

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

Dreadful judgments impending over the people of God, Isaiah 24:1-4. Particular enumeration of the horrid impieties which provoked the Divine vengeance, Isaiah 24:5, Isaiah 24:6. Great political wretchedness of the transgressors, Isaiah 24:7-12. The calamities shall be so great that only a small remnant shall be left in the land, as it were the gleanings of the vintage, Isaiah 24:13. The rest, scattered over the different countries, spread there the knowledge of God, Isaiah 24:14-16. Strong figures by which the great distress and long captivity of the transgressors are set forth, Isaiah 24:17-22. Gracious promise of a redemption from captivity; and of an extension of the kingdom of God in the latter days, attended with such glorious circumstances as totally to eclipse the light and splendor of the previous dispensation, Isaiah 24:23.

From the thirteenth chapter to the twenty-third inclusive, the fate of several cities and nations is denounced: of Babylon, of the Philistines, Moab, Damascus, Egypt, Tyre. After having foretold the destruction of the foreign nations, enemies of Judah, the prophet declares the judgments impending on the people of God themselves for their wickedness and apostasy, and the desolation that shall be brought on their whole country.

The twenty-fourth and the three following chapters seem to have been delivered about the same time: before the destruction of Moab by Shalmaneser; see Isaiah 25:10, consequently, before the destruction of Samaria; probably in the beginning of Hezekiah's reign. But concerning the particular subject of the twenty-fourth chapter interpreters are not at all agreed: some refer it to the desolation caused by the invasion of Shalmaneser; others to the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar; and others to the destruction of the city and nation by the Romans. Vitringa is singular in his opinion, who applies it to the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. Perhaps it may have a view to all of the three great desolations of the country, by Shalmaneser, by Nebuchadnezzar, and by the Romans; especially the last, to which some parts of it may seem more peculiarly applicable. However, the prophet chiefly employs general images; such as set forth the greatness and universality of the ruin and desolation that is to be brought upon the country by these great revolutions, involving all orders and degrees of men, changing entirely the face of things, and destroying the whole polity, both religious and civil; without entering into minute circumstances, or necessarily restraining it by particular marks to one great event, exclusive of others of the same kind. - L.

Verse 4

The world languisheth - The world is the same with the land; that is, the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, orbis Israeliticus. See note on Isaiah 13:11 (note).

Verse 5

The laws - The law - $\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}$ (torah), singular: so read the Septuagint, Syriac, and Chaldee.

Verse 6

Are burned - Are destroyed - For $\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}$ (charu), read $\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}$ (charebu). See the Septuagint, Syriac, Chaldee and Symmachus.

Verse 8

The mirth, etc. - $\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}$ (sheon), the noise. $\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}$ (geon), the pride, is the reading of three of De Rossi's MSS., with the Septuagint and Arabic.

Verse 9

Strong drink - Palm wine - This is the proper meaning of the word $\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}$ (shechar), $\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}$. See note on Isaiah 5:11. All enjoyment shall cease: the sweetest wine shall become bitter to their taste.

Verse 11

All joy is darkened - All gladness is passed away - For $\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}$ (arebah), darkened, read $\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}$ (aberah), passed away, transposing a letter. Houbigant, Secker. Five of Dr. Kennicott's and five of De Rossi's MSS., several ancients add $\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}$ (col), all, after $\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}\alpha^{\alpha}$ (mesos): the Septuagint adds the same word before it.

Verse 14

They shall lift up their voice - But these shall lift up their voice - That is, they that escaped out of these calamities. The great distresses brought upon Israel and Judah drove the people away, and dispersed them all over the neighboring countries: they fled to Egypt, to Asia Minor, to the islands and the coasts of Greece. They were to be found in great numbers in most of the principal cities of these countries. Alexandria was in a great measure peopled by them. They had synagogues for their worship in many places, and were greatly

them. - L.

For מִקְּוֹל (mikkol), a MS. reads מִמִּפְּנֵי (mippeney), as it is in Jeremiah 48:44, and so the Vulgate and Chaldee. But perhaps it is only, like the latter, a Hebraism, and means no more than the simple preposition מִן (min). See Psalm 102:6. For it does not appear that the terror was intended to scare the wild beasts by its noise. The paronomasia is very remarkable; מִפְּחָד (pachad), מִפְּחָת (pachath), מִפָּחַד (pach): and that it was a common proverbial form, appears from Jeremiah's repeating it in the same words, Jeremiah 48:43, Jeremiah 48:44.

Verse 18

Out of the midst of the pit - From the pit - For מִתּוֹךְ (mittoch), from the midst of, a MS. reads מִמִּן (min), from, as it is in Jeremiah 48:44; and so likewise the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate.

Verse 19

The earth - The land - מִן הָאָרֶץ (haarets), forte delendum מִן (he), ut ex praecedente ortum. Vid. seqq. - Secker. - Probably the מִן (he), in מִן הָאָרֶץ (haarets), should be blotted out, as having arisen from the preceding.

Verse 20

Like a cottage - Like a lodge for a night - See note on Isaiah 1:8.

Verse 21

On high - upon the earth - That is, the ecclesiastical and civil polity of the Jews, which shall be destroyed. The nation shall continue in a state of depression and dereliction for a long time. The image seems to be taken from the practice of the great monarchs of that time; who, when they had thrown their wretched captives into a dungeon, never gave themselves the trouble of inquiring about them; but let them lie a long time in that miserable condition, wholly destitute of relief, and disregarded. God shall at length revisit and restore his people in the last age: and then the kingdom of God shall be established in such perfection, as wholly to obscure and eclipse the glory of the temporary, typical, preparative kingdom now subsisting.

Verse 23

Before his ancients gloriously - In the sight of their old men he shall be glorified. Old MS. Bible. - The figurative language of the prophets is taken from the analogy between the world natural and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic. Accordingly the whole world natural, consisting of heaven and earth, signifies the whole world politic, consisting of thrones and people; or so much of it as is considered in prophecy: and the things in that world signify the analogous things in this. For the heavens and the things thereto signify thrones and dignities, and those who enjoy them; and the earth with the things thereon, the inferior people; and the lowest parts of the earth, called hades or hell, the lowest or most miserable part of them. Great earthquakes, and the shaking of heaven and earth, are put for the shaking of kingdoms, so as to distract and overthrow them; the creating a new heaven and earth, and the passing away of an old one, or the beginning and end of a world, for the rise and ruin of a body politic signified thereby. The sun, for the whole species and race of kings, in the kingdoms of the world politic; the moon, for the body of the common people, considered as the king's wife; the stars, for subordinate princes and great men; or for bishops and rulers of the people of God, when the sun is Christ: setting of the sun, moon, and stars. darkening the sun, Turning the moon into blood and falling of the stars, for the ceasing of a kingdom. - Sirach 1. Newton's Observations on the Prophecies, Part I., chap. 2.

These observations are of great consequence and use, in explaining the phraseology of the prophets.