⁸¹Isaiah 8:1, “a man’s pen”; ⁴⁶¹⁷Revelation 21:17, “the measure of a man.”

19. *what these things are to us* — The people perceive that Ezekiel’s strange conduct has a symbolical meaning as to themselves; they ask, “What is that meaning?”

21. *excellency of your strength* — (compare ⁴³⁰⁸Amos 6:8). The object of your pride and confidence (²⁴⁰⁴Jeremiah 7:4,10,14).

desire of ... eyes — (⁴⁹⁷⁴Psalms 27:4). The antitype to Ezekiel’s wife (⁴²⁴⁰Ezekiel 24:16).

pitieth — loveth, as pity is akin to love: “yearned over.”

Profane — an appropriate word. They had profaned the temple with idolatry; God, in just retribution, will profane it with the Chaldean sword, that is, lay it in the dust, as Ezekiel’s wife.

sons ... daughters ... left — the children *left* behind in Judea, when the parents were carried away.

22. (²⁴⁰⁶Jeremiah 16:6,7). So general shall be the calamity, that all ordinary usages of mourning shall be suspended.

23. *ye shall not mourn ... but ... pine away for your iniquities* — The Jews’ not mourning was to be not the result of insensibility, any more than

Ezekiel's not mourning for his wife was not from want of feeling. They could not in their exile manifest publicly their lamentation, but they would privately "mourn *one to another*." Their "iniquities" would then be their chief sorrow ("pining away"), as feeling that these were the cause of their sufferings (compare ^{<4139>}Leviticus 26:39 ^{<2139>}Lamentations 3:39). The fullest fulfillment is still future (^{<3207>}Zechariah 12:10-14).

24. *sign* — a typical representative in his own person of what was to befall them (^{<2108>}Isaiah 20:3).

when this cometh — alluding probably to their taunt, as if God's word spoken by His prophets would never come to pass. "Where is the word of the Lord? Let it *come* now" (^{<2475>}Jeremiah 17:15). When the prophecy is fulfilled, "ye shall know (to your cost) that I am the Lord," who thereby show My power and fulfill My word spoken by My prophet (^{<4139>}John 13:19 14:29).

25, 26. "The day" referred to in these verses is the day of the overthrow of the temple, when the fugitive "escapes." But "that day," in ^{<2207>}Ezekiel 24:27, is the day on which the fugitive brings the sad news to Ezekiel, at the Chebar. In the interval the prophet suspended his prophecies *as to the Jews*, as was foretold. Afterwards his mouth was "opened," and no more "dumb" (^{<2139>}Ezekiel 3:26,27; compare ^{<2207>}Ezekiel 24:27 33:21,22).

CHAPTER 25

EZEKIEL 25:1-17.

APPROPRIATELY IN THE INTERVAL OF SILENCE AS TO THE JEWS IN THE EIGHT CHAPTERS, (TWENTY-FIFTH THROUGH THIRTY-SECOND) EZEKIEL DENOUNCES JUDGMENTS ON THE HEATHEN WORLD KINGDOMS.

If Israel was not spared, much less the heathen utterly corrupt, and having no mixture of truth, such as Israel in its worst state possessed (⁶¹⁰⁴⁷1 Peter 4:17,18). Their ruin was to be utter: Israel's but temporary (³⁴⁶³Jeremiah 46:28). The nations denounced are seven, the perfect number; implying that God's judgments would visit, not merely these, but *the whole round* of the heathen foes of God. Babylon is excepted, because she is now for the present viewed as the rod of God's retributive justice, a view too much then lost sight of by those who fretted against her universal supremacy.

3. (²⁴⁰⁰Jeremiah 49:1).

when ... profaned; ... when ... desolate; ... when ... captivity — rather, “for ... for ... for”: the *cause* of the insolent exultation of Ammon over Jerusalem. They triumphed especially over the fall of the “sanctuary,” as the triumph of heathenism over the rival claims of Jehovah. In Jehoshaphat's time, when the eighty-third Psalm was written (³⁸⁰⁶Psalm 83:4,7,8,12, “Ammon ... *holpen the children of Lot,*” who were, therefore, the *leaders* of the unholy conspiracy, “Let us take to ourselves the *houses of God* in possession”), we see the same profane spirit. Now at last their wicked wish seems accomplished in the fall of Jerusalem. Ammon, descended from Lot, held the region east of Jordan, separated from the Amorites on the north by the river Jabbok, and from Moab on the south by the Arnon. They were auxiliaries to Babylon in the destruction of Jerusalem (¹²⁴⁰2 Kings 24:2).

4. *men of ... east* — literally, “children of the East,” the nomad tribes of Arabia-Deserta, east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea.

palaces — their nomadic encampments or folds, surrounded with mud walls, are so called in irony. Where thy “palaces” once stood, there shall their very different “palaces” stand. Fulfilled after the ravaging of their

region by Nebuchadnezzar, shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem (compare ^{<3122>}Ezekiel 21:22 ^{<3401>}Jeremiah 49:1-28).

5. *Rabbah* — meaning “the Great,” Ammon’s metropolis. Under the Ptolemies it was rebuilt under the name Philadelphia; the ruins are called *Amman* now, but there is no dwelling inhabited.

Ammonites — that is the Ammonite *region* is to be a “couching place for flocks,” namely of the Arabs. The “camels,” being the chief beast of burden of the Chaldeans, are put first, as their invasion was to prepare the Ammonite land for the Arab “flocks.” Instead of busy men, there shall be “still and couching flocks.”

6, 7. “Because *thou* hast clapped *thine* hands,” exulting over the downfall of Jerusalem, “*I* also will stretch out *Mine* hand upon thee” (to which ^{<3217>}Ezekiel 21:17 also may refer, “I will smite *Mine* hands together”).

hands ... feet ... heart — with the whole inward feeling, and with every outward indication. *Stamping with the foot* means *dancing for joy*.

7. *a spoil* — so the *Hebrew Margin*, or *Keri*, for the text or *Chetib*, “meat” (so ^{<3315>}Ezekiel 26:5 34:28). Their *goods* were to be a “spoil to the foe”; their *state* was to be “cut off,” so as to be no more a “people”; and they were as *individuals*, for the most part, to be “destroyed.”

8. Moab, Seir, and Ammon were contiguous countries, stretching in one line from Gilead on the north to the Red Sea. They therefore naturally acted in concert, and in joint hostility to Judea.

Judah is like ... all ... heathen — The Jews fare no better than others: it is of no use to them to serve Jehovah, who, they say, is the only true God.

9, 10. *open ... from the cities* — *I will open up the side*, or border of *Moab* (metaphor from a man whose side is open to blows), *from the* (direction of) *the cities* on his northwest border beyond the Arnon, once assigned to Reuben (^{<0315>}Joshua 13:15-21), but now in the hands of their original owners; and the “men of the east,” the wandering Bedouin hordes, shall enter through these cities into Moab and waste it. Moab accordingly was so wasted by them, that long before the time of Christ it had melted away among the hordes of the desert. For “cities,” GROTIUS translates the *Hebrew* as proper names, the *Ar* and *Aroer*, on the Arnon. Hence the *Hebrew* for “cities,” “Ar” is repeated twice (^{<0213>}Numbers 21:28 ^{<0123>}Deuteronomy 2:36 ^{<2301>}Isaiah 15:1).

glory of the country — The region of Moab was richer than that of Ammon; it answers to the modern Belka, the richest district in South Syria,

and the scene in consequence of many a contest among the Bedouins. Hence it is called here a “glorious land” (literally, “a glory,” or “ornament of a land”) [FAIRBAIRN]. Rather, “the glory of the country” is in apposition with “cities” which immediately precedes, and the names of which presently follow.

Beth-jeshimoth — meaning “the city of desolations”; perhaps so named from some siege it sustained; it was towards the west.

Baal-meon — called also “Beth-meon” (²⁴⁸²³Jeremiah 48:23), and “Beth-baal-meon” (⁴⁶³⁷Joshua 13:17, called so from the worship of Baal), and “Bajith,” simply (²³⁴⁹Isaiah 15:2).

Kiriathaim — “the double city.” The strength of these cities engendered “the pride” of Moab (²³⁶⁶Isaiah 16:6).

10. *with the Ammonites* — FAIRBAIRN explains and translates, “upon the children of Ammon” (elliptically for, “I will open Moab to the men of the east, who, having overrun the children of Ammon, shall then fall on Moab”). MAURER, as *English Version*, “with the Ammonites,” that is, Moab, “together with the land of Ammon,” is to be thrown “open to the men of the east,” to enter and take possession (²⁴⁴¹Jeremiah 49:1-39).

12. *taking vengeance* — literally, “revenging with revengement,” that is, the most unrelenting vengeance. It was not simple hatred, but deep-brooding, implacable revenge. The grudge of Edom or Esau was originally for Jacob’s robbing him of Isaac’s blessing (⁴⁰²³Genesis 25:23 27:27-41). This purpose of revenge yielded to the extraordinary kindness of Jacob, through the blessing of Him with whom Jacob wrestled in prayer; but it was revived as an hereditary grudge in the posterity of Esau when they saw the younger branch rising to the pre-eminence which they thought of right belonged to themselves. More recently, for David’s subjugation of Edom to Israel (³⁰⁸⁴2 Samuel 8:14). They therefore gave vent to their spite by joining the Chaldeans in destroying Jerusalem (⁴⁹⁰⁰Psalms 137:7 ²⁹⁴²Lamentations 4:22 ³⁰¹⁰Obadiah 1:10-14), and then intercepting and killing the fugitive Jews (³⁰⁰¹Amos 1:11) and occupying part of the Jewish land as far as Hebron.

13. *Teman ... they of Dedan* — rather, “I will make it desolate from Teman (in the south) even to Dedan (in the northwest)” [GROTIUS], (²⁴⁰⁸Jeremiah 49:8), that is, the whole country from north to south, stretching from the south of the Dead Sea to the Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea.

14. by ... my people Israel — namely, by Judas Maccabeus. The Idumeans were finally, by compulsory circumcision, incorporated with the Jewish state by John Hyrcanus (see ^{<23415>}Isaiah 34:5 63:1, etc.; I Maccabees 5:3). So complete was the amalgamation in Christ's time, that the Herods of Idumean origin, as Jews, ruled over the two races as one people. Thus the ancient prophecy was fulfilled (^{<0252>}Genesis 25:23), "The elder shall serve the younger."

15. (^{<0931>}1 Samuel 13:1-14:52 ^{<4088>}2 Chronicles 28:18). The "old hatred" refers to their continual enmity to the covenant-people. They lay along Judea on the seacoast at the opposite side from Ammon and Moab. They were overthrown by Uzziah (^{<1016>}2 Chronicles 26:6), and by Hezekiah (^{<1218>}2 Kings 18:8). Nebuchadnezzar overran the cities on the seacoast on his way to Egypt after besieging Tyre (^{<2470>}Jeremiah 47:1-7). God will take vengeance on those who take the avenging of themselves out of His hands into their own (^{<5129>}Romans 12:19-21 ^{<5013>}James 2:13).

16. cut off the Cherethims — There is a play on similar sounds in the Hebrew, *hichratti cherethim*, "I will slay the slayers." The name may have been given to a section of the Philistines from their warlike disposition (^{<0814>}1 Samuel 30:14 31:3). They excelled in archery, whence David enrolled a bodyguard from them (^{<1088>}2 Samuel 8:18 15:18 20:7). They sprang from Caphtor, identified by many with Crete, which was famed for archery, and to which the name *Cherethim* seems akin. Though in emigration, which mostly tended westwards, Crete seems more likely to be colonized from Philistia than Philistia from Crete, a *section* of Cretans may have settled at Chere thim in South Philistia, while the Philistines, *as a nation*, may have come originally from the east (compare ^{<0823>}Deuteronomy 2:23 ^{<2470>}Jeremiah 47:4 ^{<1016>}Amos 9:7 Zephaniah 2:5). In ^{<0104>}Genesis 10:14 the Philistines are made *distinct from the Caphtorim*, and are said to come from the Casluhim; so that the Cherethim were but a part of the Philistines, which ^{<0814>}1 Samuel 30:14 confirms.

remnant of — that is, "on the seacoast" of the Mediterranean: those left *remaining* after the former overthrows inflicted by Samuel, David, Hezekiah, and Psammetichus of Egypt, father of Pharaoh-necho (^{<2520>}Jeremiah 25:20).

17. know ... vengeance — They shall know Me, not in mercy, but by My vengeance on them (^{<4016>}Psalms 9:16).

CHAPTER 26

EZEKIEL 26:1-21.

THE JUDGMENT ON TYRE THROUGH NEBUCHADNEZZAR (TWENTY-SIXTH THROUGH TWENTY-EIGHTH CHAPTERS).

In the twenty-sixth chapter, Ezekiel sets forth: —

- (1) Tyre's sin;
- (2) its doom;
- (3) the instruments executing it;
- (4) the effects produced on other nations by her downfall.

In the twenty-seventh chapter, a lamentation over the fall of such earthly splendor. In the twenty-eighth chapter, an elegy addressed to the king, on the humiliation of his sacrilegious pride. Ezekiel, in his prophecies as to the heathen, exhibits *the dark side only*; because he views them simply in their hostility to the people of God, who shall outlive them all. Isaiah (^{23:1}Isaiah 23:1-18), on the other hand, at the close of judgments, holds out the prospect of blessing, when Tyre should turn to the Lord.

1. The specification of the date, which had been omitted in the case of the four preceding objects of judgment, marks the greater weight attached to the fall of Tyre.

eleventh year — namely, after the carrying away of Jehoiachin, the year of the fall of Jerusalem. The number of the month is, however, omitted, and the day only given. As the month of the *taking* of Jerusalem was regarded as one of particular note, namely, *the fourth month*, also *the fifth*, on which it was actually *destroyed* (^{25:1}Jeremiah 52:6,12,13), RABBI DAVID reasonably supposes that Tyre uttered her taunt at the close of the fourth month, as her nearness to Jerusalem enabled her to hear of its fall very soon, and that Ezekiel met it with his threat against herself on “the first day” of *the fifth month*.

2. *Tyre* — (^{66:2}Joshua 19:29 ^{10:2}2 Samuel 24:7), literally, meaning “the rock-city,” *Zor*; a name applying to the island Tyre, called New Tyre, rather

than *Old Tyre* on the *mainland*. They were half a mile apart. “New Tyre,” a century and a half before the fall of Jerusalem, had successfully resisted Shalmaneser of Assyria, for five years besieging it (MENANDER, from the Tyrian archives, quoted by JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 9.14. 2). It was the stronger and more important of the two cities, and is the one chiefly, though not exclusively, here meant. Tyre was originally a colony of Zidon. Nebuchadnezzar’s siege of it lasted thirteen years (^{<29>}Ezekiel 29:18 ^{<30>}Isaiah 23:1-18). Though no profane author mentions his having succeeded in the siege, JEROME states he read the fact in Assyrian histories.

Aha! — exultation over a fallen rival (^{<31>}Psalm 35:21,25).

she ... that was the gates — that is, the single gate composed of two folding doors. Hence the verb is *singular*. “Gates” were the place of resort for traffic and public business: so here it expresses *a mart of commerce* frequented by merchants. Tyre regards Jerusalem not as an open enemy, for her territory being the narrow, long strip of land north of Philistia, between Mount Lebanon and the sea, her interest was to cultivate friendly relations with the Jews, on whom she was dependent for corn (^{<32>}Ezekiel 27:17 ^{<33>}1 Kings 5:9 ^{<34>}Acts 12:20). But Jerusalem had intercepted some of the inland traffic which she wished to monopolize to herself; so, in her intensely selfish worldly-mindedness, she exulted heartlessly over the fall of Jerusalem as her own gain. Hence she incurred the wrath of God as pre-eminently the world’s representative in its ambition, selfishness, and pride, in defiance of the will of God (^{<35>}Isaiah 23:9).

she is turned unto me — that is, the mart of corn, wine, oil, balsam, etc. which she once was, is transferred to me. The caravans from Palmyra, Petra, and the East will no longer be intercepted by the market (“the gates”) of Jerusalem, but will come to me.

3, 4. nations ... as the sea ... waves — In striking contrast to the boasting of Tyre, God threatens to bring against her Babylon’s army levied from “many nations,” even as the Mediterranean waves that dashed against her rock-founded city on all sides.

scrape her dust ... make her ... top of ... rock — or, “a bare rock” [GROTIUS]. The soil which the Tyrians had brought together upon the rock on which they built their city, I will scrape so clean away as to leave no dust, but only the bare rock as it was. An awful contrast to her expectation of filling herself with *all* the wealth of the East now that Jerusalem has fallen.

5. in the midst of the sea — plainly referring to New Tyre (^{<36>}Ezekiel 27:32).

6. *her daughters ... in the field* — The surrounding villages, dependent on her in the open country, shall share the fate of the mother city.

7. *from the north* — the original locality of the Chaldeans; also, the direction by which they entered Palestine, taking the route of Riblah and Hamath on the Orontes, in preference to that across the desert between Babylon and Judea.

king of kings — so called because of the many kings who owned allegiance to him (^{<1283>}2 Kings 18:28). God had delegated to him the universal earth-empire which is His (^{<2047>}Daniel 2:47). The Son of God alone has the right and title inherently, and shall assume it when the world kings shall have been fully proved as abusers of the trust (^{<5065>}1 Timothy 6:15 ^{<6172>}Revelation 17:12-14 19:15,16). Ezekiel's prophecy was not based on conjecture from the past, for Shalmaneser, with all the might of the Assyrian empire, had failed in his siege of Tyre. Yet Nebuchadnezzar was to succeed. JOSEPHUS tells us that Nebuchadnezzar began the siege in the seventh year of Ithobal's reign, king of Tyre.

9. *engines of war* — literally, “an apparatus for *striking*.” “He shall apply *the stroke* of the battering-ram *against* thy walls.” HAVERNICK translates, “His enginery of *destruction*”; literally, the “*destruction* (not merely *the stroke*) of his enginery.”

axes — literally, “swords.”

10. *dust* — So thick shall be the “dust” stirred up by the immense numbers of “horses,” that it shall “cover” the whole city as a cloud.

horses ... chariots — As in ^{<3318>}Ezekiel 26:3-5, *New Tyre* on the insular rock in the sea (compare ^{<2218>}Isaiah 23:2,4,6) is referred to; so here, in ^{<3319>}Ezekiel 26:9-11, *Old Tyre* on the mainland. *Both* are included in the prophecies under one name.

wheels — FAIRBAIRN thinks that here, and in ^{<3224>}Ezekiel 23:24, as “the wheels” are distinct from the “chariots,” some wheelwork for riding on, or for the operations of the siege, are meant.

11. *thy strong garrisons* — literally, “the statutes of thy strength”; so *the forts* which are “monuments of thy strength.” MAURER understands, in stricter agreement with the literal meaning, “the statues” or “obelisks erected in honor of the idols, the tutelary gods of Tyre,” as Melecarte, answering to the Grecian Hercules, whose temple stood in Old Tyre (compare ^{<2463>}Jeremiah 43:13, *Margin*).

12. lay thy stones ... timber ... in ... midst of ... water — referring to the insular New Tyre (^{<3318>}Ezekiel 26:3,5 ^{<3278>}Ezekiel 27:4,25,26). When its lofty buildings and towers fall, surrounded as it was with the sea which entered its double harbor and washed its ramparts, the “stones ... timbers ... and dust” appropriately are described as thrown down “in the midst of the water.” Though Ezekiel attributes the capture of Tyre to Nebuchadnezzar (see on ^{<3298>}Ezekiel 29:18), yet it does not follow that the *final* destruction of it described is attributed by him to the same monarch. The overthrow of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar was the first link in the long chain of evil — the first deadly blow which prepared for, and was the earnest of, the final doom. The change in this verse from the individual conqueror “he,” to the general “they,” marks that what he did was not the whole, but only paved the way for others to complete the work begun by him. It was to be a progressive work until she was utterly destroyed. Thus the words here answer exactly to what Alexander did. With the “stones, timber,” and rubbish of Old Tyre, he built a causeway in seven months to New Tyre on the island and so took it [CURTIUS, 4, 2], 322 B.C.

13. Instead of the joyousness of thy prosperity, a death-like silence shall reign (^{<2318>}Isaiah 24:8 ^{<2473>}Jeremiah 7:34).

14. He concludes in nearly the same words as he began (^{<3304>}Ezekiel 26:4,5).

built no more — fulfilled as to the mainland Tyre, under Nebuchadnezzar. The insular Tyre recovered partly, after seventy years (^{<2317>}Isaiah 23:17,18), but again suffered under Alexander, then under Antigonos, then under the Saracens at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Now its harbors are choked with sand, precluding all hope of future restoration, “not one entire house is left, and only a few fishermen take shelter in the vaults” [MAUNDRELL]. So accurately has God’s word come to pass.

15-21. The impression which the overthrow of Tyre produced on other maritime nations and upon her own colonies, for example, Utica, Carthage, and Tartessus or Tarshish in Spain.

isles — maritime lands. Even mighty Carthage used to send a yearly offering to the temple of Hercules at Tyre: and the mother city gave high priests to her colonies. Hence the consternation at her fall felt in the widely scattered dependencies with which she was so closely connected by the ties of religion, as well as commercial intercourse.

shake — metaphorically: “be agitated” (^{<2421>}Jeremiah 49:21).

16. come down from their thrones ... upon the ground — “the throne of the mourners” (^{<3013>}Job 2:13 ^{<3013>}Jon 3:6).

princes of the sea — are the merchant rulers of Carthage and other colonies of Tyre, who had made themselves rich and powerful by trading on the sea (²³²⁸Isaiah 23:8).

clothe ... with trembling — *Hebrew*, “tremblings.” Compare ³⁰⁷⁷Ezekiel 7:27, “clothed with desolation”; ⁴¹²⁸Psalms 132:18. In a public calamity the garment was changed for a mourning garb.

17. inhabited of seafaring men — that is, which was frequented by merchants of various sea-bordering lands [GROTIUS]. FAIRBAIRN translates with Peschito, “Thou inhabitant of the seas” (the *Hebrew* literal meaning). Tyre rose as it were *out of* the seas as if she got thence her inhabitants, being peopled so closely down to the waters. So Venice was called “the bride of the sea.”

strong in the sea — through her insular position.

cause their terror to be on all that haunt it — namely, the sea. The *Hebrew* is rather, “they put their terror upon all *her* (the city’s) inhabitants,” that is, they make the name of every Tyrian to be feared [FAIRBAIRN].

18. thy departure — ²³²⁹Isaiah 23:6,12 predicts that the Tyrians, in consequence of the siege, should pass over the Mediterranean to the lands bordering on it (“Chittim,” “Tarshish,” etc.). So Ezekiel here. Accordingly JEROME says that he read in Assyrian histories that, “when the Tyrians saw no hope of escaping, they *fled* to Carthage or some islands of the Ionian and Aegean Seas” [BISHOP NEWTON]. (See on ³¹⁹⁸Ezekiel 29:18). GROTIUS explains “departure,” that is, “in the day when hostages shall be *carried away* from thee to Babylon.” The parallelism to “*thy fall*” makes me think “departure” must mean “thy end” in general, but with an *included* allusion to the “departure” of most of her people to her colonies at *the fall* of the city.

19. great waters — appropriate metaphor of the Babylonian hosts, which literally, by breaking down insular Tyre’s ramparts, caused the sea to “cover” part of her.

20. the pit — Tyre’s disappearance is compared to that of *the dead placed in their sepulchres* and no more seen among the living (compare ³⁵²⁸Ezekiel 32:18,23 ²³⁴¹Isaiah 14:11,15,19).

I shall set glory in the land — In contrast to Tyre consigned to the “pit” of *death*, I shall set glory (that is, My presence symbolized by the Shekinah cloud, the antitype to which shall be Messiah, “the *glory* as of the only-begotten of the Father,” ⁴¹¹⁴John 1:14 ²³⁰²Isaiah 4:2,5 ³⁰⁶³Zechariah 6:13) in Judah.

of the living — as opposed to Tyre consigned to the “pit” of death. Judea is to be the land of national and spiritual *life*, being restored after its captivity (Ezekiel 47:9). FAIRBAIRN loses the antithesis by applying the negative to both clauses, “and that thou be *not* set as a glory in the land of the living.”

21. *terror* — an example of judgment calculated to terrify all evildoers.

thou shall be no more — Not that there was to be no more a Tyre, but she was no more to be *the* Tyre that once was: her glory and name were to be no more. As, to Old Tyre, the prophecy was literally fulfilled, not a vestige of it being left.

CHAPTER 27

EZEKIEL 27:1-36.

TYRE'S FORMER GREATNESS, SUGGESTING A LAMENTATION OVER HER SAD DOWNFALL.

2. *lamentation* — a funeral dirge, eulogizing her great attributes, to make the contrast the greater between her former and her latter state.

3. *situate at the entry of the sea* — literally, plural, “entrances,” that is, ports or havens; referring to the double port of Tyre, at which vessels entered round the north and south ends of the island, so that ships could find a ready entrance from whatever point the wind might blow (compare ^{<370>}Ezekiel 28:2).

merchant of ... people for many isles — that is, a mercantile emporium of the peoples of many seacoasts, both from the east and from the west (^{<2338>}Isaiah 23:3), “a mart of nations.”

of perfect beauty — (^{<382>}Ezekiel 28:12).

4. Tyre, in consonance with her seagirt position, separated by a strait of half a mile from the mainland, is described as a ship built of the best material, and manned with the best mariners and skillful pilots, but at last wrecked in tempestuous seas (^{<3726>}Ezekiel 27:26).

5. *Senir* — the Amorite name of Hermon, or the southern height of Anti-libanus (^{<4819>}Deuteronomy 3:9); the Sidonian name was *Sirion*. “All thy ... boards”; dual in *Hebrew*, “double-boards,” namely, placed in a double order on the two sides of which the ship consisted [VATABLUS]. Or, referring to the two sides or the two ends, the prow and the stern, which every ship has [MUNSTER].

cedars — most suited for “masts,” from their height and durability.

6. *Bashan* — celebrated for its oaks, as Lebanon was for its cedars.

the company of ... Ashurites — the most skillful workmen summoned from Assyria. Rather, as the *Hebrew* orthography requires, “They have made thy (rowing) benches of ivory inlaid in the daughter of cedars” [MAURER], or, *the best boxwood*. FAIRBAIRN, with BOCHART, reads the

Hebrew two words as *one*: “Thy plankwork (*deck*: instead of ‘benches,’ as the *Hebrew* is *singular*) they made ivory *with boxes*.” *English Version*, with MAURER’S correction, is simpler.

Chittim — Cyprus and Macedonia, from which, PLINY tells us, the best boxwood came [GROTIUS].

7. broidered ... sail — The ancients embroidered their sails often at great expense, especially the Egyptians, whose linen, still preserved in mummies, is of the finest texture.

Elishah — Greece; so called from Elis, a large and ancient division of Peloponnesus. Pausanias says that the best of linen was produced in it, and in no other part of Greece; called by HOMER, *Alisium*.

that which covered thee — thy awning.

8. Arvad — a small island and city near Phoenicia, now *Ruad*: its inhabitants are still noted for seafaring habits.

thy wise men, O Tyrus ... thy pilots — While the men of Arvad, once thy equals (⁴¹⁰⁸Genesis 10:18), and the Sidonians, once thy superiors, were employed by thee in subordinate positions as “mariners,” thou madest thine own skilled men alone to be commanders and pilots. Implying the political and mercantile superiority of Tyre.

9. Gebal — a Phoenician city and region between Beirut and Tripoils, famed for skilled workmen (⁴¹⁶⁸1 Kings 5:18, *Margin*; ⁴⁸³⁷Psalms 83:7).

calkers — *stoppers of chinks* in a vessel: carrying on the metaphor as to Tyre.

occupy thy merchandise — that is, to exchange merchandise with thee.

10. Persia ... Phut — warriors from the extreme east and west.

Lud — the Lydians of Asia Minor, near the Meander, famed for archery (²⁶⁹⁹Isaiah 66:19); rather than those of Ethiopia, as the Lydians of Asia Minor form a kind of intermediate step between Persia and Phut (the Libyans about Cyrene, shielded warriors, ²⁴⁴⁹Jeremiah 46:9, descended from Phut, son of Ham).

hanged ... shield ... comeliness — Warriors hanged their accoutrements on the walls for ornament. Divested of the metaphor, it means that it was an honor to thee to have so many nations supplying thee with hired soldiers.

11. Gammadims — rather, as the Tyrians were Syro-Phoenicians, from a *Syriac* root, meaning *daring*, “men of daring” [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU]. It is

not likely the keeping of watch “in the towers” would have been entrusted to foreigners. Others take it from a *Hebrew* root, “a dagger,” or short sword (^{<0016>}Judges 3:16), short-swordsmen.”

12. *Tarshish* — Tartessus in Spain, a country famed for various metals, which were exported to Tyre. Much of the “tin” probably was conveyed by the Phoenicians from Cornwall to Tarshish.

traded in thy fairs — “did barter with thee” [FAIRBAIRN]; from a root, “to leave,” something *left* in barter for something else.

13. *Javan* — the Ionians or *Greeks*: for the *Ionians* of Asia Minor were the first Greeks with whom the Asiatics came in contact.

Tubal ... Meshech — the Tibareni and Moschi, in the mountain region between the Black and Caspian Seas.

persons of men — that is, as slaves. So the Turkish harems are supplied with female slaves from Circassia and Georgia.

vessels — all kinds of *articles*. Superior weapons are still manufactured in the Caucasus region.

14. *Togarmah* — Armenia: descended from Gomer (^{<0018>}Genesis 10:3). Their mountainous region south of the Caucasus was celebrated for horses.

horsemen — rather, “riding-horses,” as distinct from “horses” for chariots [FAIRBAIRN].

15. *Dedan* — near the Persian Sea: thus an avenue to the commerce of India. Not the Dedan in Arabia (^{<0021>}Ezekiel 27:20), as the names in the context here prove, but the Dedan sprung from Gush [BOCHART], (^{<0019>}Genesis 10:7).

merchandise of thine hand — that is, were dependent on thee for trade [FAIRBAIRN]; came to buy *the produce of thy hands* [GROTIUS].

a present — literally, “a reward in return”; a price paid for merchandise.

horns of ivory — Ivory is so termed from its resemblance to *horns*. The *Hebrew* word for “ivory” means “tooth”; so that they cannot have mistaken ivory as if *coming from the horns* of certain animals, instead of from the tusks of the elephant.

16. “Syria was thy mart for the multitude,” etc. For “Syria” the *Septuagint* reads “Edom.” But the Syrians were famed as merchants.

occupied — *old English* for “traded”; so in ^{<0023>}Luke 19:13.

agate — Others translate, “ruby,” “chalcedony,” or “pearls.”

17. Minnith ... Pannag — names of places in Israel famed for good wheat, wherewith Tyre was supplied (^{<1169>}1 Kings 5:9,11 ^{<1570>}Ezra 3:7 ^{<4123>}Acts 12:20); Minnith was formerly an Ammonite city (^{<0113>}Judges 11:33). “Pannag” is identified by GROTIUS with “Phenice,” the *Greek* name for “Canaan.” “They traded ... wheat,” that is, they supplied thy market with wheat.

balm — or, “balsam.”

18. Helbon — or Chalybon, in Syria, now Aleppo; famed for its wines; the Persian monarchs would drink no other.

19. Daniel also — None of the other places enumerated commence with the copula (“also”; *Hebrew*, *ve*). Moreover, the products specified, “cassia, calamus,” apply rather to places in Arabia. Therefore, FAIRBAIRN translates, “Vedan”; perhaps the modern Aden, near the straits of Bab-el-man-deb. GROTIUS refers it to Dana, mentioned by PTOLEMY.

Javan — not the Greeks of *Europe* or *Asia Minor*, but of a Greek settlement in *Arabia*.

going to and fro — rather, as *Hebrew* admits, “from *Uzal*.” This is added to “Javan,” to mark *which* Javan is meant (^{<0107>}Genesis 10:27). The metropolis of Arabia Felix, or Yemen; called also Sanaa [BOCHART]. *English Version* gives a good sense, thus: All peoples, whether near as the Israelite “Dan,” or far as the Greeks or “Javan,” who were wont to “go to and fro” from their love of traffic, frequented thy marts, bringing bright iron, etc., these products not being necessarily represented as those of Daniel or Javan.

bright iron — Yemen is still famed for its sword blades.

calamus — aromatic cane.

20. Dedan — in Arabia; distinct from the Dedan in ^{<3275>}Ezekiel 27:15 (see on ^{<3275>}Ezekiel 27:15). Descended from Abraham and Keturah (^{<0128>}Genesis 25:3) [BOCHART].

precious clothes — splendid coverlets.

21. Arabia — the nomadic tribes of Arabia, among which Kedar was pre-eminent.

occupied with thee — literally, “of thy hand,” that is, they *traded* with thee for wares, the product of *thy hand* (see on ^{<3275>}Ezekiel 27:15,16).

22. *Sheba ... Raamah* — in Arabia.

chief of ... spices — that is, *best* spices (^{<983>}Deuteronomy 33:15). Obtained from India and conveyed in caravans to Tyre.

23. *Haran* — the dwelling-place of Abraham in Mesopotamia, after he moved from Ur (^{<113>}Genesis 11:31).

Canneh — Calneh, an Assyrian city on the Tigris; the Ctesiphon of the Greeks (^{<100>}Genesis 10:10).

Eden — probably a region in Babylonia (see ^{<108>}Genesis 2:8).

Chilmad — a compound; the place designated by PTOLEMY “Gaal of Media.” The *Chaldee version* interprets it of Media. HENDERSON refers it to Carmanda, which XENOPHON describes as a large city beyond the Euphrates.

24. *all sorts of things* — *Hebrew*, “perfections”; exquisite articles of finery [GROTIUS].

clothes — rather, “mantles” or “cloaks”; literally, “wrappings.” For “blue,” HENDERSON translates, “purple.”

chests of rich apparel, bound with cords — treasures or repositories of damask stuffs, consisting of variegated threads woven together in figures [HENDERSON].

cedar — The “chests” were made of *cedar*, in order to last the longer; and it also keeps off decay and has a sweet odor.

25. *sing of thee* — personification; flay great merchant ships were palpable proofs of thy greatness. Others translate from a different *Hebrew* root, “were thy (mercantile) travelers.” FAIRBAIRN translates, “Were thy walls.” But the parallelism to “thou wast glorious” favors *English Version*, “sing of thee.”

26. In contrast to her previous greatness, her downfall is here, by a sudden transition, depicted under the image of a vessel foundering at sea.

east wind — blowing from Lebanon, the most violent wind in the Mediterranean (^{<987>}Psalms 48:7). A Levanter, as it is called. Nebuchadnezzar is meant. The “sea” is the war with him which the “rowers,” or rulers of the state vessel, had “brought” it into, to its ruin.

27. The detailed enumeration implies the *utter completeness* of the ruin.

and in all thy company — “even with all thy collected multitude” [HENDERSON].

28. The suburbs — the buildings of Tyre on the adjoining continent.

29. So on the downfall of spiritual Babylon (^{<6887>}Revelation 18:17, etc.).

shall stand upon ... land — being cast out of their ships in which heretofore they prided themselves.

30. against thee — rather, “concerning thee.”

31. utterly bald — literally, “bald with baldness.” The Phoenician custom in mourning; which, as being connected with heathenish superstitions, was forbidden to Israel (^{<6840>}Deuteronomy 14:1).

take up — lift up.

the destroyed — a destroyed one. Literally, (as opposed to its previous bustle of thronging merchants and mariners, ^{<6577>}Ezekiel 27:27), “one brought to death’s stillness.”

in ... midst of ... sea — insular Tyre.

33. out of the seas — brought on shore *out of* the ships.

filledst — didst supply plentifully with *wares*.

enrich ... kings — with the custom dues levied on the wares.

34. In the time when ... shall ... shall — *Now* that thou *art* broken (wrecked) ... thy merchandise ... are fallen [MAURER].

35. isles — seacoasts.

36. hiss — with astonishment; as in ^{<1008>}1 Kings 9:8.

CHAPTER 28

EZEKIEL 28:1-26.

PROPHETICAL DIRGE ON THE KING OF TYRE, AS THE CULMINATION AND EMBODIMENT OF THE SPIRIT OF CARNAL PRIDE AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF THE WHOLE STATE. THE FALL OF ZIDON, THE MOTHER CITY. THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL IN CONTRAST WITH TYRE AND ZIDON.

2. *Because*, etc. — repeated resumptively in ^{<3816>}Ezekiel 28:6. The apodosis begins at ^{<3817>}Ezekiel 28:7. “The prince of Tyrus” at the time was Ithobal, or Ithbaal II; the name implying his close connection with Baal, the Phoenician supreme god, whose representative he was.

I am a god, I sit in ... seat of God ... the seas — As God sits enthroned in His heavenly citadel exempt from all injury, so I sit secure in my impregnable stronghold amidst the stormiest elements, able to control them at will, and make them subserve my interests. The language, though primarily here applied to the king of Tyre, as similar language is to the king of Babylon (^{<3143>}Isaiah 14:13,14), yet has an ulterior and fuller accomplishment in Satan and his embodiment in Antichrist (^{<21725>}Daniel 7:25 11:36,37 ^{<31042>}2 Thessalonians 2:4 ^{<6116>}Revelation 13:6). This feeling of superhuman elevation in the king of Tyre was fostered by the fact that the island on which Tyre stood was called “the holy island” [SANCONIATHON], being sacred to Hercules, so much so that the colonies looked up to Tyre as the mother city of their religion, as well as of their political existence. The *Hebrew* for “God” is *El*, that is, “the Mighty One.”

yet, etc. — keen irony.

set thine heart as ... heart of God — Thou thinkest of thyself as if thou wert God.

3. Ezekiel ironically alludes to Ithbaal’s overweening opinion of the wisdom of himself and the Tyrians, as though superior to that of Daniel, whose fame had reached even Tyre as eclipsing the Chaldean sages. “Thou art wiser,” namely, in thine own opinion (Zechariah 9:2).

no secret — namely, forgetting riches (^{<38206>}Ezekiel 28:4).

that they can hide — that is, that can be hidden.

5. (³⁵⁰Psalm 62:10).

6. *Because*, etc. — resumptive of ³⁵⁰Ezekiel 28:2.

7. *therefore* — apodosis.

strangers ... terrible of the nations — the Chaldean foreigners noted for their ferocity (³⁵⁰Ezekiel 30:11 31:12).

against the beauty of thy wisdom — that is, against thy beautiful possessions acquired by thy wisdom on which thou pridedst thyself (³⁵⁰Ezekiel 28:3-5).

defile thy brightness — obscure the brightness of thy kingdom.

8. *the pit* — that is, the bottom of the sea; the image being that of one conquered in a sea-fight.

the deaths — plural, as various kinds of deaths are meant (³⁵⁰Jeremiah 16:4).

of them ... slain — literally, “pierced through.” Such deaths as those pierced with many wounds die.

9. *yet say* — that is, still say; referring to ³⁵⁰Ezekiel 28:2.

but, etc. — But thy blasphemous boastings shall be falsified, and thou shalt be shown to be but man, and not God, in the hand (at the mercy) of Him.

10. *deaths of ... uncircumcised* — that is, such a death as the uncircumcised or godless heathen *deserve*; and perhaps, also, such as the uncircumcised *inflict*, a great ignominy in the eyes of a Jew (³⁵⁰1 Samuel 31:4); a fit retribution on him who had scoffed at the circumcised Jews.

12. *sealest up the sum* — literally, “Thou art the one sealing the sum of perfection.” A thing is *sealed* when *completed* (³⁵⁰Daniel 9:24). “The sum” implies *the full measure of beauty*, from a *Hebrew* root, “to measure.” The normal man — one formed after accurate rule.

13. *in Eden* — The king of Tyre is represented in his former high state (contrasted with his subsequent downfall), under images drawn from the primeval man in Eden, the type of humanity in its most Godlike form.

garden of God — the model of ideal loveliness (³⁵⁰Ezekiel 31:8,9 36:35). In the person of the king of Tyre a new trial was made of humanity with the

greatest earthly advantages. But as in the case of Adam, the good gifts of God were only turned into ministers to pride and self.

every precious stone — so in Eden (^{<0012>}Genesis 2:12), “gold, bdellium, and the onyx stone.” So the king of Tyre was arrayed in jewel-bespangled robes after the fashion of Oriental monarchs. The nine precious stones here mentioned answer to nine of the twelve (representing the twelve tribes) in the high priest’s breastplate (^{<0290>}Exodus 39:10-13 ^{<6214>}Revelation 21:14,19-21). Of the four rows of three in each, the third is omitted in the *Hebrew*, but is supplied in the *Septuagint*. In this, too, there is an ulterior reference to Antichrist, who is blasphemously to arrogate the office of our divine High Priest (^{<3063>}Zechariah 6:13).

tabrets — tambourines.

pipes — literally, “holes” in musical pipes or flutes.

created — that is, in *the day of thine accession to the throne*. Tambourines and all the marks of joy were ready prepared for thee (“in thee,” that is, “with and for thee”). Thou hadst not, like others, to work thy way to the throne through arduous struggles. No sooner created than, like Adam, thou wast surrounded with the gratifications of Eden. FAIRBAIRN, for “pipes,” translates, “females” (having reference to ^{<0027>}Genesis 1:27), that is, musician-women. MAURER explains the *Hebrew* not as to music, but as to the *setting* and *mounting* of the gems previously mentioned.

14. anointed cherub — GESENIUS translates from an *Aramaic* root, “extended cherub.” *English Version*, from a *Hebrew* root, is better. “The cherub consecrated to the Lord by the anointing oil” [FAIRBAIRN].

covereth — The imagery employed by Ezekiel as a priest is from the Jewish temple, wherein the cherubim overshadowed the mercy seat, as the king of Tyre, a demi-god in his own esteem, extended his protection over the interests of Tyre. The cherub — an ideal compound of the highest kinds of animal existence and the type of redeemed man in his ultimate state of perfection — is made the image of the king of Tyre, as if the beau ideal of humanity. The pretensions of Antichrist are the ulterior reference, of whom the king of Tyre is a type. Compare “As God ... in the *temple* of God” (^{<3104>}2 Thessalonians 2:4).

I have set thee — not *thou* set thyself (^{<3186>}Proverbs 8:16 ^{<6131>}Romans 13:1).

upon the holy mountain of God — Zion, following up the image.

in ... midst of ... stones of fire — In ambitious imagination he stood in the place of God, “under whose feet was, as it were, a pavement of sapphire,” while His glory was like “devouring fire” (^{<0240>}Exodus 24:10,17).

15. *perfect* — prosperous [GROTIUS], and having no defect. So Hiram was a sample of the Tyrian monarch in his early days of wisdom and prosperity (^{<1007>}1 Kings 5:7, etc.).

till iniquity ... in thee — Like the primeval man thou hast fallen by abusing God’s gifts, and so hast provoked God’s wrath.

16. *filled the midst of thee* — that is, they have filled *the midst of the city*; he as the head of the state being involved in the guilt of the state, which he did not check, but fostered.

cast thee as profane — no longer treated as sacred, but driven out of the place of sanctity (see ^{<0384>}Ezekiel 28:14) which thou hast occupied (compare ^{<0889>}Psalms 89:39).

17. *brightness* — thy splendor.

lay thee before kings — as an example of God’s wrath against presumptuous pride.

18. *thy sanctuaries* — that is, the holy places, attributed to the king of Tyre in ^{<0384>}Ezekiel 28:14, as his ideal position. As he “profaned” it, so God will “profane” him (^{<0386>}Ezekiel 28:16).

fire ... devour — As he abused his supposed elevation amidst “the stones of fire” (^{<0386>}Ezekiel 28:16), so God will make His “fire” to “devour” him.

21. *Zidon* — famous for its fishery (from a root, *Zud*, “to fish”); and afterwards for its wide extended commerce; its artistic elegance was proverbial. Founded by Canaan’s first-born (^{<0105>}Genesis 10:15). Tyre was an offshoot from it, so that it was involved in the same overthrow by the Chaldeans as Tyre. It is mentioned separately, because its idolatry (Ashtaroth, Tammuz, or Adonis) infected Israel more than that of Tyre did (^{<0384>}Ezekiel 8:14 ^{<0706>}Judges 10:6 ^{<1113>}1 Kings 11:33). The notorious Jezebel was a daughter of the Zidonian king.

22. *shall be sanctified in her* — when all nations shall see that I am the Holy Judge in the vengeance that I will inflict on her for sin.

24. *no more ... brier ... unto ... Israel* — as the idolatrous nations left in Canaan (among which Zidon is expressly specified in the limits of Asher, ^{<0013>}Judges 1:31) had been (^{<0885>}Numbers 33:55 ^{<0233>}Joshua 23:13). “A brier,”

first ensnaring the Israelites in sin, and then being made the instrument of punishing them.

pricking — literally, “causing *bitterness*.” The same *Hebrew* is translated “fretting” (^{<48159>}Leviticus 13:51,52). The wicked are often called “thorns” (^{<42362>}2 Samuel 23:6).

25, 26. Fulfilled in part at the restoration from Babylon, when Judaism, so far from being merged in heathenism, made inroads by conversions on the idolatry of surrounding nations. The full accomplishment is yet future, when Israel, under Christ, shall be the center of Christendom; of which an earnest was given in the woman from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon who sought the Savior (^{<41529>}Matthew 15:21,24,26-28; compare ^{<23112>}Isaiah 11:12).

dwell safely — (^{<22365>}Jeremiah 23:6).

CHAPTER 29

EZEKIEL 29:1-21.

THE JUDGMENT ON EGYPT BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR; THOUGH ABOUT TO BE RESTORED AFTER FORTY YEARS, IT WAS STILL TO BE IN A STATE OF DEGRADATION.

This is the last of the world kingdoms against which Ezekiel's prophecies are directed, and occupies the largest space in them, namely, the next four chapters. Though farther off than Tyre, it exercised a more powerful influence on Israel.

2. Pharaoh — a common name of all the kings of Egypt, meaning “the sun”; or, as others say, a “crocodile,” which was worshipped in parts of Egypt (compare ^{29:3}Ezekiel 29:3). Hophra or Apries was on the throne at this time. His reign began prosperously. He took Gaza (^{47:1}Jeremiah 47:1) and Zidon and made himself master of Phoenicia and Palestine, recovering much that was lost to Egypt by the victory of Nebuchadnezzar at Carchemish (^{24:7}2 Kings 24:7 ^{46:2}Jeremiah 46:2), in the fourth year of Jehoiakim [WILKINSON, *Ancient Egypt*, 1.169]. So proudly secure because of his successes for twenty-five years did he feel, that he said not even a god could deprive him of his kingdom [HERODOTUS, 2.169]. Hence the appropriateness of the description of him in ^{29:3}Ezekiel 29:3. No mere human sagacity could have enabled Ezekiel to foresee Egypt's downfall in the height of its prosperity. There are four divisions of these prophecies; the first in the tenth year of Ezekiel's captivity; the last in the twelfth. Between the first and second comes one of much later date, not having been given till the twenty-seventh year (^{29:17}Ezekiel 29:17 30:19), but placed there as appropriate to the subject matter. Pharaoh-hophra, or Apries, was dethroned and strangled, and Amasis substituted as king, by Nebuchadnezzar (compare ^{44:30}Jeremiah 44:30). The Egyptian priests, from national vanity, made no mention to HERODOTUS of the Egyptian loss of territory in Syria through Nebuchadnezzar, of which JOSEPHUS tells us, but attributed the change in the succession from Apries to Amasis solely to the Egyptian soldiery. The civil war between the two rivals no doubt lasted several years, affording an opportunity to Nebuchadnezzar of interfering and of elevating the usurper Amasis, on condition of his becoming tributary to Babylon

[WILKINSON]. Compare ^{<2460>}Jeremiah 43:10-12, and see on ^{<2461>}Jeremiah 43:13, for another view of the grounds of interference of Nebuchadnezzar.

3. dragon — *Hebrew, tanim*, any large aquatic animal, here the crocodile, which on Roman coins is the emblem of Egypt.

lieth — retest proudly secure.

his rivers — the mouths, branches, and canals of the Nile, to which Egypt owed its fertility.

4. hooks in thy jaws — (^{<2372>}Isaiah 37:29; compare ^{<3401>}Job 41:1,2). Amasis was the “hook.” In the Assyrian sculptures prisoners are represented with a hook in the underlip, and a cord from it held by the king.

cause ... fish ... stick unto ... scales — Pharaoh, presuming on his power as if he were God (^{<2308>}Ezekiel 29:3, “I have made it”), wished to stand in the stead of God as defender of the covenant-people, his motive being, not love to them, but rivalry with Babylon. He raised the siege of Jerusalem, but it was only for a time (compare ^{<2306>}Ezekiel 29:6 ^{<2458>}Jeremiah 37:5,7-10); ruin overtook not only them, but himself. As the fish that clung to the horny scales of the crocodile, the lord of the Nile, when he was caught, shared his fate, so the adherents of Pharaoh, lord of Egypt, when he was overthrown by Amasis, should share his fate.

5. wilderness — captivity beyond thy kingdom. The expression is used perhaps to imply retribution in kind. As Egypt pursued after Israel, saying, “The wilderness hath shut them in” (^{<1248>}Exodus 14:3), so she herself shall be brought into a *wilderness state*.

open fields — literally “face of the field.”

not be brought together — As the crocodile is not, when caught, restored to the river, so no remnant of thy routed army shall be brought together, and rallied, after its defeat in the wilderness. Pharaoh led an army against Cyrene in Africa, in support of Aricranes, who had been stripped of his kingdom by the Cyrenians. The army perished and Egypt rebelled against him [JUNIUS]. But the reference is mainly to the defeat by Nebuchadnezzar.

beasts ... fowls — hostile and savage men.

6. staff of reed to ... Israel — alluding to the reeds on the banks of the Nile, which broke if one leaned upon them (see on ^{<2308>}Ezekiel 29:4; ^{<2306>}Isaiah 36:6). All Israel’s dependence on Egypt proved hurtful instead of beneficial (^{<2308>}Isaiah 30:1-5).

7. hand — or handle of the reed.

rend ... shoulder — by the splinters on which the shoulder or arm would fall, on the support failing the hand.

madest ... loins ... at a stand — that is, made them to be disabled. MAURER somewhat similarly (referring to a kindred *Arabic* form), “Thou hast stricken both their loins.” FAIRBAIRN, not so well, “Thou lettest all their loins stand,” that is, by themselves, bereft of the support which they looked for from thee.

8. a sword — Nebuchadnezzar’s army (²³⁹⁷Ezekiel 29:19). Also Amasis and the Egyptian revoltors who after Pharaoh-hophra’s discomfiture in Cyrene dethroned and strangled him, having defeated him in a battle fought at Memphis [JUNIUS].

9. I am the Lord — in antithesis to the blasphemous boast repeated here from ²³⁹⁸Ezekiel 29:3, “The river is mine, and I have made it.”

10. from the tower of Syene — GROTIUS translates, “from Migdol (a fortress near Pelusium on the north of Suez) to Syene (in the farthest south)”; that is, from one end of Egypt to the other. So “from Migdol to Syene,” ²³⁹⁹Ezekiel 30:6, *Margin*. However, *English Version* rightly refers Syene to Seveneh, that is, Sebennytus, in the eastern delta of the Nile, the capital of the Lower Egyptian kings. The Sebennyte Pharaohs, with the help of the Canaanites, who, as shepherds or merchants, ranged the desert of Suez, extended their borders beyond the narrow province east of the delta, to which they had been confined by the Pharaohs of Upper Egypt. The defeated party, in derision, named the Sebennyte or Lower Egyptians *foreigners* and *shepherd-kings* (a shepherd being an abomination in Egypt, ²⁴⁰⁰Genesis 46:34). They were really a *native* dynasty. Thus, in *English Version*, “Ethiopia” in the extreme south is rightly contrasted with Sebennytus or Syene in the north.

11. forty years — answering to the forty years in which the Israelites, their former bondsmen, wandered in “the wilderness” (compare *Note*, see on ²³⁹⁵Ezekiel 29:5). JEROME remarks the number *forty* is one often connected with affliction and judgment. The rains of the flood in forty days brought destruction on the world. Moses, Elias, and the Savior fasted forty days. The interval between Egypt’s overthrow by Nebuchadnezzar and the deliverance by Cyrus, was about forty years. The *ideal* forty years’ wilderness state of social and political degradation, rather than a *literal* non-passing of man or beast for that term, is mainly intended (so ²⁴⁰¹Ezekiel 4:6 ²³⁹⁶Isaiah 19:2,11).

12. As Israel passed through a term of wilderness discipline (compare ²⁴⁰²Ezekiel 20:35, etc.), which was in its essential features to be repeated

again, so it was to be with Egypt [FAIRBAIRN]. Some Egyptians were to be carried to Babylon, also many “scattered” in Arabia and Ethiopia through fear; but mainly the “scattering” was to be the *dissipation of their power*, even though the people still remained in their own land.

13. (²⁴³³Jeremiah 46:26).

14. **Pathros** — the Thehaiti, or Upper Egypt, which had been especially harassed by Nebuchadnezzar (Na 3:8,10). The oldest part of Egypt as to civilization and art. The Thebaid was anciently called “Egypt” [ARISTOTLE]. Therefore it is called the “land of the Egyptians’ *birth*” (*Margin*, for “habitation”).

base kingdom — Under Amasis it was made dependent on Babylon; humbled still more under Cambyses; and though somewhat raised under the Ptolemies, never has it regained its ancient pre-eminence.

16. Egypt, when restored, shall be so circumscribed in power that it shall be no longer an object of confidence to Israel, as formerly; for example, as when, relying on it, Israel broke faith with Nebuchadnezzar (²³⁷¹³Ezekiel 17:13,15,16).

which bringeth their iniquity to remembrance, when they shall look after them — rather, “while they (the Israelites) look to (or, *turn after*) them” [HENDERSON]. Israel’s looking to Egypt, rather than to God, causes their iniquity (unfaithfulness to the covenant) to be remembered by God.

17. The departure from the chronological order occurs here only, among the prophecies as to foreign nations, in order to secure greater unity of subject.

18. **every head ... bald, ... shoulder ... peeled** — with carrying baskets of earth and stones for the siege works.

no wages ... for the service — that is, *in proportion to* it and the time and labor which he expended on the siege of Tyre. Not that he actually failed in the siege (JEROME expressly states, from Assyrian histories, that Nebuchadnezzar succeeded); but, so much of the Tyrian resources had been exhausted, or transported to her colonies in ships, that little was left to compensate Nebuchadnezzar for his thirteen year’s siege.

19. **multitude** — not as FAIRBAIRN, “store”; but, he shall take away a *multitude of captives* out of Egypt. The success of Nebuchadnezzar is implied in Tyre’s receiving a king from Babylon, probably one of her captives there, Merbal.

take her spoil ... prey — literally, “spoil her spoil, prey her prey,” that is, as she spoiled other nations, so shall she herself be a spoil to Babylon.

20. *because they wrought for me* — the Chaldeans, fulfilling My will as to Tyre (compare ^{<3239>}Jeremiah 25:9).

21. In the evil only, not in the good, was Egypt to be parallel to Israel. The very downfall of Egypt will be the signal for the rise of Israel, because of God’s covenant with the latter.

I cause the horn of ... Israel to bud — (^{<3927>}Psalm 132:17). I will cause its ancient glory to revive: an earnest of Israel’s full glory under Messiah, the son of David (^{<4169>}Luke 1:69). Even in Babylon an earnest was given of this in Daniel (^{<2702>}Daniel 6:2) and Jeconiah (^{<3423>}Jeremiah 52:31).

I will give thee ... opening of ... mouth — When thy predictions shall have come to pass, thy words henceforth shall be more heeded (compare ^{<3327>}Ezekiel 24:27).

CHAPTER 30

EZEKIEL 30:1-26.

CONTINUATION OF THE PROPHECIES AGAINST EGYPT.

Two distinct messages:

(1) At ^{<300>}Ezekiel 30:1-9, a repetition of ^{<290>}Ezekiel 29:1-16, with fuller details of lifelike distinctness. The date is probably not long after that mentioned in ^{<297>}Ezekiel 29:17, on the eve of Nebuchadnezzar's march against Egypt after subjugating Tyre.

(2) A vision relating directly to Pharaoh and the overthrow of his kingdom; communicated at an earlier date, the seventh of the first month of the eleventh year. Not a year after the date in ^{<290>}Ezekiel 29:1, and three months before the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

2. *Woe worth the day!* — that is, Alas for the day!

3. *the time of the heathen* — namely, for taking vengeance on them. The judgment on Egypt is the beginning of a world-wide judgment on all the heathen enemies of God (^{<205>}Joel 1:15 2:1,2 3 ^{<305>}Obadiah 1:15).

4. *pain* — literally, “pangs with trembling as of a woman in childbirth.”

5. *the mingled people* — the mercenary troops of Egypt from various lands, mostly from the interior of Africa (compare ^{<270>}Ezekiel 27:10 ^{<250>}Jeremiah 25:20,24 46:9,21).

Chub — the people named *Kufa* on the monuments [HAVERNICK], a people considerably north of Palestine [WILKINSON]; *Coba* or *Chobat*, a city of Mauritania [MAURER].

men of the land that is in league — too definite an expression to mean merely, “men in league” with Egypt; rather, “sons of the land of the covenant,” that is, the *Jews* who migrated to Egypt and carried Jeremiah with them (^{<240>}Jeremiah 42:1-44:30). Even they shall not escape (^{<220>}Jeremiah 42:22 44:14).

6. *from the tower of Syene* — (see on ^{<230>}Ezekiel 29:10).

7. *in the midst of ... countries ... desolate* — Egypt shall fare no better than they (²⁹⁰⁰Ezekiel 29:10).

9. *messengers ... in ships to ... Ethiopians* — (²⁸⁰⁰Isaiah 18:1,2). The cataracts interposing between them and Egypt should not save them. Egyptians “fleeing from before Me” in My execution of judgment, as “messengers” in “skiffs” (“vessels of bulrushes,” ²⁸⁰⁰Isaiah 18:2) shall go up the Nile as far as navigable, to announce the advance of the Chaldeans.

as in the day of Egypt — The day of Ethiopia’s “pain” shall come shortly, as Egypt’s day came.

10. *the multitude* — the large population.

12. *rivers* — the artificial canals made from the Nile for irrigation. The drying up of these would cause scarcity of grain, and so prepare the way for the invaders (²⁹⁰⁵Isaiah 19:5-10).

13. *Noph* — Memphis, the capital of Middle Egypt, and the stronghold of “idols.” Though no record exists of Nebuchadnezzar’s “destroying” these, we know from HERODOTUS and others, that Cambyses took Pelusium, the key of Egypt, by placing before his army dogs, cats, etc., all held sacred in Egypt, so that no Egyptian would use any weapon against them. He slew Apis, the sacred ox, and burnt other idols of Egypt.

no more a prince — referring to the anarchy that prevailed in the civil wars between Apries and Amasis at the time of Nebuchadnezzar’s invasion. There shall no more be a prince of the land of Egypt, ruling the whole country; or, no *independent* prince.

14. *Pathros* — Upper Egypt, with “No” or Thebes its capital (famed for its stupendous buildings, of which grand ruins remain), in antithesis to Zoan or Tanis, a chief city in Lower Egypt, within the Delta.

15. *Sin* — that is, Pelusium, the frontier fortress on the northeast, therefore called “the strength (that is, the key) of Egypt.” It stands in antithesis to No or Thebes at the opposite end of Egypt; that is, I will afflict Egypt from one end to the other.

16. *distresses daily* — MAURER translates, “enemies during the day,” that is, open enemies who do not wait for the covert of night to make their attacks (compare ²⁹⁰⁴Jeremiah 6:4 15:8). However, the *Hebrew*, though rarely, is sometimes rendered (see ⁴⁹⁰⁰Psalms 13:2) as in *English Version*.

17. *Aven* — meaning “vanity” or “iniquity”: applied, by a slight change of the *Hebrew* name, to On or Heliopolis, in allusion to its idolatry. Here

stood the temple of the sun, whence it was called in *Hebrew*, *Beth-shemesh* (^{<2483>}Jeremiah 43:13). The Egyptian hieroglyphics call it, *Revelation Athom*, the sun, the father of the gods, being impersonate in *Athom* or *Adam*, the father of mankind.

Pi-beseth — that is, Bubastis, in Lower Egypt, near the Pelusiac branch of the Nile: notorious for the worship of the goddess of the same name (*Coptic*, *Pasht*), the granite stones of whose temple still attest its former magnificence.

these cities — rather, as the *Septuagint*, “the women,” namely, of Aven and Pi-beseth, in antithesis to “the young men.” So in ^{<2308>}Ezekiel 30:18, “daughters shall go into captivity” [MAURER].

18. Tehaphnehes — called from the queen of Egypt mentioned in ^{<1119>}1 Kings 11:19. The same as Daphne, near Pelusium, a royal residence of the Pharaohs (^{<2437>}Jeremiah 43:7,9). Called Hanes ^{<2304>}Isaiah 30:4).

break ... the yokes of Egypt — that is, the tyrannical supremacy which she exercised over other nations. Compare “bands of their yoke” (^{<2540>}Ezekiel 34:7).

a cloud — namely, of calamity.

20. Here begins the earlier vision, not long after that in the twenty-ninth chapter, about three months before the taking of Jerusalem, as to Pharaoh and his kingdom.

21. broken ... arm of Pharaoh — (^{<4577>}Psalms 37:17 ^{<2425>}Jeremiah 48:25). Referring to the defeat which Pharaoh-hophra sustained from the Chaldeans, when trying to raise the siege of Jerusalem (^{<2673>}Jeremiah 37:5,7); and previous to the deprivation of Pharaoh-necho of all his conquests from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates (^{<1241>}2 Kings 24:7 ^{<2442>}Jeremiah 46:2); also to the Egyptian disaster in Cyrene.

22. arms — Not only the “one arm” broken already (^{<2521>}Ezekiel 30:21) was not to be healed, but the other two should be broken. Not a corporal wound, but a *breaking of the power* of Pharaoh is intended.

cause ... sword to fall out of ... hand — deprive him of the resources of making war.

CHAPTER 31

EZEKIEL 31:1-18.

THE OVERTHROW OF EGYPT ILLUSTRATED BY THAT OF ASSYRIA.

Not that Egypt was, like Assyria, utterly to cease to be, but it was, like Assyria, to lose its prominence in the empire of the world.

1. *third month* — two months later than the prophecy delivered in ^{<3500>}Ezekiel 30:20.

2. *Whom art thou like* — The answer is, Thou art like the haughty king of Assyria; as he was overthrown by the Chaldeans, so shalt thou be by the same.

3. He illustrates the pride and the consequent overthrow of the Assyrian, that Egypt may the better know what she must expect.

cedar in Lebanon — often eighty feet high, and the diameter of the space covered by its boughs still greater: the symmetry perfect. Compare the similar image (^{<3708>}Ezekiel 17:3 ^{<2700>}Daniel 4:20-22).

with a shadowing shroud — with an overshadowing thicket.

top ... among ... thick boughs — rather [HENGSTENBERG], “among the clouds.” But *English Version* agrees better with the *Hebrew*. The *top*, or *topmost shoot*, represents the king; the *thick boughs*, the large resources of the empire.

4. *waters ... little rivers* — the Tigris with its branches and “rivulets,” or “conduits” for irrigation, the source of Assyria’s fertility. “The deep” is the ever flowing water, never dry. Metaphorically, for Assyria’s resources, as the “conduits” are her colonies.

5. *when he shot forth* — because of the abundant moisture which nourished him in shooting forth. But see *Margin*.

6. *fowls ... made ... nests in ... boughs* — so ^{<3723>}Ezekiel 17:23 ^{<27012>}Daniel 4:12. The gospel kingdom shall gather all under its covert, for their good and for the glory of God, which the world kingdoms did for evil and for self-aggrandizement (^{<4133>}Matthew 13:32).

8. *cedars ... could not hide him* — could not outtop him. No other king eclipsed him.

were not like — were not comparable to.

garden of God — As in the case of Tyre (^{<3283>}Ezekiel 28:13), the imagery, that is applied to the Assyrian king, is taken from Eden; peculiarly appropriate, as Eden was watered by rivers that afterwards watered Assyria (^{<4020>}Genesis 2:10-14). This cedar seemed to revive in itself all the glories of paradise, so that no tree there outtopped it.

9. *I ... made him* — It was all due to *My* free grace.

10. *thou ... he* — The change of persons is because the language refers partly to the cedar, partly to the person signified by the cedar.

11. Here the literal supersedes the figurative.

shall surely deal with him — according to his own pleasure, and according to the Assyrian's (Sardanapalus) desert. Nebuchadnezzar is called "the mighty one" (*El*, a name of God), because he was God's representative and instrument of judgment (^{<2157>}Daniel 2:37,38).

12. *from his shadow* — *under* which they had formerly *dwelt* as their covert (^{<2506>}Ezekiel 31:6).

13. Birds and beasts shall insult over his fallen trunk.

14. *trees by the waters* — that is, that are plentifully supplied by the waters: nations abounding in resources.

stand up in their height — that is, trust in their height: *stand upon* it as their ground of confidence. FAIRBAIRN points the *Hebrew* differently, so as for "their trees," to translate, "(And that none that drink water may stand *on themselves*, (because of their greatness).)" But the usual reading is better, as Assyria and the confederate states throughout are compared to strong trees. The clause, "All that drink water," marks the ground of the trees' confidence "in their height," namely, that they have ample sources of supply. MAURER, retaining the same *Hebrew*, translates, "that neither their *terebinth trees* may stand up in their height, nor all (the other trees) that drink water."

to ... nether ... earth ... pit — (^{<2628>}Ezekiel 32:18 ^{<1831>}Psalms 82:7).

15. *covered the deep* — as mourners cover their heads in token of mourning, "I made the deep that watered the cedar" to wrap itself in

mourning for him. The waters of the deep are the tributary peoples of Assyria (⁴⁶⁷⁵Revelation 17:15).

fainted — literally, were “faintness” (itself); more forcible than the verb.

16. *hell* — Sheol or Hades, the unseen world: equivalent to, “I cast him into oblivion” (compare ²³⁴⁹Isaiah 14:9-11).

shall be comforted — because so great a king as the Assyrian is brought down to a level with them. It is a kind of consolation to the wretched to have companions in misery.

17. *his arm, that dwelt under his shadow* — those who were the helpers or tool of his tyranny, and therefore enjoyed his protection (for example, Syria and her neighbors). These were sure to share her fate. Compare the same phrase as to the Jews living under the protection of their king (²⁹⁰⁹Lamentations 4:20); both alike “making flesh their arm, and in heart departing from the Lord” (²¹⁷⁵Jeremiah 17:5).

18. Application of the parabolic description of Assyria to the parallel case of Egypt. “All that has been said of the Assyrian consider as said to thyself. To whom art thou so like, as thou art to the Assyrian? To none.” The lesson on a gigantic scale of Eden-like privileges abused to pride and sin by the Assyrian, as in the case of the first man in Eden, ending in ruin, was to be repeated in Egypt’s case. For the unchangeable God governs the world on the same unchangeable principles.

thou shall lie in ... uncircumcised — As circumcision was an object of mocking to thee, thou shall lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, slain by their sword [GROTIUS]. Retribution in kind (²³²⁰Ezekiel 28:10).

This is Pharaoh — Pharaoh’s end shall be the same humiliating one as I have depicted the Assyrian’s to have been. “This” is demonstrative, as if he were pointing with the finger to Pharaoh lying prostrate, a spectacle to all, as on the shore of the Red Sea (⁴²⁴³Exodus 14:30,31).

CHAPTER 32

ⲉⲙⲉⲗⲉⲗ EZEKIEL 32:1-32.

TWO ELEGIES OVER PHARAOH, ONE DELIVERED ON THE FIRST DAY (ⲉⲙⲉⲗⲉⲗ EZEKIEL 32:1), THE OTHER ON THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF THE SAME MONTH, THE TWELFTH OF THE TWELFTH YEAR.

1. The twelfth year from the carrying away of Jehoiachin; Jerusalem was by this time overthrown, and Amasis was beginning his revolt against Pharaoh-hophra.
2. *Pharaoh* — “Phra” in Burmah, signifies the king, high priest, and idol.
whale — rather, any monster of the waters; here, the crocodile of the Nile. Pharaoh is as a lion on dry land, a crocodile in the waters; that is, an object of terror everywhere.
camest forth with thy rivers — “breakest forth” [FAIRBAIRN]. The antithesis of “seas” and “rivers” favors GROTIUS rendering, “Thou camest forth from the sea *into* the rivers”; that is, from thy own empire into other states. However, *English Version* is favored by the “thy”: thou camest forth with *thy* rivers (that is, with thy forces) and with thy feet didst fall irrecoverably; so Israel, once desolate, troubles the waters (that is, neighboring states).
3. *with a company of many people* — namely, the Chaldeans (ⲉⲙⲉⲗⲉⲗ Ezekiel 29:3,4 ⲉⲙⲉⲗⲉⲗ Hosea 7:12).
- my net* — for they are My instrument.
4. *leave thee upon the land* — as a fish drawn out of the water loses all its strength, so Pharaoh (in ⲉⲙⲉⲗⲉⲗ Ezekiel 32:3, compared to a water monster) shall be (ⲉⲙⲉⲗⲉⲗ Ezekiel 29:5).
5. *thy height* — thy hugeness [FAIRBAIRN]. The great heap of corpses of thy forces, on which thou pridest thyself. “Height” may refer to *mental elevation*, as well as bodily [VATABLUS].
6. *land wherein thou swimmest* — Egypt: the land watered by the Nile, the the source of its fertility, wherein thou swimmest (carrying on the

image of the crocodile, that is, wherein thou dost exercise thy wanton power at will). Irony. The land shall still afford seas to swim in, but they shall be seas of blood. Alluding to the plague (^{<1079>}Exodus 7:19 ^{<1088>}Revelation 8:8). HAVERNICK translates, “I will water the land with *what flows from thee*, even thy blood, reaching to the mountains”: “with thy blood *overflowing* even to the mountains.” Perhaps this is better.

7. *put thee out* — extinguish thy light (^{<1805>}Job 18:5). Pharaoh is represented as a bright star, at the extinguishing of whose light in the political sky the whole heavenly host is shrouded in sympathetic darkness. Here, too, as in ^{<3506>}Ezekiel 32:6, there is an allusion to the supernatural darkness sent formerly (^{<1021>}Exodus 10:21-23). The heavenly bodies are often made images of earthly dynasties (^{<2300>}Isaiah 13:10 ^{<1029>}Matthew 24:29).

9. *thy destruction* — that is tidings of thy destruction (literally, “thy breakage”) carried by captive and dispersed Egyptians “among the nations” [GROTIUS]; or, *thy broken people*, resembling one great *fracture*, the ruins of what they had been [FAIRBAIRN].

10. *brandish my sword before them* — literally, “in their faces,” or sight.

13. (See on ^{<3291>}Ezekiel 29:11). The picture is ideally true, not to be interpreted by the letter. The political ascendancy of Egypt was to cease with the Chaldean conquest [FAIRBAIRN]. Henceforth Pharaoh must figuratively no longer *trouble the waters by man or beast*, that is, no longer was he to flood other peoples with his overwhelming forces.

14. *make their waters deep* — rather, “make ... *to subside*”; literally, “sink” [FAIRBAIRN].

like oil — emblem of *quietness*. No longer shall they descend violently on other countries as the overflowing Nile, but shall be still and sluggish in political action.

16. As in ^{<3394>}Ezekiel 19:14. This is a prophetic lamentation; yet so it shall come to pass [GROTIUS].

17. The second lamentation for Pharaoh. This funeral dirge in imagination accompanies him to the unseen world. Egypt personified in its political head is ideally represented as undergoing the change by death to which man is liable. Expressing that Egypt’s supremacy is no more, a thing of the past, never to be again.

the month — the twelfth month (^{<3001>}Ezekiel 32:1); fourteen days after the former vision.

18. *cast them down* — that is predict that they shall be *cast down* (so ²⁰¹⁰Jeremiah 1:10). The prophet's word was God's, and carried with it its own fulfillment.

daughters of ... nations — that is the nations with their peoples. Egypt is to share the fate of other ancient nations once famous, now consigned to oblivion: Elam (Ezekiel 32: 24), Meshech, etc. (³⁵²⁹Ezekiel 32:26), Edom (³⁵²⁹Ezekiel 32:29), Zidon (³⁵³⁰Ezekiel 32:30).

19. *Whom dost thou pass in beauty?* — Beautiful as thou art, thou art not more so than other nations, which nevertheless have perished.

go down, etc. — to the nether world, where all “beauty” is speedily marred.

20. *she is delivered to the sword* — namely, by God.

draw her — as if addressing her executioners: drag her forth to death.

21. (³⁵¹⁶Ezekiel 31:16). Ezekiel has before his eyes ²³⁴⁹Isaiah 14:9, etc.

shall speak to him — with “him” join “with them that help him”; *shall speak to him and his helpers* with a taunting welcome, as now one of themselves.

22. *her ... his* — The abrupt change of gender is, because Ezekiel has in view at one time the *kingdom* (feminine), at another the *monarch*. “Asshur,” or Assyria, is placed first in punishment, as being first in guilt.

23. *in the sides of the pit* — Sepulchres in the East were caves hollowed out of the rock, and the bodies were laid in niches formed at the sides. MAURER needlessly departs from the ordinary meaning, and translates, “extremities” (compare ²³⁴³Isaiah 14:13,15).

which caused terror — They, who alive were a terror to others, are now, in the nether world, themselves a terrible object to behold.

24. *Elam* — placed next, as having been an auxiliary to Assyria. Its territory lay in Persia. In Abraham's time an independent kingdom (⁰¹⁴⁰Genesis 14:1). Famous for its bowmen (²³²⁶Isaiah 22:6).

borne their shame — the just retribution of their lawless *pride*. Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar (²⁴⁸⁴Jeremiah 49:34-38).

25. *a bed* — a sepulchral niche.

all ... slain by ... sword, etc. — (³⁵²¹Ezekiel 32:21,23,24). The very monotony of the phraseology gives to the dirge an awe-inspiring effect.

26. *Meshech, Tubal* — northern nations: the Moschi and Tibareni, between the Black and Caspian Seas. HERODOTUS [3.94], mentions them as a subjugated people, tributaries to Darius Hystaspes (see ^{<32718>}Ezekiel 27:13).

27. *they shall not lie with the mighty* — that is, they shall not have separate tombs such as mighty conquerors have: but shall all be heaped together in one pit, as is the case with the vanquished [GROTIUS]. HAVERNICK reads it interrogatively, “Shall they not lie with the mighty that are fallen?” But *English Version* is supported by the parallel (^{<29448>}Isaiah 14:18,19), to which Ezekiel refers, and which represents them as *not* lying as mighty kings lie in a grave, but cast out of one, as a carcass trodden under foot.

with ... weapons of war — alluding to the custom of burying warriors with their arms (1 Maccabees 13:29). Though honored by the laying of “their swords under their heads,” yet the punishment of “their iniquities shall be upon their bones.” Their swords shall thus attest their shame, not their glory (^{<4062>}Matthew 26:52), being the instruments of their violence, the penalty of which they are paying.

28. *Yea, thou* — Thou, too, Egypt, like them, shalt lie as one vanquished.

29. *princes* — Edom was not only governed by kings, but by subordinate “princes” or “dukes” (^{<1350>}Genesis 36:40).

with their might — notwithstanding their might, they shall be brought down (^{<23418>}Isaiah 34:5,10-17 ^{<3407>}Jeremiah 49:7,13-18).

lie with the uncircumcised — Though Edom was circumcised, being descended from Isaac, he shall lie with the uncircumcised; much more shall Egypt, who had no hereditary right to circumcision.

30. *princes of the north* — Syria, which is still called by the Arabs the north; or the Tyrians, north of Palestine, conquered by Nebuchadnezzar (^{<2301>}Ezekiel 26:1-28:26), [GROTIUS].

Zidonians — who shared the fate of Tyre (^{<3221>}Ezekiel 28:21).

with their terror they are ashamed of their might — that is, notwithstanding the terror which they inspired in their contemporaries. “Might” is connected by MAURER thus, “Notwithstanding the terror which resulted from their might.”

31. *comforted* — with the melancholy satisfaction of not being alone, but of having other kingdoms companions in his downfall. This shall be his only comfort — a very poor one!

32. *my terror* — the *Margin* or *Keri*. The *Hebrew* text or *Chetib* is “*his* terror,” which gives good sense (⁴³⁹²⁵Ezekiel 32:25,30). “*My* terror” implies that God puts *His* terror on Pharaoh’s multitude, as they put “their terror” on others, for example, under Pharaoh-necho on Judea. As “the land of the living” was the scene of “their terror,” so it shall be God’s; especially in Judea, He will display His glory to the terror of Israel’s foes (³⁹³¹⁷Ezekiel 26:20). In Israel’s case the judgment is temporary, ending in their future restoration under Messiah. In the case of the world kingdoms which flourished for a time, they fall to rise no more.

CHAPTER 33

EZEKIEL 33:1-33.

RENEWAL OF EZEKIEL'S COMMISSION, NOW THAT HE IS AGAIN TO ADDRESS HIS COUNTRYMEN, AND IN A NEW TONE.

Heretofore his functions had been chiefly threatening; from this point, after the evil had got to its worst in the overthrow of Jerusalem, the consolatory element preponderates.

2. to the children of thy people — whom he had been forbidden to address from ^{<320>}Ezekiel 24:26,27, till Jerusalem was overthrown, and the “escaped” came with tidings of the judgment being completed. So now, in ^{<330>}Ezekiel 33:21, the tidings of the fact having arrived, he opens his heretofore closed lips to the Jews. In the interval he had prophesied as to foreign nations. The former part of the chapter, at ^{<330>}Ezekiel 33:2-20, seems to have been imparted to Ezekiel on the evening previous (^{<330>}Ezekiel 33:22), being a preparation for the latter part (^{<330>}Ezekiel 33:23-33) imparted after the tidings had come. This accounts for the first part standing without intimation of the date, which was properly reserved for the latter part, to which the former was the anticipatory introduction [FAIRBAIRN].

watchman — ^{<330>}Ezekiel 33:1-9 exhibit Ezekiel's office as a spiritual watchman; so in ^{<330>}Ezekiel 3:16-21; only here the duties of the earthly watchman (compare ^{<330>}2 Samuel 18:24,25 ^{<330>}2 Kings 9:17) are detailed first, and then the application is made to the spiritual watchman's duty (compare ^{<330>}Isaiah 21:6-10 ^{<330>}Hosea 9:8 Habakkuk 2:1). “A man of their coasts” is a man specially chosen for the office *out of their whole number*. So ^{<330>}Judges 18:2, “five men *from their coasts*”; also the *Hebrew* of ^{<330>}Genesis 47:2; implying the care needed in the choice of the watchman, the spiritual as well as the temporal (^{<330>}Acts 1:21,22,24-26 ^{<330>}1 Timothy 5:22).

3. the sword — invaders. An appropriate illustration at the time of the invasion of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar.

4. blood ... upon his own head — metaphor from sacrificial victims, on the heads of which they used to lay their hands, praying that their guilt should be upon the victims.

6. *his iniquity* — his negligence in not maintaining constant watchfulness, as they who are in warfare ought to do. The thing signified here appears from under the image.

7. *I have set thee a watchman* — application of the image. Ezekiel's appointment to be a watchman spiritually is far more solemn, as it is derived from God, not from the people.

8. *thou shalt surely die* — by a violent death, the earnest of everlasting death; the qualification being supposed, "if thou dost not repent."

9. Blood had by this time been shed (^{<3621>}Ezekiel 33:21), but Ezekiel was clear.

10. *be upon us* — that is, their guilt remain on us.

pine away in them — if we suffer the penalty threatened for them in ^{<3623>}Ezekiel 24:23, according to the law (^{<3679>}Leviticus 26:39).

how should we ... live? — as Thou dost promise in ^{<3625>}Ezekiel 33:5 (compare ^{<3711>}Ezekiel 37:11 ^{<2344>}Isaiah 49:14).

11. To meet the Jews' cry of despair in ^{<3630>}Ezekiel 33:10, Ezekiel here cheers them by the assurance that God has no pleasure in their death, but that they should repent and live (^{<602>}2 Peter 3:9). A yearning tenderness manifests itself here, notwithstanding all their past sins; yet with it a holiness that abates nothing of its demands for the honor of God's authority. God's righteousness is vindicated as in ^{<3625>}Ezekiel 3:18-21 and ^{<3621>}Ezekiel 18:1-32, by the statement that each should be treated with the closest adaptation of God's justice to his particular case.

12. *not fall ... in the day that he turneth* — (^{<4074>}2 Chronicles 7:14; see ^{<3621>}Ezekiel 3:20 18:24).

15. *give again that he had robbed* — (^{<2918>}Luke 19:8).

statutes of life — in the obeying of which life is promised (^{<3625>}Leviticus 18:5). If the law has failed to give life to man, it has not been the fault of the law, but of man's sinful inability to keep it (^{<3710>}Romans 7:10,12 ^{<3621>}Galatians 3:21). It becomes life-giving through Christ's righteous obedience to it (^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 3:6).

17. *The way of the Lord* — The Lord's way of dealing in His moral government.

21. *twelfth year ... tenth month* — a year and a half after the capture of the city (^{<3621>}Jeremiah 39:2 52:5,6), in the eleventh year and fourth month. The

one who escaped (as foretold, ^{<309>}Ezekiel 24:26) may have been so long on the road through fear of entering the enemy's country [HENDERSON]; or, the *singular* is used for the *plural* in a collective sense, "the escaped remnant." Compare similar phrases, "the escaped of Moab," ^{<310>}Isaiah 15:9; "He that escapeth of them," ^{<311>}Amos 9:1. Naturally the reopening of the prophet's mouth for consolation would be deferred till the number of the escaped remnant was complete: the removal of such a large number would easily have occupied seventeen or eighteen months.

22. *in the evening* — (see on ^{<312>}Ezekiel 33:2). Thus the capture of Jerusalem was known to Ezekiel by revelation before the messenger came.

my mouth ... no more dumb — that is, to my countrymen; as foretold (^{<313>}Ezekiel 24:27), He spake (^{<314>}Ezekiel 33:2-20) in the evening before the tidings came.

24. *they that inhabit ... wastes of ... Israel* — marking the blindness of the fraction of Jews under Gedaliah who, though dwelling amidst regions laid waste by the foe, still cherished hopes of deliverance, and this without repentance.

Abraham was one ... but we are many — If God gave the land for an inheritance to Abraham, who was but one (^{<315>}Isaiah 51:2), much more it is given to us, who, though reduced, are still many. If he, with 318 servants, was able to defend himself amid so many foes, much more shall we, so much more numerous, retain our own. The grant of the land was not for his sole use, but for his numerous posterity.

inherited the land — not actually possessed it (^{<316>}Acts 7:5), but had the right of dwelling and pasturing his flocks in it [GROTIUS]. The Jews boasted similarly of their Abrahamic descent in ^{<317>}Matthew 3:9 and ^{<318>}John 8:39.

25. *eat with the blood* — in opposition to the law (^{<319>}Leviticus 19:26; compare ^{<320>}Genesis 9:4). They did so as an idolatrous rite.

26. *Ye stand upon your sword* — Your dependence is, not on right and equity, but on force and arms.

every one — Scarcely anyone refrains from adultery.

27. *shall fall by the sword* — The very object of their confidence would be the instrument of their destruction. Thinking to "stand" by it, by it they shall "fall." Just retribution! Some fell by the sword of Ishmael; others by the Chaldeans in revenge for the murder of Gedaliah (^{<321>}Jeremiah 40:1-44:30).

caves — (^{100B}Judges 6:2 ^{103B}1 Samuel 13:6). In the hilly parts of Judea there were caves almost inaccessible, as having only crooked and extremely narrow paths of ascent, with rock in front stretching down into the valleys beneath perpendicularly [JOSEPHUS, *Wars of the Jews*, 1.16.4].

28. most desolate — (³⁰²⁷Jeremiah 4:27 12:11).

none ... pass through — from fear of wild beasts and pestilence [GROTIUS].

30. Not only the remnant in Judea, but those at the Chebar, though less flagrantly, betrayed the same unbelieving spirit.

talking against thee — Though going to the prophet to hear the word of the Lord, they criticised, *in an unfriendly spirit*, his peculiarities of manner and his enigmatical style (³¹⁰⁹Ezekiel 20:49); making these the excuse for their impenitence. Their talking was not directly “*against*” Ezekiel, for they professed to like his ministrations; but God’s word speaks of things as they really are, not as they appear.

by the walls — in the public haunts. In the East groups assemble under the walls of their houses in winter for conversation.

in the doors — privately.

what is the word — Their motive was curiosity, seeking pastime and gratification of the ear (⁵⁰⁰²2 Timothy 4:3); not reformation of the heart. Compare Johanan’s consultation of Jeremiah, to hear the word of the Lord without desiring to *do* it (³⁴⁰¹Jeremiah 42:1-43:13).

31. as the people cometh — that is, in crowds, as disciples flock to their teacher.

sit before thee — on lower seats at thy feet, according to the Jewish custom of pupils (^{653B}Deuteronomy 33:3 ¹⁰⁶³2 Kings 4:38 ¹⁰¹⁹Luke 10:39 ^{402B}Acts 22:3).

as my people — though they are not.

hear ... not do — (¹⁰³⁰Matthew 13:20,21 ³⁰²³James 1:23,24).

they show much love — literally, “make love,” that is, act the part of lovers. Profess love to the Lord (⁴⁰²¹Matthew 7:21). GESENIUS translates, according to *Arabic* idiom, “They do the delights of God,” that is, all that is agreeable to God. *Vulgate* translates, “They turn thy words into a song of their mouths.”

heart goeth after ... covetousness — the grand rival to the love of God; therefore called “idolatry,” and therefore associated with impure carnal love, as both alike transfer the heart’s affection from the Creator to the creature (⁴¹³²Matthew 13:22 ⁴¹⁸⁶Ephesians 5:5 ⁵¹⁸⁰1 Timothy 6:10).

32. *very lovely song* — literally, a “song of loves”: a lover’s song. They praise thy eloquence, but care not for the subject of it as a real and personal thing; just as many do in the modern church [JEROME].

play well on an instrument — Hebrew singers accompanied the “voice” with the harp.

33. *when this cometh to pass* — when My predictions are verified.

lo, it will come — rather, “lo it is come” (see ³³²²Ezekiel 33:22).

know — experimentally, and to their cost.

CHAPTER 34

EZEKIEL 34:1-31.

REPROOF OF THE FALSE SHEPHERDS; PROMISE OF THE TRUE AND GOOD SHEPHERD.

Having in the thirty-third chapter laid down repentance as the necessary preliminary to happier times for the people, He now promises the removal of the false shepherds as preparatory to the raising up of the Good Shepherd.

2. ²²¹⁶Jeremiah 23:1 and ³¹¹⁷Zechariah 11:17 similarly make the removal of the false shepherds the preliminary to the interposition of Messiah the Good Shepherd in behalf of His people Israel. The “shepherds” are not prophets or priests, but *rulers* who sought in their government their own selfish ends, not the good of the people ruled. The term was appropriate, as David, the first king and the type of the true David (³³²³Ezekiel 34:23,24), was taken from being a shepherd (¹⁰⁸²2 Samuel 5:2 ⁴⁷⁸⁰Psalms 78:70,71); and the office, like that of a shepherd for his flock, is to guard and provide for his people. The choice of a *shepherd* for the first king was therefore designed to suggest this thought, just as Jesus’ selection of *fishermen* for apostles was designed to remind them of their spiritual office of catching men (compare ³⁴⁰³Isaiah 44:28 ²⁰¹⁸Jeremiah 2:8 3:15 10:21 23:1,2).

3. *fat* — or, by differently pointing the *Hebrew*, “milk” [*Septuagint*]. Thus the repetition “fat” and “fed” is avoided: also the eating of “fat” would not probably be put before the “killing” of the sheep. The eating of sheep’s or goats’ milk as food (⁶²¹⁴Deuteronomy 32:14 ¹⁷²⁷Proverbs 27:27) was unobjectionable, had not these shepherds milked them too often, and that without duly “feeding” them [BOCHART], (²⁸⁹¹Isaiah 56:11). The rulers levied exorbitant tributes.

kill ... fed — kill the rich by false accusation so as to get possession of their property.

feed not ... flock — take no care of the people (⁶¹⁰²John 10:12).

4. *The diseased* — rather, those *weak* from the effects of “disease,” as “strengthened” (that is, with due nourishment) requires [GROTIUS].

broken — that is, fractures from wounds inflicted by the wolf.

brought again ... driven away — (^{<1234>}Exodus 23:4). Those “driven away” by the enemy into foreign lands through God’s judgments are meant (^{<2345>}Jeremiah 23:3). A spiritual reformation of the state by the rulers would have turned away God’s wrath, and “brought again” the exiles. The rulers are censured as *chiefly* guilty (though the people, too, were guilty), because they, who ought to have been foremost in checking the evil, promoted it.

neither ... sought ... lost — Contrast the Good Shepherd’s love (^{<2345>}Luke 15:4).

with force ... ruled — (^{<1013>}Exodus 1:13,14). With an Egyptian bondage. The very thing forbidden by the law they did (^{<1056>}Leviticus 25:43; compare ^{<1018>}1 Peter 5:3).

5. scattered, because ... no shepherd — that is, none worthy of the name, though there were some *called* shepherds (^{<1271>}1 Kings 22:17 ^{<1018>}Matthew 9:36). Compare ^{<1056>}Matthew 26:31, where the sheep were scattered when the true Shepherd was smitten. God calls them “My sheep”; for they were not, as the shepherds treated them, *their* patrimony whereby to “feed themselves.”

meat to all ... beasts — They became a prey to the Syrians, Ammon, Moab, and Assyria.

6. every high hill — the scene of their idolatries sanctioned by the rulers.

search ... seek — rather, “seek ... search.” The former is the part of the superior rulers *to inquire after: to search out* is the duty of the subordinate rulers [JUNIUS].

10. I will require my flock — (^{<3137>}Hebrews 13:17), rather, “I require,” etc., for God already had begun to do so, punishing Zedekiah and the other princes severely (^{<3520>}Jeremiah 52:10).

11. I ... will ... search — doing that which the so-called shepherds had failed to do, I being the rightful owner of the flock.

12. in the day that he is among — *in the midst of (Hebrew)* His sheep that had been scattered. Referring to Messiah’s second advent, when He shall be “the glory *in the midst of* Israel” (Zechariah 2:5).

in the cloudy ... day — the day of the nation’s calamity (^{<3111>}Joel 2:2).

13. And I will bring them out from the people, etc. — (^{<3525>}Ezekiel 28:25 36:24 37:21,22 ^{<2345>}Isaiah 65:9,10 ^{<2345>}Jeremiah 23:3).

14. *good pasture* — (⁴⁸²⁰Psalm 23:2).

high mountains of Israel — In ⁴⁵⁷²Ezekiel 17:23 20:40, the phrase is “the mountain of the height of Israel” in the *singular* number. The reason for the difference is: *there* Ezekiel spoke of the central seat of the kingdom, Mount Zion, where the people met for the worship of Jehovah; *here* he speaks of the kingdom of Israel at large, all the parts of which are regarded as possessing a moral elevation.

16. In contrast to the unfaithful shepherds (⁴⁵⁰⁴Ezekiel 34:4). The several duties neglected by *them* I will faithfully discharge.

fat ... strong — that is, those rendered wanton by prosperity (⁴⁶²⁵Deuteronomy 32:15 ⁴⁴⁵³Jeremiah 5:28), who use their strength to oppress the weak. Compare ⁴⁵⁰⁴Ezekiel 34:20, “the fat cattle” (⁴³⁰⁰Isaiah 10:16). The image is from fat cattle that wax refractory.

with judgment — that is, justice and equity, as contrasted with the “force” and “cruelty” with which the unfaithful shepherds ruled the flock (⁴⁵⁰⁴Ezekiel 34:4).

17. *you, ... my flock* — passing from the rulers to the people.

cattle and cattle — rather, “sheep and sheep”; *Margin*, “small cattle,” or “flocks of lambs and kids,” that is, I judge between one class of citizens and another, so as to award what is right to each. He then defines the class about to be punitively “judged,” namely, “the rams and he-goats,” or “great he-goats” (compare ⁴³⁴⁹Isaiah 14:9, *Margin*; Zechariah 10:3 ⁴¹⁵²Matthew 25:32,33). They answer to “the fat and strong,” as opposed to the “sick” (⁴⁵⁰⁴Ezekiel 34:16). The rich and ungodly of the people are meant, who imitated the bad rulers in oppressing their poorer brethren, as if it enhanced their own joys to trample on others’ rights (⁴⁵⁰⁴Ezekiel 34:18).

18, 19. Not content with appropriating to their own use the goods of others, they from mere wantonness spoiled what they did not use, so as to be of no use to the owners.

deep waters — that is, “limpid,” as deep waters are generally *clear*. GROTIUS explains the image as referring to the usuries with which the rich ground the poor (⁴³²²Ezekiel 22:12 ⁴³⁴⁹Isaiah 24:2).

19. *they eat* — scantily.

they drink — sorrowfully.

20. *fat ... lean* — the rich oppressors ... the humble poor.

21. *scattered them abroad* — down to the time of the carrying away to Babylon [GROTIUS].

22. After the restoration from Babylon, the Jews were delivered in some degree from the oppression, not only of foreigners, but also of their own great people (^{<4181>}Nehemiah 5:1-19). The full and final fulfillment of this prophecy is future.

23. *set up* — that is, raise up by divine appointment; alluding to the declaration of God to David, “I will *set up* thy seed after thee” (^{<4072>}2 Samuel 7:12); and, “Yet have I set My king on My holy hill of Zion” (^{<3906>}Psalms 2:6; compare ^{<4023>}Acts 2:30 13:23).

one shepherd — literally, “a Shepherd, one”: singularly and pre-eminently *one*: the only one of His kind, to whom none is comparable (So 5:10). The Lord Jesus refers to this prophecy (^{<6043>}John 10:14), “I am THE Good Shepherd.” Also “one” as uniting in one the heretofore divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and also “gathering together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth” (^{<6010>}Ephesians 1:10); thus healing worse breaches than that between Israel and Judah (^{<5011>}Colossians 1:20). “God by Him reconciling all things unto Himself, whether things in earth or in heaven.”

David — the antitypical David, Messiah, of the seed of David, which no other king after the captivity was: who was *fully*, what David was only in a degree, “the man after God’s own heart.” Also, David means *beloved*: Messiah was truly God’s *beloved* Son (^{<2301>}Isaiah 42:1 ^{<4017>}Matthew 3:17). Shepherd means King, rather than religious instructor; in this pre-eminently He was the true David, who was the *Shepherd King* (^{<4012>}Luke 1:32,33). Messiah is called “David” in ^{<2513>}Isaiah 55:3,4 ^{<3819>}Jeremiah 30:9 ^{<3815>}Hosea 3:5.

24. *my servant* — implying fitness for ruling in the name of God, not pursuing a self-chosen course, as other kings, but acting as the faithful administrator of the will of God; Messiah realized fully this character (^{<3407>}Psalms 40:7,8 ^{<2301>}Isaiah 42:1 49:3,6 53:11 ^{<5007>}Philippians 2:7), which David typically and partially represented (^{<4136>}Acts 13:36); so He is the fittest person to wield the world scepter, abused by all the world kings (^{<2034>}Daniel 2:34,35,44,45).

25. *covenant of peace ... evil beasts ... to cease ... dwell safely* — The original promise of the law (^{<0306>}Leviticus 26:6) shall be realized for the first time fully under Messiah (^{<2509>}Isaiah 11:6-9 35:9 ^{<3815>}Hosea 2:18).

26. *them and the places round about my hill* — The Jews, and Zion, God's hill (⁴⁹¹⁶Psalm 2:6), are to be sources of blessing, not merely to themselves, but to the surrounding heathen (²³⁹²⁴Isaiah 19:24 56:6,7 60:3 ⁴³¹⁰Micah 5:7 ⁴⁸⁸³Zechariah 8:13). The literal fulfillment is, however, the primary one, though the spiritual also is designed. In correspondence with the settled reign of righteousness internally, all is to be prosperity externally, fertilizing showers (according to the promise of the ancient covenant, ⁴³⁰⁴Leviticus 26:4 ⁴⁹⁸⁹Psalm 68:9 ⁴⁹¹⁰Malachi 3:10), and productive trees and lands (⁴⁵²⁷Ezekiel 34:27). Thus shall they realize the image of ⁴⁵⁴⁴Ezekiel 34:14; namely, a flock richly pastured by God Himself.

27. *served themselves of them* — availed themselves of their services, as if the Jews were their slaves (⁴²⁷³Jeremiah 22:13 25:14; compare ⁴¹⁵³Genesis 15:13 ⁴¹¹⁴Exodus 1:14).

28. *dwell safely* — (⁴²³⁶Jeremiah 23:6).

29. *plant of renown* — Messiah, the “Rod” and “Branch” (²³¹⁰⁴Isaiah 11:1), the “righteous Branch” (⁴²³⁵Jeremiah 23:5), who shall obtain for them “renown.” FAIRBAIRN less probably translates, “A plantation for a name,” that is, a flourishing condition, represented as a garden (alluding to Eden, ⁴⁰⁰⁸Genesis 2:8-11, with its various trees, good for food and pleasant to the sight), the planting of the Lord (⁴³⁰⁷Isaiah 60:21 61:3), and an object of “renown” among the heathen.

31. *ye my flock ... are men* — not merely an explanation of the image, as JEROME represents. But as God had promised many things which mere “men” could not expect to realize, He shows that it is not from *man's* might their realization is to be looked for, but from GOD, who would perform them for His covenant-people, “*His flock*” [ROSENMULLER]. When we realize most our weakness and God's power and faithfulness to His covenant, we are in the fittest state for receiving His blessings.

CHAPTER 35

EZEKIEL 35:1-15.

JUDGMENT ON EDMOM.

Another feature of Israel's prosperity; those who exulted over Israel's humiliation, shall themselves be a "prey." Already stated in ^{<3512>}Ezekiel 25:12-14; properly repeated here in full detail, as a commentary on ^{<3428>}Ezekiel 34:28. The Israelites "shall be no more a prey"; but Edom, the type of their most bitter foes, shall be destroyed irrecoverably.

2. *Mount Seir* — that is, Idumea (^{<0139>}Genesis 36:9). Singled out as badly pre-eminent in its bitterness against God's people, to represent all their enemies everywhere and in all ages. So in ^{<2345>}Isaiah 34:5 63:1-4, Edom, the region of the greatest enmity towards God's people, is the ideal scene of the final judgments of all God's foes. "Seir" means "shaggy," alluding to its rugged hills and forests.

3. *most desolate* — literally, "desolation and desolateness" (^{<2497>}Jeremiah 49:17, etc.). It is only in their national character of foes to God's people, that the Edomites are to be utterly destroyed. A *remnant* of Edom, as of the other heathen, is to be "called by the name of God" (^{<3092>}Amos 9:12).

5. *perpetual hatred* — (^{<3970>}Psalm 137:7 ^{<3001>}Amos 1:11 ^{<3001>}Obadiah 1:10-16). Edom perpetuated the hereditary hatred derived from Esau against Jacob.

shed the blood of, etc. — The literal translation is better. "Thou hast poured out the children of Israel"; namely, like water. So ^{<3224>}Psalm 22:14 63:10, *Margin*; ^{<3821>}Jeremiah 18:21. Compare ^{<0144>}2 Samuel 14:14.

by the force of the sword — literally, "by" or "upon the hands of the sword"; the sword being personified as a devourer whose "hands" were the instruments of destruction.

in the time that their iniquity had an end — that is, had its consummation (^{<3215>}Ezekiel 21:25,29). Edom consummated his guilt when he exulted over Jerusalem's downfall, and helped the foe to destroy it (^{<3970>}Psalm 137:7 ^{<3001>}Obadiah 1:11).

6. *I will prepare thee unto blood* — I will expose thee to slaughter.

sith — old English for “seeing that” or “since.”

thou hast not hated blood — The *Hebrew* order is, “thou hast hated not blood”; that is, thou couldst not bear to live without bloodshed [GROTIUS]. There is a play on similar sounds in the *Hebrew*; *Edom* resembling *dam*, the *Hebrew* for “blood”; as “Edom” means “red,” the transition to “blood” is easy. Edom, akin to blood in name, so also in nature and acts; “blood therefore shall pursue thee.” The measure which Edom meted to others should be meted to himself (¹⁹⁴⁹¹⁷Psalm 109:17 ⁴¹⁰¹²Matthew 7:2 26:52).

7. *cut off ... him that passeth* — that is, every passer to and fro; “the highways shall be unoccupied” (²⁹¹¹¹Ezekiel 29:11 ¹⁰¹¹⁶Judges 5:6).

9. *shall not return* — to their former state (²³⁶⁵⁵Ezekiel 16:55); shall not be restored. The *Hebrew* text (*Chetib*) reads, “shall not *be inhabited*” (compare ²³¹¹¹Ezekiel 26:20 Malachi 1:3,4).

10. So far from being allowed to enter on Israel’s vacated inheritance, as Edom hoped (²³⁶⁵⁵Ezekiel 36:5 ¹⁸⁸¹⁴Psalm 83:4,12 ³⁰¹¹³Obadiah 1:13), it shall be that he shall be deprived of his own; and whereas Israel’s humiliation was temporary, Edom’s shall be perpetual.

Lord was there — (²³⁶⁵⁵Ezekiel 48:35 ¹⁹⁴¹¹Psalm 48:1,3 132:13,14). Jehovah claimed Judea as His own, even when the Chaldeans had overthrown the state; they could not remove Him, as they did the idols of heathen lands. The broken sentences express the excited feelings of the prophet at Edom’s wicked presumption. The transition from the “two nations and two countries” to “it” marks that the two are regarded as one whole. The last clause, “and Jehovah was there,” bursts in, like a flash of lightning, reproving the wicked presumption of Edom’s thought.

11. *according to thine anger* — (³¹¹¹³James 2:13). As thou in anger and envy hast injured them, so I will injure thee.

I will make myself known among them — namely, the Israelites. I will manifest My favor to them, after I have punished thee.

12, 13. *blasphemies ... against ... Israel ... against me* — God regards what is done against His people as done against Himself (⁴¹⁵⁶⁵Matthew 25:45 ⁴⁴⁰¹²Acts 9:2,4,5). Edom *implied*, if he did not express it, in his taunts against Israel, that God had not sufficient power to protect His people. A type of the spirit of all the foes of God and His people (⁴⁰⁰¹¹1 Samuel 2:3 ⁶¹¹⁶Revelation 13:6).

14. (²⁵¹³Isaiah 65:13,14). “The whole earth” refers to *Judea and the nations that submit themselves to Judea’s God*; when these rejoice, the foes of God and His people, represented by Edom *as a nation*, shall be desolate. Things shall be completely reversed; Israel, that now for a time mourns, shall then rejoice and for ever. Edom, that now rejoices over fallen Israel, shall then, when elsewhere all is joy, mourn, and for ever (²⁵¹⁷Isaiah 65:17-19 ⁴¹⁰⁰Matthew 5:4 ⁴¹⁰⁵Luke 6:25). HAVERNICK loses this striking antithesis by translating, “According to the joy of the whole land (of Edom), so I will make thee desolate”; which would make ³⁵¹⁵Ezekiel 35:15 a mere repetition of this.
15. (³⁰¹²Obadiah 1:12,15).

CHAPTER 36

⚔️ EZEKIEL 36:1-38.

ISRAEL AVENGED OF HER FOES, AND RESTORED, FIRST TO INWARD HOLINESS, THEN TO OUTWARD PROSPERITY.

The distinction between Israel and the heathen (as Edom) is: Israel has a covenant relation to God ensuring restoration after chastisement, so that the heathen's hope of getting possession of the elect people's inheritance must fail, and they themselves be made desolate (^{⚔️}Ezekiel 36:1-15). The reason for the chastisement of Israel was Israel's sin and profanation of God's name (^{⚔️}Ezekiel 36:16-21). God has good in store for Israel, for His own name's sake, to revive His people; first, by a spiritual renewal of their hearts, and, next, by an external restoration to prosperity (^{⚔️}Ezekiel 36:22-33). The result is that the heathen shall be impressed with the power and goodness of God manifested so palpably towards the restored people (^{⚔️}Ezekiel 36:34-38).

1, 2. *mountains of Israel* — in contrast to “*Mount Seir*” of the previous prophecy. They are here personified; Israel's elevation is moral, not merely physical, as Edom's. Her hills are “the everlasting hills” of Jacob's prophecy (^{⚔️}Genesis 49:26). “The enemy” (Edom, the singled-out representative of all God's foes), with a shout of exultation, “Aha!” had claimed, as the nearest kinsman of Israel (the brother of their father Esau), his vacated inheritance; as much as to say, the so-called “everlasting” inheritance of Israel and of the “hills,” which typified the unmoved perpetuity of it (^{⚔️}Psalms 125:1,2), has come to an end, in spite of the promise of God, and has become “ours” (compare ^{⚔️}Deuteronomy 32:13-33:15).

3. Literally, “Because, even because.”

swallowed you up — literally, “panted after” you, as a beast after its prey; implying the greedy cupidity of Edom as to Israel's inheritance (^{⚔️}Psalms 56:1,2).

lips of talkers — literally, “lips of *the tongue*,” that is, of the slanderer, the man of tongue. Edom slandered Israel because of the connection of the latter with Jehovah, as though He were unable to save them.

^{<6387>}Deuteronomy 28:37, and ^{<2409>}Jeremiah 24:9 had foretold Israel's reproach among the heathen (^{<2196>}Daniel 9:16).

4. Inanimate creatures are addressed, to imply that the creature also, as it were, groans for deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (^{<6189>}Romans 8:19-21) [POLANUS]. The completeness of the renewed blessedness of all parts of the land is implied.

derision — (^{<5758>}Psalm 79:4).

5. *to cast it out for a prey* — that is, to take the land for a prey, its inhabitants being cast out. Or the land is compared to a prey cast forth to wild beasts. FAIRBAIRN needlessly alters the *Hebrew* pointing and translates, "that they may plunder its pasturage."

6. *the shame of the heathen* — namely, the shame with which the heathen cover you (^{<4338>}Psalm 123:3,4).

7. *lifted ... mine hand* — in token of an oath (^{<3105>}Ezekiel 20:5 ^{<0142>}Genesis 14:22).

they shall bear their shame — a *perpetual* shame; whereas the "shame" which Israel bore from these heathen was only for a time.

8. *they are at hand to come* — that is the Israelites are soon about to return to their land. This proves that the primary reference of the prophecy is to the return from Babylon, which was "at hand," or comparatively near. But this only in part fulfilled the prediction, the full and final blessing in future, and the restoration from Babylon was an earnest of it.

10. *wastes builded* — ^{<2582>}Isaiah 58:12 61:4 ^{<3191>}Amos 9:11,12,14, where, as here (^{<3625>}Ezekiel 34:23,24), the names of David, Messiah's type, and Edom, Israel's foe, are introduced in connection with the coming restoration.

11. *do better ... than at your beginnings* — as in the case of Job (^{<822>}Job 42:12). Whereas the heathen nations fall irrevocably, Israel shall be more than restored; its last estate shall exceed even its first.

12. *to walk upon you* — O mountains of Israel (^{<3618>}Ezekiel 36:8)!

thee ... thou — change from *plural* to *singular*: O hill of Zion, singled out from the other mountains of Israel (^{<3625>}Ezekiel 34:26); or land.

thou shall no more ... bereave them of men — Thou shalt no more provoke God to bereave them *of children* (so the ellipsis ought to be

supplied, as Ezekiel probably alludes to ^{<2457>}Jeremiah 15:7, “I will bereave them *of children*”).

13. *Thou land devourest up men* — alluding to the words of the spies (^{<0433>}Numbers 13:32). The land personified is represented as doing that which was done in it. Like an unnatural mother it devoured, that is, it was the grave of its people; of the Canaanites, its former possessors, through mutual wars, and finally by the sword of Israel; and now, of the Jews, through internal and external ills; for example, wars, famine (to which ^{<3670>}Ezekiel 36:30, “reproach of *famine* among the heathen,” implies the allusion here is).

14. *bereave* — so the *Keri*, or *Hebrew Margin* reads, to correspond to “bereave” in ^{<3613>}Ezekiel 36:13; but “cause to fall” or “stumble,” in the *Hebrew* text or *Chetib*, being the more difficult reading, is the one least likely to come from a corrector; also, it forms a good transition to the next subject, namely, the moral *cause* of the people’s calamities, namely, their *falls*, or *stumbings* through sin. The latter ceasing, the former also cease. So the same expression follows in ^{<3615>}Ezekiel 36:15, “Neither shalt thou cause thy nations to *fall* any more.”

17. *removed woman* — (^{<1519>}Leviticus 15:19, etc.).

18, 19. The reason for their removal was their sin, which God’s holiness could not let pass unpunished; just as a woman’s legal uncleanness was the reason for her being *separated* from the congregation.

20. *profaned my holy name, when they* — the heathen

said to them — the Israelites.

These, etc. — The Israelites gave a handle of reproach to the heathen against God, who would naturally say, These who take usury, oppress, commit adultery, etc., and who, in such an abject plight, are “gone forth” as exiles “out of His land,” are specimens of what Jehovah can or will effect, for His people, and show what kind of a God this so-called holy, omnipotent, covenant-keeping God must be! (^{<525>}Isaiah 52:5 ^{<6124>}Romans 2:24).

21. *I had pity for mine holy name* — that is, I felt pity for it; God’s own name, so dishonored, was the primary object of His pitying concern; then His people, secondarily, through His concern for it [FAIRBAIRN].

22. *not ... for your sakes* — that is, not for any merit in you; for, on the contrary, on your part, there is everything to call down continued severity (compare ^{<808>}Deuteronomy 9:5,6). The sole and sure ground of hope was

God's regard to "His own name," as the God of covenant grace (³⁹⁶⁶Psalm 106:45), which He must vindicate from the dishonor brought on it by the Jews, before the heathen.

23. sanctify — vindicate and manifest as holy, in opposition to the heathen reproaches of it brought on by the Jews' sins and their punishment (see on ³⁶³⁰Ezekiel 36:20).

sanctified in you — that is, in respect of you; I shall be regarded in their eyes as the Holy One, and righteous in My dealings towards you (³²⁰⁴Ezekiel 20:41 28:22).

24. Fulfilled primarily in the restoration from Babylon; ultimately to be so in the restoration "from all countries."

25. The *external* restoration must be preceded by an *internal* one. The change in their condition must not be superficial, but must be based on a radical renewal of the heart. Then the heathen, understanding from the regenerated lives of God's people how holy God is, would perceive Israel's past troubles to have been only the necessary vindications of His righteousness. Thus God's name would be "sanctified" before the heathen, and God's people be prepared for outward blessings.

sprinkle ... water — phraseology taken from the law; namely, the water mixed with the ashes of a heifer sprinkled with a hyssop on the unclean (⁴⁰⁹⁹Numbers 19:9-18); the thing signified being the cleansing blood of Christ sprinkled on the conscience and heart (³⁸¹³Hebrews 9:13,14 10:22; compare ²⁶³⁸Jeremiah 33:8 ⁴¹⁵⁵Ephesians 5:26).

from all your idols — Literal idolatry has ceased among the Jews ever since the captivity; so far, the prophecy has been already fulfilled; but "cleansing from *all* their idols," for example, covetousness, prejudices against Jesus of Nazareth, is yet future.

26. new heart — mind and will.

spirit — motive and principle of action.

stony heart — unimpressible in serious things; like the "stony ground" (⁴¹³⁵Matthew 13:5,20), unfit for receiving the good seed so as to bring forth fruit.

heart of flesh — not "carnal" in opposition to "spiritual"; but impressible and docile, fit for receiving the good seed. In ³⁸⁸¹Ezekiel 18:31 they are commanded, "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit." Here God says, "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." Thus the

responsibility of man, and the sovereign grace of God, are shown to be coexistent. Man cannot make himself a new heart unless God gives it (^{<3852>}Philippians 2:12,13).

27. *my spirit* — (^{<3818>}Ezekiel 11:19 ^{<3629>}Jeremiah 32:39). The partial reformation at the return from Babylon (^{<4500>}Ezra 10:6, etc. ^{<4600>}Nehemiah 8:1-9:38) was an earnest of the full renewal hereafter under Messiah.

28. *ye ... my people, ... I ... your God* — (^{<3812>}Ezekiel 11:20 ^{<3812>}Jeremiah 30:22).

29. *save ... from all ... uncleannesses* — the province of Jesus, according to the signification of His name (^{<4021>}Matthew 1:21). To be specially exercised in behalf of the Jews in the latter days (^{<5126>}Romans 11:26).

call for ... corn — as a master “calls for” a servant; all the powers and productions of nature are the servants of Jehovah (^{<49516>}Psalms 105:16 ^{<4088>}Matthew 8:8,9). Compare as to the subordination of all the intermediate agents to the Great First Cause, who will give “corn” and all good things to His people, ^{<3021>}Hosea 2:21,22 ^{<3882>}Zechariah 8:12.

30. *no more reproach of famine among the heathen* — to which their taunt (^{<3883>}Ezekiel 36:13), “Thou land devourest up men,” in part referred.

31. *remember your ... evil ways* — with shame and loathing. The unexpected grace and love of God, manifested in Christ to Israel, shall melt the people into true repentance, which mere legal fear could not (^{<3861>}Ezekiel 16:61,63 ^{<40104>}Psalms 130:4 ^{<38217>}Zechariah 12:10; compare ^{<38387>}Jeremiah 33:8,9).

35. *they shall say* — The heathen, who once made Israel’s desolation a ground of reproach against the name of Jehovah Himself (^{<38501>}Ezekiel 36:20,21); but now He so vindicates its sanctity (^{<38622>}Ezekiel 36:22,23) that these same heathen are constrained to acknowledge Israel’s more than renewed blessedness to be God’s own work, and a ground for glorifying His name (^{<38566>}Ezekiel 36:36).

Eden — as Tyre (the type of the world powers in general: so Assyria, a cedar “in the garden of God, Eden,” ^{<38108>}Ezekiel 31:8,9), in original advantages, had been compared to “Eden, the garden of God” (^{<38813>}Ezekiel 28:13), from which she had fallen irrecoverably; so Israel, once desolate, is to be as “the garden of Eden” (^{<28083>}Isaiah 51:3), and is to be so unchangeably.

36. *Lord ... spoken ... do it* — (^{<02319>}Numbers 23:19).

37. *I will yet for this be inquired of* — so as to grant it. On former occasions He had refused to be inquired of by Israel because the inquirers were not in a fit condition of mind to receive a blessing (^{234B}Ezekiel 14:3 20:3). But hereafter, as in the restoration from Babylon (^{460E}Nehemiah 8:1-9:38 ^{270B}Daniel 9:3-20,21,23), God will prepare His people's hearts (^{236E}Ezekiel 36:26) to pray aright for the blessings which He is about to give (^{49A2B}Psalms 102:13-17,20 ^{382D7}Zechariah 12:10-14 13:1).

like a flock — resuming the image (^{262E}Ezekiel 34:23,31).

38. *As the holy flock* — the great flock of choice animals for sacrifice, brought up to Jerusalem at the three great yearly festivals, the passover, pentecost, and feast of the tabernacles.

CHAPTER 37

EZEKIEL 37:1-28.

THE VISION OF DRY BONES REVIVIFIED, SYMBOLIZING ISRAEL'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

Three stages in Israel's revival present themselves to the prophet's eye.

(1) The new awakening of the people, the resurrection of the dead (³⁵⁰Ezekiel 37:1-14).

(2) The reunion of the formerly hostile members of the community, whose contentions had affected the whole (³⁵⁷Ezekiel 37:15-28).

(3) The community thus restored is strong enough to withstand the assault of Gog, etc. (³⁸¹Ezekiel 38:1-39:29) [EWALD].

1. *carried ... in the spirit* — The matters transacted, therefore, were not literal, but in vision.

the valley — probably that by the Chebar (³⁴²Ezekiel 3:22). The valley represents Mesopotamia, the scene of Israel's sojourn in her state of national deadness.

2. *dry* — bleached by long exposure to the atmosphere.

3. *can these bones live? ... thou knowest* — implying that, humanly speaking, they could not; but faith leaves the question of possibility to rest with God, with whom nothing is impossible (⁶²³Deuteronomy 32:39). An image of Christian faith which believes in the coming general resurrection of the dead, in spite of all appearances against it, because God has said it (⁶⁰²John 5:21 ⁶⁰⁷Romans 4:17 ⁶⁰²2 Corinthians 1:9).

4. *Prophecy* — Proclaim God's quickening word to them. On account of this innate power of the divine word to effect its end, prophets are said to *do* that which they *prophecy as about to be done* (³⁰⁰Jeremiah 1:10).

5. *I ... cause breath to enter into you* — So ²³⁹Isaiah 26:19, containing the same vision, refers *primarily* to Israel's restoration. Compare as to God's renovation of the earth and all its creatures hereafter by His breath, ⁴⁹⁰Psalms 104:30.

ye shall live — come to life *again*.

6. *ye shall know that I am the Lord* — by the actual proof of My divinity which I will give in reviving Israel.

7. *noise* — of the bones when coming in mutual collision. Perhaps referring to the decree of Cyrus, or the noise of the Jews' exultation at their deliverance and return.

bones came together — literally, “*ye bones came together*”; as in ^{<441>}Jeremiah 49:11 (*Hebrew*), “*ye widows of thine shall trust in Me.*” The second person puts the scene vividly before one's eyes, for the whole resurrection scene is a *prophecy in action* to render more palpably to the people the prophecy in word (^{<472>}Ezekiel 37:21).

8. So far, they were only cohering in order as unsightly skeletons. The next step, that of covering them successively with sinews, skin, and flesh, gives them beauty; but still “no breath” of life in them. This may imply that Israel hereafter, as at the restoration from Babylon was the case in part, shall return to Judea unconverted at first (Zechariah 13:8,9). Spiritually: a man may assume all the semblances of spiritual life, yet have none, and so be dead before God.

9. *wind* — rather, *the spirit* of life or *life-breath* (*Margin*). For it is distinct from “the four *winds*” from which it is summoned.

from the four winds — implying that Israel is to be gathered from the four quarters of the earth (^{<2315>}Isaiah 43:5,6 ^{<2318>}Jeremiah 31:8), even as they were “scattered into all the winds” (^{<2350>}Ezekiel 5:10 12:14 17:21; compare ^{<2601>}Revelation 7:1,4).

10. Such honor God gives to the divine word, even in the mouth of a man. How much more when in the mouth of the Son of God! (^{<2325>}John 5:25-29). Though this chapter does not *directly* prove the resurrection of the dead, it does so *indirectly*; for it takes for granted the future fact as one recognized by believing Jews, and so made the image of their national restoration (so ^{<2328>}Isaiah 25:8 26:19 ^{<2712>}Daniel 12:2 ^{<2302>}Hosea 6:2 13:14; compare *Note*, see on ^{<2372>}Ezekiel 37:12).

11. *Our bones are dried* — (^{<2320>}Psalm 141:7), explained by “our hope is lost” (^{<2324>}Isaiah 49:14); our national state is as hopeless of resuscitation, as marrowless bones are of reanimation.

cut off for our parts — that is, so far as we are concerned. There is nothing in us to give hope, like a withered branch “cut off” from a tree, or a limb from the body.

12. *my people* — in antithesis to “for our parts” (^{<3571>}Ezekiel 37:11). The hope that is utterly gone, if looking at *themselves*, is sure for them in *God*, because He regards them as *His* people. Their covenant relation to God ensures His not letting death permanently reign over them. Christ makes the same principle the ground on which the literal resurrection rests. God had said, “I am the God of Abraham,” etc.; God, by taking the patriarchs as *His*, undertook to do for them all that Omnipotence can perform: He, being the ever living God, is necessarily the God of, not dead, but living persons, that is, of those whose bodies His covenant love binds Him to raise again. He can — and because He can — He will — He must [FAIRBAIRN]. He calls them “*My people*” when receiving them into favor; but “*thy people*,” in addressing His servant, as if He would put them away from Him (^{<3337>}Ezekiel 13:17 33:2 ^{<3319>}Exodus 32:7).

out of your graves — out of your politically dead state, primarily in Babylon, finally hereafter in all lands (compare ^{<3068>}Ezekiel 6:8 ^{<2834>}Hosea 13:14). The Jews regarded the lands of their captivity and dispersion as their “graves”; their restoration was to be as “life from the dead” (^{<5115>}Romans 11:15). Before, the bones were in the open plain (^{<3571>}Ezekiel 37:1,2); now, in the graves, that is, some of the Jews were in the graves of actual captivity, others at large but dispersed. Both alike were nationally dead.

16. *stick* — alluding to ^{<4072>}Numbers 17:2, the tribal rod. The union of the two rods was a prophecy in action of the brotherly union which is to reunite the ten tribes and Judah. As their severance under Jeroboam was fraught with the greatest evil to the covenant-people, so the first result of both being joined by the spirit of life to God is that they become joined to one another under the one covenant King, Messiah-David.

Judah, and ... children of Israel his companions — that is, Judah and, besides Benjamin and Levi, those who had joined themselves to him of Ephraim, Manasseh, Simeon, Asher, Zebulun, Issachar, as having the temple and lawful priesthood in his borders (^{<4412>}2 Chronicles 11:12,13,16 15:9 30:11,18). The latter became identified with Judah after the carrying away of the ten tribes, and returned with Judah from Babylon, and so shall be associated with that tribe at the future restoration.

For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim — Ephraim’s posterity took the lead, not only of the other descendants of Joseph (compare ^{<3579>}Ezekiel 37:19), but of the ten tribes of Israel. For four hundred years, during the period of the judges, with Manasseh and Benjamin, its dependent tribes, it had formerly taken the lead: Shiloh was its religious capital; Shechem, its civil capital. God had transferred the birthright from Reuben (for dishonoring his

father's bed) to Joseph, whose representative, Ephraim, though the younger, was made (^{<0489>}Genesis 48:19 ^{<1301>}1 Chronicles 5:1). From its pre-eminence "Israel" is attached to it as "companions." The "all" in this case, not in that of Judah, which has only attached as "companions" the children of Israel" (that is, some of them, namely, those who followed the fortunes of Judah), implies that the *bulk* of the ten tribes did not return at the restoration from Babylon, but are distinct from Judah, until the coming union with it at the restoration.

18. God does not explain the symbolical prophecy until the Jews have been stimulated by the type to consult the prophet.

19. The union effected at the restoration from Babylon embraced but comparatively few of Israel; a future complete fulfillment must therefore be looked for.

stick of Joseph ... in the hand of Ephraim — Ephraim, of the descendants of Joseph, had exercised the rule among the ten tribes: that rule, symbolized by the "stick," was now to be withdrawn from him, and to be made one with the other, Judah's rule, in God's hand.

them — the "stick of Joseph," would strictly require "it"; but Ezekiel expresses the sense, namely, the ten tribes who were subject to it.

with him — that is, Judah; or "it," that is, the stick of Judah.

22. one nation — (^{<2113>}Isaiah 11:13 ^{<2418>}Jeremiah 3:18 ^{<2011>}Hosea 1:11).

one king — not Zerubbabel, who was not a king either in fact or name, and who ruled over but a few Jews, and that only for a few years; whereas the King here reigns for ever. MESSIAH is meant (^{<3523>}Ezekiel 34:23,24). The union of Judah and Israel under King Messiah symbolizes the union of Jews and Gentiles under Him, partly now, perfectly hereafter (^{<3724>}Ezekiel 37:24 ^{<3106>}John 10:16).

23. (^{<2325>}Ezekiel 36:25).

out of ... their dwelling-places — (^{<2328>}Ezekiel 36:28,33). I will remove them from the scene of their idolatries to dwell in their own land, and to serve idols no more.

24. David — Messiah (See on ^{<3523>}Ezekiel 34:23,24).

25. for ever — (^{<2421>}Isaiah 60:21 ^{<2420>}Joel 3:20 ^{<3195>}Amos 9:15).

26. *covenant of peace* — better than the old legal covenant, because an unchangeable covenant of grace (^{<4645>}Ezekiel 34:25 ^{<2818>}Isaiah 55:3 ^{<4840>}Jeremiah 32:40).

I will place them — set them in an established position; no longer unsettled as heretofore.

my sanctuary — the temple of God; spiritual in the heart of all true followers of Messiah (^{<4769>}2 Corinthians 6:16); and, in some “literal” sense, in the restored Israel (^{<3401>}Ezekiel 40:1-44:31).

27. *My tabernacle ... with them* — as foretold (^{<0027>}Genesis 9:27); ^{<4014>}John 1:14, “The Word ... *dwelt* among us” (literally, “tabernacled”); first, in humiliation; hereafter, in manifested glory (^{<6213>}Revelation 21:3).

28. (^{<3823>}Ezekiel 36:23).

sanctify Israel — set it apart as holy unto Myself and inviolable (^{<0918>}Exodus 19:5,6).

CHAPTER 38

EZEKIEL 38:1-23.

THE ASSAULT OF GOG, AND GOD'S JUDGMENT ON HIM.

The objections to a *literal* interpretation of the prophecy are —

- (1) The ideal nature of the name Gog, which is the root of Magog, the only kindred name found in Scripture or history.
- (2) The nations congregated are selected from places most distant from Israel, and from one another, and therefore most unlikely to act in concert (Persians and Libyans, etc.).
- (3) The whole spoil of Israel could not have given a handful to a tithe of their number, or maintained the myriads of invaders a single day (Ezekiel 38:12,13).
- (4) The wood of their invaders' weapons was to serve for fuel to Israel for seven years! And *all* Israel were to take seven months in burying the dead! Supposing a million of Israelites to bury each two corpses a day, the aggregate buried in the hundred eighty working days of the seven months would be three hundred sixty millions of corpses! Then the pestilential vapors from such masses of victims before they were all buried! What Israelite could live in such an atmosphere?
- (5) The scene of the Lord's controversy here is different from that in Isaiah 34:6, Edom, which creates a discrepancy. (But probably a different judgment is alluded to).
- (6) The gross carnality of the representation of God's dealings with His adversaries is inconsistent with Messianic times. It therefore requires a non-literal interpretation. The prophetic delineations of the divine principles of government are thrown into the familiar forms of Old Testament relations. The final triumph of Messiah's truth over the most distant and barbarous nations is represented as a literal conflict on a gigantic scale, Israel being the battlefield, ending in the complete triumph of Israel's anointed King, the Savior of the world. It is a *prophetical* parable [FAIRBAIRN]. However, though the *details* are not literal, the distinctiveness in this picture, characterizing also parallel

descriptions in writers less ideally picturesque than Ezekiel, gives probability to a more definite and generally literal interpretation. The awful desolations caused in Judea by Antiochus Epiphanes, of Syria (I Maccabees; and PORPHYRY, quoted by JEROME on Ezekiel), his defilement of Jehovah's temple by sacrificing swine and sprinkling the altar with the broth, and setting up the altar of Jupiter Olympius, seem to be an earnest of the final desolations to be caused by Antichrist in Israel, previous to His overthrow by the Lord Himself, coming to reign (compare ²⁷⁸⁰Daniel 8:10-26 11:21-45 12:1 Zechariah 13:9 14:2,3). GROTIUS explains Gog as a name taken from Gyges, king of Lydia; and Magog as Syria, in which was a city called Magag [PLINY, 5.28]. What Ezekiel stated more generally, ⁶¹⁰Revelation 20:7-9 states more definitely as to the anti-Christian confederacy which is to assail the beloved city.

2. **Gog** — the prince of the land of Magog. The title was probably a common one of the kings of the country, as “Pharaoh” in Egypt. Chakan was the name given by the Northern Asiatics to their king, and is still a title of the Turkish sultan: “Gog” may be a contraction of this. In Ezekiel's time a horde of northern Asiatics, termed by the Greeks “Scythians,” and probably including the Moschi and Tibareni, near the Caucasus, here (“Meshech ... Tubal”) undertook an expedition against Egypt [HERODOTUS, 1.103-106]. These names might be adopted by Ezekiel from the historical fact familiar to men at the time, as ideal titles for the great last anti-Christian confederacy.

Magog — (⁴¹⁰Genesis 10:2 ⁴³⁰⁵1 Chronicles 1:5). The name of a land belonging to Japheth's posterity. *Maha*, in Sanskrit, means “land.” Gog is the ideal political head of the region. In ⁶³⁰⁸Revelation 20:8, Gog and Magog are two peoples.

the chief prince — rather, “prince of *Rosh*,” or “*Rhos*” [*Septuagint*]. The Scythian Tauri in the Crimea were so called. The Araxes also was called “*Rhos*.” The modern Russians may have hence *assumed* their name, as Moscow and Tobolsk from Meshech and Tubal, though their *proper* ancient name was *Slavi*, or *Wends*. HENGSTENBERG supports *English Version*, as “*Rosh*” is not found in the Bible. “Magog was Gog's original kingdom, though he acquired also Meshech and Tubal, so as to be called their *chief prince*.”

3. His high-sounding titles are repeated to imply the haughty self-confidence of the invader as if invincible.

4. **turn thee back** — as a refractory wild beast, which thinks to take its own way, but is bent by a superior power to turn on a course which must end in

its destruction. Satan shall be, by overruling Providence, permitted to deceive them to their ruin (^{<6117>}Revelation 20:7,8).

hooks into thy jaws — (^{<2304>}Ezekiel 29:4 ^{<1248>}2 Kings 19:28).

5. Persia ... Libya — expressly specified by APPIAN as supplying the ranks of Antiochus' army.

6. Gomer — the Celtic Cimmerians of Crim-Tartary.

Togarmah — the Armenians of the Caucasus, south of Iberia.

7. Irony. Prepare thee and all thine with all needful accoutrements for war — that ye may perish together.

be ... a guard unto them — that is, *if thou canst*.

8. thou shall be visited — in wrath, by God (^{<2306>}Isaiah 29:6). Probably there is allusion to ^{<2321>}Isaiah 24:21,22, “The host of the high ones ... shall be gathered ... as prisoners ... in me pit ... and *after many days shall they be visited.*” I therefore prefer *English Version* to GROTIUS rendering, “Thou shalt get *the command*” of the expedition. The “after many days” is defined by “in the latter years,” that is, in the times just before the coming of Messiah, namely, under Antiochus, before His first coming; under Antichrist, before His second coming.

the mountains of Israel ... always waste — that is, waste during the long period of the captivity, the earnest of the much longer period of Judea's present desolation (to which the language “always waste” more fully applies). This marks the impious atrocity of the act, to assail God's people, who had only begun to recover from their protracted calamities.

but it is brought ... and they shall dwell — rather, “And they (the Israelites) were brought ... dwelt safely” [FAIRBAIRN]. *English Version* means, “Against Israel, which has been waste, but which (that is, whose people) is now (at the time of the invasion) brought forth out of the nations where they were dispersed, and shall be found by the invader dwelling securely, so as to seem an easy prey to him.”

9. cloud to cover the land — with the multitude of thy forces.

10. an evil thought — as to attacking God's people in their defenseless state.

11. dwell safely — that is, securely, without fear of danger (compare ^{<1089>}Esther 9:19). Antiochus, the type of Antichrist, took Jerusalem without a blow.

12. *midst of the land* — literally, “the navel” of the land (⁴⁰⁸⁵Judges 9:37, *Margin*). So, in ³⁴⁸⁸Ezekiel 5:5, Israel is said to be set “in the midst of the nations”; not physically, but morally, a central position for being a blessing to the world: so (as the favored or “beloved city,” ⁶¹⁰⁹Revelation 20:9) an object of envy. GROTIUS translates, “In the *height* of the land” (so ³⁵⁸⁸Ezekiel 38:8), “the mountains of Israel,” Israel being morally elevated above the rest of the world.

13. *Sheba*, etc. — These mercantile peoples, though not taking an active part against the cause of God, are well pleased to see others do it. Worldliness makes them ready to deal in the ill-gotten spoil of the invaders of God’s people. Gain is before godliness with them (I Maccabees 3:41).

young lions — daring princes and leaders.

14. *shalt thou not know it?* — to thy cost, being visited with punishment, while Israel dwells safely.

16. *I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me* — So in ⁴⁸⁹⁶Exodus 9:16, God tells Pharaoh, “For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee My power; and that My name may be declared throughout all the earth.”

17. *thou he of whom I have spoken in old time* — Gog, etc. are here identified with the enemies spoken of in other prophecies (⁴⁸⁴⁷Numbers 24:17-24 ²²⁰⁷Isaiah 27:1; compare ²³⁰⁷Isaiah 26:20,21 ²⁴²³Jeremiah 30:23,24 ²⁸⁸¹Joel 3:1 ³¹⁸⁵Micah 5:5,6 ²³⁴²Isaiah 14:12-14 59:19). God is represented as addressing Gog at the time of his assault; therefore, the “old time” is the time long prior, when Ezekiel uttered these prophecies; so, he also, as well as Daniel (²⁷¹⁰Daniel 11:1-45) and Zechariah (Zechariah 14:1-21) are included among “the prophets of Israel” here.

many years — ago.

18. *fury shall come up in my face* — literally, “nose”; in *Hebrew*, the idiomatic expression for *anger*, as men in anger breathe strongly through the nostrils. Anthropopathy: God stooping to human modes of thought (⁴⁹⁸⁸Psalms 18:8).

19. *great shaking* — an earthquake: physical agitations after accompanying social and moral revolutions. Foretold also in ²⁴⁸⁶Joel 3:16; (compare Haggai 2:6,7 ⁴¹⁴⁷Matthew 24:7,29 ⁶⁶⁶⁸Revelation 16:18).

20. *fishes* — disturbed by the fleets which I will bring.

fowls, etc. — frightened at the sight of so many men: an ideal picture.

mountains — that is, the fortresses on the mountains.

steep places — literally, “stairs” (So 2:14); steep terraces for vines on the sides of hills, to prevent the earth being washed down by the rains.

every wall — of towns.

21. every man’s sword ... against his brother — I will destroy them partly by My people’s sword, partly by their swords being turned against one another (compare ^{<4023>}2 Chronicles 20:23).

22. plead — a forensic term; because God in His inflictions acts on the principles of His own immutable *justice*, not by arbitrary impulse (^{<2766>}Isaiah 66:16 ^{<2578>}Jeremiah 25:31).

blood ... hailstones, fire — (^{<6087>}Revelation 8:7 16:21). The imagery is taken from the destruction of Sodom and the plagues of Egypt (compare ^{<9116>}Psalms 11:6). Antiochus died by “pestilence” (II Maccabees 9:5).

CHAPTER 39

EZEKIEL 39:1-29.

CONTINUATION OF THE PROPHECY AGAINST GOG.

1. Repeated from ^{38B}Ezekiel 38:3, to impress the prophecy more on the mind.

2. *leave but the sixth part of thee* — *Margin*, “strike thee with six plagues” (namely, pestilence, blood, overflowing rain, hailstones, fire, brimstone, ^{38D}Ezekiel 38:22); or, “draw thee back with an hook of six teeth” (^{38H}Ezekiel 38:4), the six teeth being those six plagues. Rather, “lead thee about” [LUDOVICUS DE DIEU and *Septuagint*]. As Antiochus was led (to his ruin) to leave Egypt for an expedition against Palestine, so shall the last great enemy of God be.

north parts — from the extreme north [FAIRBAIRN].

3. *bow* — in which the Scythians were most expert.

4, 5. (Compare ^{39A}Ezekiel 39:17-20).

upon the mountains of Israel — The scene of Israel’s preservation shall be that of the ungodly foe’s destruction.

6. *carelessly* — in self-confident security.

the isles — Those dwelling in maritime regions, who had helped Gog with fleets and troops, shall be visited with the fire of God’s wrath in their own lands.

7. *not let them pollute my holy name* — by their sins bringing down judgments which made the heathen think that I was unable or unwilling to save My people.

8. *it is come ... it is done* — The prediction of the salvation of My people, and the ruin of their enemy, is come to pass — is done: expressing that the event foretold is as certain as if it were already accomplished.

9, 10. The burning of the foe’s weapons implies that nothing belonging to them should be left to pollute the land. The *seven* years (*seven* being the sacred number) spent on this work, implies the completeness of the

cleansing, and the people's zeal for purity. How different from the ancient Israelites, who left not merely the arms, but the heathen themselves, to remain among them [FAIRBAIRN], (^{<OR12>}Judges 1:27,28 2:2,3 ^{<1946>}Psalm 106:34-36). The desolation by Antiochus began in the one hundred and forty-first year of the Seleucidae. From this date to 148, a period of six years and four months ("2300 days," ^{<2784>}Daniel 8:14), when the temple-worship was restored (I Maccabees 4:52), God vouchsafed many triumphs to His people; from this time to the death of Antiochus, early in 149, a period of seven months, the Jews had rest from Antiochus, and purified their land, and on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month celebrated the Encaenia, or feast of dedication (^{<612>}John 10:22) and purification of the temple. The whole period, in round numbers, was seven years. Mattathias was the patriotic Jewish leader, and his third son, Judas, the military commander under whom the Syrian generals were defeated. He retook Jerusalem and purified the temple. Simon and Jonathan, his brothers, succeeded him: the independence of the Jews was secured, and the crown vested in the Asmonean family, in which it continued till Herod the Great.

11. *place ... of graves* — Gog found only a grave where he had expected the spoils of conquest.

valley — So vast were to be the masses that nothing but a deep valley would suffice for their corpses.

the passengers on the east of the sea — those travelling on the high road, east of the Dead Sea, from Syria to Petra and Egypt. The publicity of the road would cause many to observe God's judgments, as the stench (as *English Version* translates) or the multitude of graves (as HENDERSON translates, "it shall *stop the passengers*") would arrest the attention of passers-by. Their grave would be close to that of their ancient prototypes, Sodom and Gomorrah in the Dead Sea, both alike being signal instances of God's judgments.

13. *I ... glorified* — in destroying the foe (^{<332>}Ezekiel 28:22).

14. *with the passengers* — The men employed continually in the burying were to be helped by those happening to pass by; all were to combine.

after the end of seven months shall they search — to see if the work was complete [MUNSTER].

15. First "*all the people of the land*" engaged in the burying for seven months; then special men were employed, at the end of the seven months, to search for any still left unburied. The passers-by helped them by setting up a mark near any such bones, in order to keep others from being defiled

by casually touching them, and that the buriers might come and remove them. Denoting the minute care to put away every relic of heathen pollution from the Holy Land.

16. A city in the neighborhood was to receive the name Hamonah, “multitude,” to commemorate the overthrow of the multitudes of the foe [HENDERSON]. The multitude of the slain shall give a name to the city of Jerusalem after the land shall have been cleansed [GROTIUS]. Jerusalem shall be famed as the conqueror of multitudes.

17. (⁴⁶⁹⁷Revelation 19:17).

sacrifice — Anciently worshippers feasted on the sacrifices. The birds and beasts of prey are invited to the sacrificial feast provided by God (compare ²³⁸⁶Isaiah 18:6 34:6 Zephaniah 1:7 ⁴⁰⁹⁹Mark 9:49). Here this sacrifice holds only a subordinate place in the picture, and so is put last. Not only shall their bones lie long unburied, but they shall be stripped of the flesh by beasts and birds of prey.

18. *rams ... lambs ... goats* — By these various animal victims used in sacrifices are meant various ranks of men, princes, generals, and soldiers (compare ²³⁴⁶Isaiah 34:6).

fatlings of Bashan — ungodly men of might (⁴⁰²²Psalm 22:12). Bashan, beyond Jordan, was famed for its fat cattle. Fat implies prosperity which often makes men refractory towards God (⁴⁶²⁴Deuteronomy 32:14,15).

20. *my table* — the field of battle on the mountains of Israel (²³⁰⁸Ezekiel 38:8,20).

chariots — that is, charioteers.

22. *So the house of Israel shall know ... Lord* — by My interposition for them. So, too, the heathen shall be led to fear the name of the Lord (⁴⁹²⁵Psalm 102:15).

23. *hid I my face* — (⁴⁶¹⁷Deuteronomy 31:17 ²⁸⁴²Isaiah 59:2).

25. *bring again the captivity* — restore from calamity to prosperity.

the whole house of Israel — so “all Israel” (⁴⁶¹²Romans 11:26). The restorations of Israel heretofore have been partial; there must be one yet future that is to be *universal* (²⁸¹¹Hosea 1:11).

26. *After that they have borne their shame* — the punishment of their sin: after they have become sensible of their guilt, and ashamed of it (²³⁰⁸Ezekiel 20:43 36:31).

27. *sanctified in them* — vindicated as holy in My dealings with them.

28. The Jews, having no dominion, settled country, or fixed property to detain them, may return at any time without difficulty (compare ^{<3104>}Hosea 3:4,5).

29. *poured out my Spirit upon ... Israel* — the sure forerunner of their conversion (^{<3123>}Joel 2:28 ^{<3210>}Zechariah 12:10). The pouring out of His Spirit is a pledge that He will hide His face no more (^{<4122>}2 Corinthians 1:22 ^{<4114>}Ephesians 1:14 ^{<5106>}Philippians 1:6).

CHAPTER 40

EZEKIEL 40:1-49.

THE REMAINING CHAPTERS, THE FORTIETH THROUGH FORTY-EIGHTH, GIVE AN IDEAL PICTURE OF THE RESTORED JEWISH TEMPLE.

The arrangements as to the land and the temple are, in many particulars, different from those subsisting before the captivity. There are things in it so improbable physically as to preclude a *purely* literal interpretation. The general truth seems to hold good that, as Israel served the nations for his rejection of Messiah, so shall they serve him in the person of Messiah, when he shall acknowledge Messiah (³⁸⁰²Isaiah 60:12 ³⁸⁴⁷Zechariah 14:17-19; compare ³⁷²¹Psalms 72:11). The ideal temple exhibits, under Old Testament forms (used as being those then familiar to the men whom Ezekiel, a priest himself, and one who delighted in sacrificial images, addresses), not the precise literal outline, but *the essential character* of the worship of Messiah as it shall be when He shall exercise sway in Jerusalem among His own people, the Jews, and thence to the ends of the earth. The very fact that the whole is a vision (³⁶⁰²Ezekiel 40:2), not an oral face-to-face communication such as that granted to Moses (⁴¹²⁶Numbers 12:6-8), implies that the directions are not to be understood so precisely literally as those given to the Jewish lawgiver. The description involves things which, taken literally, almost involve natural impossibilities. The square of the temple, in ³⁶²¹Ezekiel 42:20, is six times as large as the circuit of the wall enclosing the old temple, and larger than all the earthly Jerusalem. Ezekiel gives three and a half miles and one hundred forty yards to his temple square. The boundaries of the ancient city were about two and a half miles. Again, the city in Ezekiel has an area between three or four thousand square miles, including the holy ground set apart for the prince, priests, and Levites. This is nearly as large as the whole of Judea west of the Jordan. As Zion lay in the center of the ideal city, the one-half of the sacred portion extended to nearly thirty miles south of Jerusalem, that is, covered nearly the whole southern territory, which reached only to the Dead Sea (³⁴⁷⁹Ezekiel 47:19), and yet five tribes were to have their inheritance on that side of Jerusalem, *beyond* the sacred portion (³⁶⁸³Ezekiel 48:23-28). Where was land to be found for them there? A breadth of but four or five miles apiece would be left. As the boundaries of the land are given the same as

under Moses, these incongruities cannot be explained away by supposing physical changes about to be effected in the land such as will meet the difficulties of the purely literal interpretation. The distribution of the land is in equal portions among the twelve tribes, without respect to their relative numbers, and the parallel sections running from east to west. There is a difficulty also in the supposed separate existence of the twelve tribes, such separate tribeships no longer existing, and it being hard to imagine how they could be restored as distinct tribes, mingled as they now are. So the stream that issued from the east threshold of the temple and flowed into the Dead Sea, in the rapidity of its increase and the quality of its waters, is unlike anything ever known in Judea or elsewhere in the world. Lastly, the catholicity of the Christian dispensation, and the spirituality of its worship, seem incompatible with a return to the local narrowness and “beggarly elements” of the Jewish ritual and carnal ordinances, disannulled “because of the unprofitableness thereof” [FAIRBAIRN], (²⁸⁰⁴Galatians 4:3,9 5:1 ²⁸⁰⁶Hebrews 9:10 10:18). “A temple with sacrifices now would be a denial of the all-sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ. He who sacrificed before confessed the Messiah. He who should sacrifice now would solemnly deny Him” [DOUGLAS]. These difficulties, however, may be all *seeming*, not real. Faith accepts God’s Word as it is, waits for the event, sure that it will clear up all such difficulties. Perhaps, as some think, the beau ideal of a sacred commonwealth is given according to the then existing pattern of temple services, which would be the imagery most familiar to the prophet and his hearers at the time. The minute particularizing of details is in accordance with Ezekiel’s style, even in describing purely ideal scenes. The old temple embodied in visible forms and rites spiritual truths affecting the people even when absent from it. So this ideal temple is made in the absence of the outward temple to serve by description the same purpose of symbolical instruction as the old literal temple did by forms and acts. As in the beginning God promised to be a “sanctuary” (²³¹¹Ezekiel 11:16) to the captives at the Chebar, so now at the close is promised a complete restoration and realization of the theocratic worship and polity under Messiah in its noblest ideal (compare ²³⁸³Jeremiah 31:38-40). In ²⁶²²Revelation 21:22 “no temple” is seen, as in the perfection of the new dispensation the accidents of place and form are no longer needed to realize to Christians what Ezekiel imparts to Jewish minds by the imagery familiar to them. In Ezekiel’s temple holiness stretches over the entire temple, so that in this there is no longer a distinction between the different parts, as in the old temple: parts left undeterminate in the latter obtain now a divine sanction, so that all arbitrariness is excluded. So that it is a perfect manifestation of the love of God to His covenant-people (²³⁰¹Ezekiel 40:1-43:12); and from it, as from a new center of religious life, there gushes forth the fullness of blessings to them, and so to all people (²³⁰¹Ezekiel 47:1-

23) [FAIRBAIRN and HAVERNICK]. The temple built at the return from Babylon can only very partially have realized the model here given. The law is seemingly opposed to the gospel (^{<4172>}Matthew 5:21,22,27,28,33,34). It is not really so (compare ^{<4157>}Matthew 5:17,18 ^{<4158>}Romans 3:31 ^{<4162>}Galatians 3:21,22). It is true Christ's sacrifice superseded the law sacrifices (^{<3902>}Hebrews 10:12-18). Israel's province may hereafter be to show the essential identity, even in the minute details of the temple sacrifices, between the law and gospel (^{<5108>}Romans 10:8). The ideal of the theocratic temple will then first be realized.

1. *beginning of the year* — the ecclesiastical year, the first month of which was Nisan.

the city ... thither — Jerusalem, the center to which all the prophet's thoughts tended.

2. *visions of God* — divinely sent visions.

very high mountain — Moriah, very high, as compared with the plains of Babylon, still more so as to its *moral* elevation (^{<3472>}Ezekiel 17:22 20:40).

by which — Ezekiel coming from the north is set down *at* (as the *Hebrew* for "upon" may be translated) Mount Moriah, and sees the city-like frame of the temple stretching *southward*. In ^{<3405>}Ezekiel 40:3, "God brings him thither," that is, close up to it, so as to inspect it minutely (compare ^{<6210>}Revelation 21:10). In this closing vision, as in the opening one of the book, the divine hand is laid on the prophet, and he is borne away in the visions of God. But the scene there was by the Chebar, Jehovah having forsaken Jerusalem; now it is the mountain of God, Jehovah having returned thither; there, the vision was calculated to inspire terror; here, hope and assurance.

3. *man* — The Old Testament manifestations of heavenly beings as *men* prepared men's minds for the coming incarnation.

brass — resplendent.

line — used for longer measurements (Zechariah 2:1).

reed — used in measuring houses (^{<6215>}Revelation 21:15). It marked the straightness of the walls.

5. Measures were mostly taken from the human body. The *greater cubit*, the length from the elbow to the end of the middle finger, a little more than two feet: exceeding the ordinary *cubit* (from the elbow to the wrist) by an hand-breadth, that is, twenty-one inches in all. Compare ^{<2683>}Ezekiel 43:13,

with ^{<341B>}Ezekiel 40:5. The *palm* was the full breadth of the hand, three and a half inches.

breadth of the building — that is, the boundary wall. The imperfections in the old temple's boundary wall were to have no place here. The buildings attached to it had been sometimes turned to common uses; for example, Jeremiah was imprisoned in one (^{<341B>}Jeremiah 20:2 29:26). But now all these were to be holy to the Lord. The gates and doorways to the city of God were to be imprinted in their architecture with the idea of the exclusion of everything defiled (^{<6127>}Revelation 21:27). The east gate was to be especially sacred, as it was through it the glory of God had departed (^{<3123>}Ezekiel 11:23), and through it the glory was to return (^{<3601>}Ezekiel 43:1,2 44:2,3).

6. *the stairs* — seven in number (^{<341B>}Ezekiel 40:26).

threshold — the sill [FAIRBAIRN].

other threshold — FAIRBAIRN considers there is but one threshold, and translates, "even the one threshold, one rod broad." But there is another threshold mentioned in ^{<3407>}Ezekiel 40:7. The two thresholds here seem to be the upper and the lower.

7. *chamber* — These chambers were for the use of the Levites who watched at the temple gates; *guard-chambers* (^{<1224>}2 Kings 22:4 ^{<1325>}1 Chronicles 9:26,27); also used for storing utensils and musical instruments.

9. *posts* — projecting column-faced fronts of the sides of the doorway, opposite to one another.

12. *space* — rather, "the boundary."

16. *narrow* — latticed [HENDERSON]. The ancients had no glass, so they had them latticed, narrow in the interior of the walls, and widening at the exterior. "Made fast," or "firmly fixed in the chambers" [MAURER].

arches — rather, "porches."

17. *pavement* — tessellated mosaic (^{<1006>}Esther 1:6).

chambers — serving as lodgings for the priests on duty in the temple, and as receptacles of the tithes of salt, wine, and oil.

18. The higher pavement was level with the entrance of the gates, the lower was on either side of the raised pavement thus formed. Whereas Solomon's temple had an outer court open to alterations and even idolatrous innovations (^{<1231>}2 Kings 23:11,12 ^{<1305>}1 Chronicles 20:5), in this

there was to be no room for human corruptions. Its compass was exactly defined, one hundred cubits; and the fine pavement implied it was to be trodden only by clean feet (compare ^{<2318>}Isaiah 35:8).

20-27. The different approaches corresponded in plan. In the case of these two other gates, however, no mention is made of a building with thirty chambers such as was found on the east side. Only one was needed, and it was assigned to the east as being the sacred quarter, and that most conveniently situated for the officiating priests.

23. *and toward the east* — an elliptical expression for “The gate of the inner court was over against the (outer) gate toward the north (just as the inner gate was over against the outer gate) toward the east.”

28-37. The inner court and its gates.

according to these measures — namely, the measures of the outer gate. The figure and proportions of the inner answered to the outer.

30. This verse is omitted in the *Septuagint*, the Vatican manuscript, and others. The dimensions here of the inner gate do not correspond to the outer, though ^{<308>}Ezekiel 40:28 asserts that they do. HAVERNICK, retaining the verse, understands it of another porch looking inwards toward the temple.

arches — the porch [FAIRBAIRN]; the columns on which the arches rest [HENDERSON].

31. *eight steps* — The outer porch had only *seven* (^{<348>}Ezekiel 40:26).

37. *posts* — the *Septuagint* and *Vulgate* read, “the porch,” which answers better to ^{<348>}Ezekiel 40:31-34. “The arches” or “porch” [MAURER].

38. *chambers ... entries* — literally, “a chamber and its door.”

by the posts — that is, *at* or *close by* the posts or *columns*.

where they washed the burnt offering — This does not apply to all the gates but only to the north gate. For ^{<0111>}Leviticus 1:11 directs the sacrifices to be killed north of the altar; and ^{<308>}Ezekiel 8:5 calls the north gate, “the gate of the altar.” And ^{<300>}Ezekiel 40:40 particularly mentions the *north gate*.

43. *hooks* — cooking apparatus for cooking the flesh of the sacrifices that fell to the priests. The hooks were “fastened” in the walls within the apartment, to hang the meat from, so as to roast it. The *Hebrew* comes from a root “fixed” or “placed.”

44. *the chambers of the singers* — two in number, as proved by what follows: “and their prospect (that is, the prospect of *one*) was toward the south, (and) one toward the north.” So the *Septuagint*.

46. *Zadok* — lineally descended from Aaron. He had the high priesthood conferred on him by Solomon, who had set aside the family of Ithamar because of the part which Abiathar had taken in the rebellion of Adonijah (^{<100B>}1 Kings 1:7 2:26,27).

47. *court, an hundred cubits ... foursquare* — not to be confounded with the inner court, or court of Israel, which was open to all who had sacrifices to bring, and went round the three sides of the sacred territory, one hundred cubits broad. This court was one hundred cubits square, and had the altar in it, in front of the temple. It was the court of the priests, and hence is connected with those who had charge of the altar and the music. The description here is brief, as the things connected with this portion were from the first divinely regulated.

48, 49. These two verses belong to the forty-first chapter, which treats of the temple itself.

49. *twenty ... eleven cubits* — in Solomon’s temple (^{<100B>}1 Kings 6:3) “twenty ... *ten* cubits.” The breadth perhaps was *ten and a half*; ^{<100B>}1 Kings 6:3 designates the number by the *lesser* next round number, “ten”; Ezekiel here, by the *larger* number, “eleven” [MENOCHIUS]. The *Septuagint* reads “twelve.”

he brought me by the steps — They were *ten* in number [*Septuagint*].

CHAPTER 41

EZEKIEL 41:1-26.

THE CHAMBERS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE TEMPLE.

1. *tabernacle* — As in the measurement of the outer porch he had pointed to Solomon's *temple*, so here in the edifice itself, he points to the old *tabernacle*, which being eight boards in breadth (each one and a half cubits broad) would make in all twelve cubits, as here. On the interior it was only ten cubits.

2. *length thereof* — namely, of the holy place [FAIRBAIRN].

3. *inward* — towards the most holy place.

4. *thereof* — of the holy of holies.

before the temple — that is, before, or in front of the most holy place (so "temple" is used in ^{<1063>}1 Kings 6:3). The angel went in and measured it, while Ezekiel stood in front, in the only part of the temple accessible to him. The dimensions of the two apartments are the same as in Solomon's temple, since being fixed originally by God, they are regarded as finally determined.

5. *side chamber* — the singular used collectively for the plural. These chambers were appendages attached to the outside of the temple, on the west, north, and south; for on the east side, the principal entrance, there were no chambers. The narrowness of the chambers was in order that the beams could be supported without needing pillars.

6. *might ... hold, but ... not hold in ... wall of the house* — ^{<1065>}1 Kings 6:6 tells us there were rests made in the walls of the temple for supports to the side chambers; but the temple walls did not thereby become part of this side building; they stood separate from it. "They entered," namely, the beams of the chambers, which were three-storied and thirty in consecutive order, entered into the wall, that is, were made to lean on rests projecting from the wall.

7. *the breadth ... so increased from the lowest ... to the highest* — that is, the breadth of the interior space above was greater than that below.

8. *foundations ... six ... cubits* — the substructure, on which the foundations rested, was a full reed of six cubits.

great — literally, “to the extremity” or root, namely, of the hand [HENDERSON]. “To the joining,” or point, where the foundation of one chamber ceased and another began [FAIRBAIRN].

9. *that which was left* — There was an unoccupied place within chambers that belonged to the house. The buildings in this unoccupied place, west of the temple, and so much resembling it in size, imply that no place was to be left which was to be held, as of old, not sacred. Manasseh (^{<4231>}2 Kings 23:11) had abused these “suburbs of the temple” to keeping horses sacred to the sun. All excuse for such abominations was henceforth to be taken away, the Lord claiming every space, and filling up this also with sacred erections [FAIRBAIRN].

10. *the chambers* — that is, of the priests in the court: between these and the side chambers was the wideness, etc. While long details are given as to the chambers, etc., no mention is made of the ark of the covenant. FAIRBAIRN thus interprets this: In future there was to be a perfect conformity to the divine idea, such as there had not been before. The dwellings of His people should all become true sanctuaries of piety. Jehovah Himself, in the full display of the divine Shekinah, shall come in the room of the ark of the covenant (^{<3418>}Jeremiah 3:16,17). The interior of the temple stands empty, waiting for His entrance to fill it with His glory (^{<360>}Ezekiel 43:1-12). It is the same temple, but the courts of it have become different to accommodate a more numerous people. The entire compass of the temple mount has become a holy of holies (^{<2682>}Ezekiel 43:12).

12-15. Sum of the measures of the temple, and of the buildings behind and on the side of it.

15. *galleries* — terrace buildings. On the west or back of the temple, there was a separate place occupied by buildings of the same external dimensions as the temple, that is, one hundred cubits square in the entire compass [FAIRBAIRN].

16. *covered* — being the highest windows they were “covered” from the view below. Or else “covered *with lattice-work*.”

17. *by measure* — Measurements were taken [FAIRBAIRN].

21. *appearance of the one as the appearance of the other* — The appearance of the sanctuary or holy of holies was similar to that of the temple. They differed only in magnitude.

22. *table ... before the Lord* — the altar of incense (³³⁴¹⁰Ezekiel 44:16). At it, not at the table of showbread, the priests daily ministered. It stood in front of the veil, and is therefore said to be “before the Lord.” It is called a table, as being that at which the Lord will take delight in His people, as at a feast. Hence its dimensions are larger than that of old — three cubits high, two broad, instead of two and one.

25. *thick planks* — a thick-plank work at the threshold.

CHAPTER 42

EZEKIEL 42:1-20.

CHAMBERS OF THE PRIESTS: MEASUREMENTS OF THE TEMPLE.

2. *Before the length of an hundred cubits* — that is before “the separate place,” which was that length (³⁴¹³Ezekiel 41:13). He had before spoken of chambers for the officiating priests on the north and south gates of the inner court (³⁴⁰⁴Ezekiel 40:44-46). He now returns to take a more exact view of them.

5. *shorter* — that is, the building became *narrower* as it rose in height. The chambers were many: so “in My Father’s house are many mansions” (³⁴¹²John 14:2); and besides these there was much “room” still left (compare ²¹⁴²Luke 14:22). The chambers, though private, were near the temple. Prayer in our chambers is to prepare us for public devotions, and to help us in improving them.

16. *five hundred reeds* — the *Septuagint* substitutes “cubits” for “reeds,” to escape the immense compass assigned to the whole, namely, a square of five hundred rods or three thousand cubits (two feet each; ³⁴⁰⁵Ezekiel 40:5), in all a square of one and one-seventh miles, that is, more than all ancient Jerusalem; also, there is much space thus left unappropriated. FAIRBAIRN rightly supports *English Version*, which agrees with the *Hebrew*. The vast extent is another feature marking the ideal character of the temple. It symbolizes the great enlargement of the kingdom of God, when Jehovah-Messiah shall reign at Jerusalem, and from thence to the ends of the earth (²¹¹²Isaiah 2:2-4 ³⁴³⁷Jeremiah 3:17 ³¹¹²Romans 11:12,15).

20. *wall ... separation between ... sanctuary and ... profane* — No longer shall the wall of partition be to separate the Jew and the Gentile (³¹¹⁴Ephesians 2:14), but to separate the sacred from the profane. The lowness of it renders it unfit for the purpose of defense (the object of the wall, ³²¹²Revelation 21:12). But its square form (as in the city, ³²¹⁶Revelation 21:16) is the emblem of the kingdom that cannot be shaken (³¹²⁸Hebrews 12:28), resting on prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone.

CHAPTER 43

EZEKIEL 43:1-27.

JEHOVAH'S RETURN TO THE TEMPLE.

Everything was now ready for His reception. As the Shekinah glory was the peculiar distinction of the old temple, so it was to be in the new in a degree as much more transcendent as the proportions of the new exceeded those of the old. The fact that the Shekinah glory was not in the second temple proves that it cannot be that temple which is meant in the prophecy.

2. *the way of the east* — the way whereby the glory had departed (^{<3112>}Ezekiel 11:22,23), and rested on Mount Olivet (compare Zechariah 14:4).

his voice ... like ... many waters — So *English Version* rightly, as in ^{<3124>}Ezekiel 1:24, “voice of the Almighty”; ^{<6015>}Revelation 1:15 14:2, prove this. Not as FAIRBAIRN translates, “its noise.”

earth his glory — (^{<6801>}Revelation 18:1).

3. *when I came to destroy the city* — that is, to pronounce God’s word for its destruction. So completely did the prophets identify themselves with Him in whose name they spake.

6. *the man* — who had been measuring the buildings (^{<3408>}Ezekiel 40:3).

7. *the place* — that is, “*behold the place of My throne*” — the place on which your thoughts have so much dwelt (^{<2108>}Isaiah 2:1-3 ^{<2417>}Jeremiah 3:17 ^{<3416>}Zechariah 14:16-20 Malachi 3:1). God from the first claimed to be their King politically as well as religiously: and He had resisted their wish to have a human king, as implying a rejection of Him as the proper Head of the state. Even when He yielded to their wish, it was with a protest against their king ruling except as His vicegerent. When Messiah shall reign at Jerusalem, He shall then first realize the original idea of the theocracy, with its at once divine and human king reigning in righteousness over a people all righteous (^{<3412>}Ezekiel 43:12 ^{<2511>}Isaiah 52:1 54:13 60:21).

9. *carcasses of their kings* — It is supposed that some of their idolatrous kings were buried within the bounds of Solomon’s temple [HENDERSON]. Rather, “the carcasses of their *idols*,” here called “kings,” as having had

lordship over them in past times (^{<2363>}Isaiah 26:13); but henceforth Jehovah, alone their rightful lord, shall be their king, and the idols that had been their “king” would appear but as “carcasses.” Hence these defunct kings are associated with the “high places” in ^{<2607>}Ezekiel 43:7 [FAIRBAIRN] ^{<1830>}Leviticus 26:30 and ^{<2468>}Jeremiah 16:18, confirm this. Manasseh had built altars in the courts of the temple to the host of heaven (^{<1215>}2 Kings 21:5 23:6).

I will dwell in the midst ... for ever — (^{<6218>}Revelation 21:3).

10. *show the house ... that they may be ashamed of their iniquities* — When the spirituality of the Christian scheme is *shown* to men by the Holy Ghost, it makes them “ashamed of their iniquities.”

12. *whole ... most holy* — This superlative, which had been used exclusively of the holy of holies (^{<1234>}Exodus 26:34), was now to characterize the entire building. This all-pervading sanctity was to be “*the law of the (whole) house,*” as distinguished from the Levitical law, which confined the peculiar sanctity to a single apartment of it.

13-27. As to the altar of burnt offering, which was the appointed means of access to God.

15. *altar* — *Hebrew, Harel*, that is, “mount of God”; denoting the high security to be imparted by it to the restored Israel. It was a high place, but a high place *of God*, not of idols.

from the altar — literally, “the lion of God,” *Ariel* (in ^{<2301>}Isaiah 29:1, “Ariel” is applied to Jerusalem). MENOCHIUS supposes that on it four animals were carved; the lion perhaps was the uppermost, whence the horns were made to issue. GESENIUS regards the two words as expressing the “hearth” or fireplace of the altar.

16. *square in the four squares* — square on the four sides of its squares [FAIRBAIRN].

17. *settle* — ledge [FAIRBAIRN].

stairs — rather, “the ascent,” as “steps” up to God’s altar were forbidden in ^{<1215>}Exodus 20:26.

18-27. The sacrifices here are not mere commemorative, but propitiatory ones. The expressions, “blood” (^{<2568>}Ezekiel 43:18), and “for a sin offering” (^{<2609>}Ezekiel 43:19,21,22), prove this. In the *literal* sense they can only apply to the second temple. Under the Christian dispensation they would directly oppose the doctrine taught in ^{<3001>}Hebrews 10:1-18, namely, that Christ has

by one offering for ever atoned for sin. However, it is *possible* that they might exist with a *retrospective* reference to Christ's sufferings, as the Levitical sacrifices had a *prospective* reference to them; not propitiatory in themselves, but memorials to keep up the remembrance of His propitiatory sufferings, which form the foundation of His kingdom, lest they should be lost sight of in the glory of that kingdom [DE BURGH]. The particularity of the directions make it unlikely that they are to be understood in a merely vague spiritual sense.

20. *cleanse* — literally, “make expiation for.”

21. *burn it ... without the sanctuary* — (^{<5831>}Hebrews 13:11).

26. *Seven days* — referring to the original directions of Moses for seven days' purification services of the altar (^{<0297>}Exodus 29:37).

consecrate themselves — literally, “fill their hands,” namely, with offerings; referring to the mode of consecrating a priest (^{<0228>}Exodus 29:24,35).

27. *I will accept you* — (^{<3204>}Ezekiel 20:40,41 ^{<5121>}Romans 12:1 ^{<0115>}1 Peter 2:5).

CHAPTER 44

EZEKIEL 44:1-31.

ORDINANCES FOR THE PRINCE AND THE PRIESTS.

2. *shut ... not be opened* — (^{<824>}Job 12:14 ^{<222>}Isaiah 22:22 ^{<687>}Revelation 3:7). “Shut” to the people (^{<121>}Exodus 19:21,22), but open to “the prince” (^{<344>}Ezekiel 44:3), he holding the place of God in political concerns, as the priests do in spiritual. As a mark of respect to an Eastern monarch, the gate by which he enters is thenceforth shut to all other persons (compare ^{<121>}Exodus 19:24).

3. *the prince* — not King Messiah, as He never would offer a burnt offering for Himself, as the prince is to do (^{<344>}Ezekiel 46:4). The prince must mean the civil ruler under Messiah. His connection with the east gate (by which the Lord had returned to His temple) implies, that, as ruling under God, he is to stand in a place of peculiar nearness to God. He represents Messiah, who entered heaven, the true sanctuary, by a way that none other could, namely, by His own holiness; all others must enter as sinners by faith in His blood, through grace.

eat bread before the Lord — a custom connected with sacrifices (^{<155>}Genesis 31:54 ^{<182>}Exodus 18:12 24:11 ^{<618>}1 Corinthians 10:18).

4-6. Directions as to the priests. Their acts of desecration are attributed to “the house of Israel” (^{<344>}Ezekiel 44:6,7), as the sins of the priesthood and of the people acted and reacted on one another; “like people, like priest” (^{<151>}Jeremiah 5:31 ^{<344>}Hosea 4:9).

7. *uncircumcised in heart* — Israelites circumcised outwardly, but wanting the true circumcision of the heart (^{<106>}Deuteronomy 10:16 ^{<415>}Acts 7:51).

uncircumcised in flesh — not having even the outward badge of the covenant-people.

8. *keepers ... for yourselves* — such as you yourselves thought fit, not such as I approve of. Or else, “Ye have not *yourselves* kept the charge of My holy things, but have set *others as* keepers of My charge in My sanctuary for yourselves” [MAURER].

10, 11. *Levites ... shall ... bear* — namely, the punishment of

their iniquity ... Yet they shall be ministers — So Mark, a *Levite*, nephew of Barnabas (^{<4066>}Acts 4:36), was punished by Paul for losing an opportunity of bearing the cross of Christ, and yet was afterwards admitted into his friendship again, and showed his zeal (^{<4133>}Acts 13:13 15:37 ^{<5040>}Colossians 4:10 ^{<5011>}2 Timothy 4:11). One may be a believer, and that too in a distinguished place, and yet lose some special honor — be acknowledged as pious, yet be excluded from some dignity [BENGEL].

charge at the gates — Better to be “a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness” (^{<9840>}Psalm 84:10). Though standing as a mere doorkeeper, it is in the *house* of God, which hath foundations: whereas he who *dwells* with the wicked, dwells in but shifting *tents*.

15. *Zadok* — The priests of the line of Ithamar were to be discharged from ministrations in the temple, because of their corruptions, following in the steps of Eli’s sons, against whom the same denunciation was uttered (^{<0123>}1 Samuel 2:32,35). Zadok, according to his name (which means “righteous”) and his line, were to succeed (^{<1025>}1 Kings 2:35 ^{<1348>}1 Chronicles 24:3), as they did not take part in the general apostasy to the same degree, and perhaps [FAIRBAIRN] the prophet, referring to their original state, speaks of them as they appeared when first chosen to the office.

17. *linen* — symbolical of purity. Wool soon induces perspiration in the sultry East and so becomes uncleanly.

18. *bonnets* — turbans.

19. *not sanctify the people with their garments* — namely, those peculiarly priestly vestments in which they ministered in the sanctuary.

20. *Neither ... shave ... heads* — as mourners do (^{<6201>}Leviticus 21:1-5). The worshippers of the Egyptian idols Serapis and Isis shaved their heads; another reason why Jehovah’s priests are not to do so.

nor suffer ... locks to grow long — as the luxurious, barbarians, and soldiers in warfare did [JEROME].

21. *Neither ... wine* — lest the holy enthusiasm of their devotion should be mistaken for inebriation, as in Peter’s case (^{<4123>}Acts 2:13,15,18).

28. *I am their inheritance* — (^{<0180>}Numbers 18:20 ^{<6109>}Deuteronomy 10:9 18:1 ^{<6134>}Joshua 13:14,32).

30. *give ... priest the first ... that he may cause the blessing to rest* — (^{<1039>}Proverbs 3:9,10 ^{<3180>}Malachi 3:10).

CHAPTER 45

EZEKIEL 45:1-25.

ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND FOR THE SANCTUARY, THE CITY, AND THE PRINCE.

1. offer an oblation — from a *Hebrew* root to “heave” or “raise”; when anything was offered to God, the offerer raised the hand. The special territorial division for the tribes is given in the forty-seventh and forty-eighth chapters. Only Jehovah’s portion is here subdivided into its three parts:

- (1) that for the sanctuary (^{3581E}Ezekiel 45:2,3);
- (2) that for the priests (^{3581E}Ezekiel 45:4);
- (3) that for the Levites (^{3581E}Ezekiel 45:5). Compare ^{3588E}Ezekiel 48:8-13.

five and twenty thousand reeds, etc. — So *English Version* rightly fills the ellipsis (compare *Note*, see on ^{3506E}Ezekiel 42:16). Hence “cubits” are mentioned in ^{3581E}Ezekiel 45:2, not here, implying that *there alone* cubits are meant. Taking each reed at twelve feet, the area of the whole would be a square of sixty miles on each side. The whole forming a square betokens the settled stability of the community and the harmony of all classes. “An holy portion of the land” (^{3581E}Ezekiel 45:1) comprised the whole length, and only two-fifths of the breadth. The outer territory in its distribution harmonizes with the inner and more sacred arrangements of the sanctuary. No room is to be given for *oppression* (see ^{3588E}Ezekiel 45:8), all having ample provision made for their wants and comforts. All will mutually cooperate without constraint or contention.

7. The prince’s possession is to consist of two halves, one on the west, the other on the east, of the sacred territory. The prince, as head of the holy community, stands in closest connection with the sanctuary; his possession, therefore, on both sides must adjoin that which was peculiarly the Lord’s [FAIRBAIRN].

12. The standard weights were lost when the Chaldeans destroyed the temple. The threefold enumeration of shekels (twenty, twenty-five, fifteen) probably refers to coins of different value, representing respectively so

many shekels, the three collectively making up a *maneh*. By weighing these together against the *maneh*, a test was afforded whether they severally had their proper weight: sixty shekels in all, containing one coin a fourth of the whole (fifteen shekels), another a third (twenty shekels), another a third and a twelfth (twenty-five shekels) [MENOCHIUS]. The *Septuagint* reads, “fifty shekels shall be your *maneh*.”

13-15. In these oblations there is a progression as to the relation between the kind and the quantity: of the corn, the sixth of a tenth, that is, a sixtieth part of the quantity specified; of the oil, the tenth of a tenth, that is, an hundredth part; and of the flock, one from every two hundred.

18. The year is to begin with a consecration service, not mentioned under the Levitical law; but an earnest of it is given in the feast of dedication of the second temple, which celebrated its purification by Judas Maccabeus, after its defilement by Antiochus.

20. for him that is simple — for sins of ignorance (⁴⁰⁴Leviticus 4:2,13,27).

21. As a new solemnity, the feast of consecration is to prepare for the passover; so the passover itself is to have different sacrifices from those of the Mosaic law. Instead of one ram and seven lambs for the daily burnt offering, there are to be seven bullocks and seven rams. So also whereas the feast of tabernacles had its own offerings, which diminished as the days of the feast advanced, here the same are appointed as on the passover. Thus it is implied that the letter of the law is to give place to its spirit, those outward rites of Judaism having no intrinsic efficacy, but symbolizing the spiritual truths of Messiah’s kingdom, as for instance the perfect holiness which is to characterize it. Compare ⁴⁰⁵1 Corinthians 5:7,8, as to our spiritual “passover,” wherein, at the Lord’s supper, we feed on Christ by faith, accompanied with “the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Literal ordinances, though not slavishly bound to the letter of the law, will set forth the catholic and eternal verities of Messiah’s kingdom.

CHAPTER 46

EZEKIEL 46:1-24.

CONTINUATION OF THE ORDINANCES FOR THE PRINCE AND FOR THE PEOPLE IN THEIR WORSHIP.

2. The prince is to go through the east gate without (open on the Sabbath only, to mark its peculiar sanctity) to the entrance of the gate of the inner court; he is to go no further, but “stand by the post” (compare ^{<1084>}1 Kings 8:14,22, Solomon standing before the altar of the Lord in the presence of the congregation; also ^{<1114>}2 Kings 11:14 23:3, “by a pillar”: the customary place), the court within belonging exclusively to the priests. There, as representative of the people, in a peculiarly near relation to God, he is to present his offerings to Jehovah, while at a greater distance, the people are to stand worshipping at the outer gate of the same entrance. The offerings on Sabbaths are larger than those of the Mosaic law, to imply that the worship of God is to be conducted by the prince and people in a more munificent spirit of self-sacrificing liberality than formerly.

9. The worshippers were on the great feasts to pass from one side to the other, through the temple courts, in order that, in such a throng as should attend the festivals, the ingress and egress should be the more unimpeded, those going out not being in the way of those coming in.

10. *prince in the midst* — not isolated as at other times, but joining the great throng of worshippers, at their head, after the example of David (^{<924>}Psalm 42:4, “I had gone with the multitude ... to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy day”); the highest in rank animating the devotions of the rest by his presence and example.

12-15. Not only is he to perform *official* acts of worship on holy days and feasts, but in “voluntary” offerings daily he is to show his individual zeal, surpassing all his people in liberality, and so setting them a princely example.

16-18. The prince’s possession is to be inalienable, and any portion given to a servant is to revert to his sons at the year of jubilee, that he may have no temptation to spoil his people of their inheritance, as formerly (compare Ahab and Naboth, ^{<1208>}1 Kings 21:1-29). The mention of the year of jubilee

implies that there is something literal meant, besides the spiritual sense. The jubilee year was restored after the captivity [JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities*, 14.10,6; I Maccabees 6:49]. Perhaps it will be restored under Messiah's coming reign. Compare ²³⁰¹²Isaiah 61:2,3, where "the acceptable year of the Lord" is closely connected with the comforting of the mourners in Zion, and "the day of vengeance" on Zion's foes. The mention of the prince's *sons* is another argument against Messiah being meant by "the prince."

19-24. Due regard is to be had for the sanctity of the officiating priests' food, by cooking courts being provided close to their chambers. One set of apartments for cooking was to be at the corners of the *inner* court, reserved for the flesh of the sin offerings, to be eaten only by the priests whose perquisite it was (²³⁰¹³Leviticus 6:25 7:7), before coming forth to mingle again with the people; another set at the corners of the *outer* court, for cooking the flesh of the peace offerings, of which the people partook along with the priests. All this implies that no longer are the common and unclean to be confounded with the sacred and divine, but that in even the least things, as eating and drinking, the glory of God is to be the aim (²³⁰¹⁴1 Corinthians 10:31).

22. *courts joined* — FAIRBAIRN translates, "roofed" or "vaulted." But these cooking apartments seem to have been uncovered, to let the smoke and smell of the meat the more easily pass away. They were "joined" or "attached" to the walls of the courts at the corners of the latter [MENOCHIUS].

23. *boiling places* — boilers.

under the rows — At the foot of the rows, that is, in the lowest part of the *walls*, were the places for boiling made.

CHAPTER 47

EZEKIEL 47:1-29.

VISION OF THE TEMPLE WATERS. BORDERS AND DIVISION OF THE LAND.

The happy fruit to the earth at large of God's dwelling with Israel in holy fellowship is that the blessing is no longer restricted to the one people and locality, but is to be diffused with comprehensive catholicity through the whole world. So the plant from the cedar of Lebanon is represented as gathering under its shelter "all fowl of every wing" (Ezekiel 17:23). Even the desert places of the earth shall be made fruitful by the healing waters of the Gospel (compare Isaiah 35:1).

1. waters — So Revelation 22:1, represents "the water of life as proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." His throne was set up in the temple at Jerusalem (Ezekiel 43:7). Thence it is to flow over the earth (Joel 3:18 Zechariah 13:1 14:8). Messiah is the temple and the door; from His pierced side flow the living waters, ever increasing, both in the individual believer and in the heart. The fountains in the vicinity of Moriah suggested the image here. The waters flow eastward, that is, towards the Kedron, and thence towards the Jordan, and so along the Ghor into the Dead Sea. The main point in the picture is the rapid augmentation from a petty stream into a mighty river, not by the influx of side streams, but by its own self-supply from the sacred miraculous source in the temple [HENDERSON]. (Compare Psalm 36:8,9 46:4 Isaiah 11:9 Habakkuk 2:14). Searching into the things of God, we find some easy to understand, as the water up to the ankles; others more difficult, which require a deeper search, as the waters up to the knees or loins; others beyond our reach, of which we can only adore the depth (Romans 11:33). The *healing* of the waters of the Dead Sea here answers to "there shall be no more curse" (Revelation 22:3; compare Zechariah 14:11).

7. trees — not merely *one* tree of life as in Paradise (Genesis 3:22), but many: to supply immortal food and medicine to the people of God, who themselves also become "trees of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:3) planted by the waters and (Psalm 1:3) bearing fruit unto holiness.

8. *the desert* — or “plain,” *Hebrew, Arabah* (^{<6187>}Deuteronomy 3:17 4:49 ^{<6186>}Joshua 3:16), which is the name still given to the valley of the Jordan and the plain south of the Dead Sea, and extending to the Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea.

the sea — the Dead Sea. “*The sea*” noted as covering with its waters the guilty cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah. In its bituminous waters no vegetable or animal life is said to be found. But now death is to give place to life in Judea, and throughout the world, as symbolized by the healing of these death-pervaded waters covering the doomed cities. Compare as to “the sea” in general, regarded as a symbol of the troubled powers of nature, disordered by the fall, henceforth to rage no more, ^{<6201>}Revelation 21:1.

9. *rivers* — in *Hebrew*, “two rivers.” Hence Hebrew expositors think that the waters from the temple were divided into two branches, the one emptying itself into the eastern or Dead Sea, the other into the western or Mediterranean. So Zechariah 14:8. However, though this probably is covertly implied in the *Hebrew dual*, the flowing of the waters into the *Dead Sea only* is expressed. Compare ^{<3678>}Ezekiel 47:8, “waters ... healed,” which can apply only to it, not to the Mediterranean: also ^{<3679>}Ezekiel 47:10, “fish as the fish of the great sea”; the Dead Sea, when healed, containing fish, as the Mediterranean does.

10. *En-gedi ... En-eglaim* — En-gedi (meaning “fountain of the kid”), anciently, Hazazon-Tamar, now Ain-Jidy; west of the Dead Sea; David’s place of refuge from Saul. En-eglaim means “fountain of two calves,” on the confines of Moab, over against En-gedi, and near where Jordan enters the Dead Sea (^{<2138>}Isaiah 15:8). These two limits are fixed on, to comprise between them the whole Dead Sea.

fish ... according to their kinds — JEROME quotes an ancient theory that “there are a hundred fifty-three kinds of fishes,” all of which were taken by the apostles (^{<4911>}John 21:11), and not one remained uncaptured; signifying that both the noble and baseborn, the rich and the poor, and every class, are being drawn out of the sea of the world to salvation. Compare ^{<1137>}Matthew 13:47, the gospel net; the apostles being fishermen, at first literally, afterwards spiritually (^{<4049>}Matthew 4:19).

11. *marshes* — marshy places. The region is known to have such pits and marshes. The Arabs take the salt collected by evaporation in these pits for their own use, and that of their flocks.

not be healed — Those not reached by the healing waters of the Gospel, through their sloth and earthly-mindedness, are given over (^{<6211>}Revelation

22:11) to their own bitterness and barrenness (as “saltness” is often employed to express, ^{<0523>}Deuteronomy 29:23 ^{<19734>}Psalms 107:34 Zephaniah 2:9); and awful example to others in the punishment they suffer (^{<0116>}2 Peter 2:6).

12. Instead of the “vine of Sodom and grapes of Gomorrah” (^{<0333>}Deuteronomy 32:32), nauseous and unwholesome, trees of life-giving and life-restoring virtue shall bloom similar in properties to, and exceeding in number, the tree of life in Eden (^{<0117>}Revelation 2:7 22:2,14).

leaf ... not fade — expressing not only the unfailling character of the heavenly medicine of the tree of life, but also that the graces of the believer (as a tree of righteousness), which are the *leaves*, and his deeds, which are the fruits that flow from those graces, are immortal (^{<0003>}Psalms 1:3 ^{<0478>}Jeremiah 17:8 ^{<0102>}Matthew 10:42 ^{<0658>}1 Corinthians 15:58).

new fruit — literally, “firstlings,” or first fruit. They are still, each month afresh, as it were, yielding their first-fruit [FAIRBAIRN]. The *first-born* of a thing, in *Hebrew* idiom, means *the chiefest*. As ^{<0883>}Job 18:13, “the first-born of death,” that is, *the most fatal* death.

13. *The redivision of the land: the boundaries.* The latter are substantially the same as those given by Moses in ^{<0603>}Numbers 34:1-29; they here begin with the north, but in Numbers they begin with the south (^{<0603>}Numbers 34:3). It is only Canaan proper, exclusive of the possession of the two and a half tribes beyond Jordan, that is here divided.

Joseph ... two portions — according to the original promise of Jacob (^{<0883>}Genesis 48:5,22). Joseph’s sons were given the birthright forfeited by Reuben, the first-born (^{<0350>}1 Chronicles 5:1). Therefore the former is here put first. His *two* sons having distinct portions make up the whole number *twelve* portions, as he had just before specified “*twelve* tribes of Israel”; for Levi had no separate inheritance, so that he is not reckoned in the twelve.

15. Zedad — on the north boundary of Canaan.

16. Hamath — As Israel was a separate people, so their land was a separate land. On no scene could the sacred history have been so well transacted as on it. On the east was the sandy desert. On the north and south, mountains. On the west, an inhospitable sea-shore. But it was not always to be a separate land. Between the parallel ranges of Lebanon is the long valley of El-Bekaa, leading to “the entering in of Hamath” on the Orontes, in the Syrian frontier. Roman roads, and the harbor made at Caesarea, opened out doors through which the Gospel should go from it to

all lands. So in the last days, when all shall flock to Jerusalem as the religious center of the world.

Berothah — a city in Syria conquered by David (^{<1088>}2 Samuel 8:8); meaning “wells.”

Hazar-hatticon — meaning “the middle village.”

Hauran — a tract in Syria, south of Damascus; Auranitis.

17. Hazar-enan — a town in the north of Canaan, meaning “village of fountains.”

18. east sea — the Dead Sea. The border is to go down straight to it by the valley of the Jordan. So (^{<0611>}Numbers 34:11,12.

19. Tamar — not Tadmor in the desert, but Tamar, the last town of Judea, by the Dead Sea. Meaning “palm tree”; so called from palm trees abounding near it.

22. to the strangers — It is altogether unprecedented under the old covenant, that “strangers” should have “inheritance” among the tribes. There would not be room locally within Canaan for more than the tribes. The literal sense must therefore be modified, as expressing that Gentiles are not to be excluded from settling among the covenant-people, and that spiritually their privileges are not to be less than those of Israel (^{<5012>}Romans 10:12 ^{<0628>}Galatians 3:28 ^{<0816>}Ephesians 3:6 ^{<1031>}Colossians 3:11 ^{<1109>}Revelation 7:9,10). Still, “sojourneth,” in (^{<1473>}Ezekiel 47:23, implies that in Canaan, the covenant people are regarded as *at home*, the strangers as *settlers*.

CHAPTER 48

EZEKIEL 48:1-35.

ALLOTMENT OF THE LAND TO SEVERAL TRIBES.

1. *Daniel* — The lands are divided into portions of ideal exactness, running alongside of each other, the whole breadth from west to east, standing in a common relation to the temple in the center: seven tribes' portions on the north, five in the smaller division in the south. The portions of the city, the temple, the prince, and the priesthood, are in the middle, not within the boundaries of any tribe, all alike having a common interest in them. Judah has the place of honor next the center on the north, Benjamin the corresponding place of honor next the center on the south; because of the adherence of these two to the temple ordinances and to the house of David for so long, when the others deserted them. Dan, on the contrary, so long locally and morally semi-heathen (^{<0710E>}Judges 18:1-31), is to have the least honorable place, at the extreme north. For the same reason, St. John (^{<061E>}Revelation 7:5-8) omits Daniel altogether.

3. *Asher* — a tribe of which no one of note is mentioned in the Old Testament. In the New Testament one is singled out of it, the prophetess Anna.

4. *Manasseh* — The intercourse and unity between the two and a half tribes east of the Jordan, and the nine and a half west of it, had been much kept up by the splitting of Manasseh, causing the visits of kinsmen one to the other from both sides of the Jordan. There shall be no need for this in the new order of things.

5. *Ephraim* — This tribe, within its two dependent tribes, Manasseh and Benjamin, for upwards of four hundred years under the judges held the pre-eminence.

6. *Reuben* — doomed formerly for incest and instability “not to excel” (^{<0400E>}Genesis 49:4). So no distinguished prophet, priest, or king had come from it. Of it were the notorious Dathan and Abiram, the mutineers. A pastoral and Bedouin character marked it and Gad (^{<01E1E>}Judges 5:16).

15-17. The five thousand rods, apportioned to the city out of the twenty-five thousand square, are to be laid off in a square of four thousand five hundred, with the two hundred fifty all around for suburbs.

profane — that is, not strictly sacred as the sacerdotal portions, but applied to secular uses.

24. Benjamin — Compare Jacob's prophecy (^{<0497>}Genesis 49:27 ^{<0592>}Deuteronomy 33:12). It alone with Judah had been throughout loyal to the house of David, so its prowess at the "night" of the national history was celebrated as well as in the "morning."

25. Simeon — omitted in the blessing of Moses in ^{<0531>}Deuteronomy 33:1-29 perhaps because of the Simeonite "prince," who at Baal-peor led the Israelites in their idolatrous whoredoms with Midian (^{<0254>}Numbers 25:14).

26. Issachar — Its ancient portion had been on the plain of Esdraelon. Compared (^{<0494>}Genesis 49:14) to "a strong ass crouching between two burdens," that is, tribute and tillage; never meddling with wars except in self-defense.

31. gates — (^{<0212>}Revelation 21:12, etc.). The twelve gates bear the names of the twelve tribes to imply that all are regarded as having an interest in it.

35. Lord is there — *Jehovah-Shammah*. Not that the city will be called so in mere name, but that the reality will be best expressed by this descriptive title (^{<2187>}Jeremiah 3:17 33:16 ^{<3205>}Zechariah 2:10 ^{<0213>}Revelation 21:3 22:3).