

Adam Clarke:

Introduction

The glorious prospect displayed in this chapter seems to have elevated the prophet even above his usual majesty. The subject is the very flourishing condition of the Church of Jesus Christ at that period of the Gospel dispensation when both Jews and Gentiles shall become one fold under one Shepherd. The imagery employed is of the most consolatory and magnificent description. This blessed state of the world shall follow a time of gross darkness, Isaiah 60:1, Isaiah 60:2. The universal diffusion of vital godliness beautifully set forth by a great variety of images, Isaiah 60:3-14. The everlasting duration and spotless purity of this kingdom of Christ, Isaiah 60:15-21. A time appointed in the counsels of Jehovah for the commencement of this happy period; and when this time arrives, the particulars of the prophecy shall have a speedy accomplishment, Isaiah 60:22.

The subject of this chapter is the great increase and flourishing state of the Church of God by the conversion and accession of the heathen nations to it, which is set forth in such ample and exalted terms, as plainly show that the full completion of this prophecy is reserved for future times. This subject is displayed in the most splendid colors under a great variety of images highly poetical, designed to give a general idea of the glories of that perfect state of the Church of God which we are taught to expect in the latter times; when the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, and the Jews shall be converted and gathered from their dispersions, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

Of the use in prophecy of general or common poetical images, in setting forth the greatness and importance of a future event universally, without descending to particulars, or too minutely explaining circumstances, I have already pretty largely treated in the twentieth prelection on the Hebrew poetry; and have more than once observed in these notes that such images are not always to be applied particularly to persons and things, and were never intended to be minutely explained. I shall add here the opinion of a very learned and judicious person upon this subject: "It is, I think, a mark of right understanding in the language of prophecy, and in the design of prophecy too, to keep to what appears the design and meaning of the prophecy in general, and what the whole of it laid together points out to us, and not to suffer a warm imagination to mislead us from the real intention of the spirit of prophecy, by following uncertain applications of the parts of it." - Lowman on the Revelation, note on Revelation 19:21 (note). - L. To this testimony I must add my own. This is one of the most glorious chapters in the whole of the Old Testament. The splendor, glory, and excellence of the Church of Christ are here pointed out in language which the Spirit of God alone is capable of using. But when shall this state of blessedness take place? Lord, thou only knowest.

Verse 1

Arise - Call upon God through Christ, for his salvation; and,

Shine - אֲרִיבֶנְךָ (ori), be illuminated: for till thou arise and call upon God, thou wilt never receive true light.

For thy light is come - כִּי בָא אֹרֶךְ (ki ba orech), for thy light cometh. The Messiah is at the door; who, while he is a light to lighten the Gentiles, will be the glory - the effulgence, of his people Israel.

Verse 2

Darkness shall cover the earth - This is the state of the Gentile people.

Verse 3

And the Gentiles shall come - This has been in some sort already fulfilled. The Gentiles have received the light of the Gospel from the land of Judea, and the Gentile kings have embraced that Gospel; so that many nations of the earth are full of the doctrine of Christ.

Verse 4

Shall be nursed at thy side - "Shall be carried at the side" - For אֲנִי אֶחָנְךָ (teamanah), shall be nursed, the Septuagint and Chaldee read אֲנִי אֶחָנְךָ (tinnasenh), shall be carried. A MS. has אֲנִי אֶחָנְךָ (al catheph tinnasenh), "shall be carried on the shoulder;" instead of אֲנִי אֶחָנְךָ (al tsad teamanah), "shall be nursed on the side." Another MS. has both אֲנִי אֶחָנְךָ (catheph) and אֲנִי אֶחָנְךָ (tsad). Another MS. has it thus: אֲנִי אֶחָנְךָ (tinnasenh): (teamanah), with a line drawn over the first word. Sir John Chardin says that it is the general custom in the east to carry their children astride upon the hip with the arm round their body. His MS. note on this place is as follows: - Coutume en Orient de porter les enfans sur le coste a; califourchon sur la hanche: cette facon est generale aux Indes; les enfans se tiennent comme cela, et la personne qui les porte les embrasse et serre par le corps; parceque sont(ni) emmaillottes, ni en robes qui les embrassent. "In the east it is the custom to carry the children on the haunch, with the legs astride. This is the general custom in India. The children support themselves in this way, and the arm of the nurse goes round

the body and presses the child close to the side; and this they can easily do, as the children are not swathed, nor encumbered with clothes. Non brachiis occidentalium more, sed humeris, divaricatis tibiis, impositos circumferunt. They carry them about, not in their arms after the manner of the western nations, but on their shoulders; the children being placed astride. Cotovic. Iter. Syr. cap. 14. This last quotation seems to favor the reading $\times\phi\times\omega \times\gamma\times^a\times\xi$ by (al catheph), on the shoulder, as the Septuagint likewise do: but upon the whole I think that $\times\phi\times\omega \times\iota\times^a \times^a\times \times\omega\times\times \times$ (al tsad tinnasenah) is the true reading, which the Chaldee favors; and I have accordingly followed it. See Isaiah 66:12. - L. This mode of carrying children is as common in India as carrying them in the arms is in Europe.

Verse 5

Then thou shalt see And Then shalt thou fear - For $\times^a\times^a\times^a\times^a$ (tirai), thou shalt see, as ours and much the greater number of the translators, ancient and modern, render it, forty MSS. (ten ancient) of Kennicott's, and twenty-eight of De Rossi's, with one ancient of my own, and the old edition of 1488, have $\times^a\times^a\times^a\times^a$ (tirai), thou shalt fear: the true reading, confirmed by the perfect parallelism of the sentences: the heart ruffled and dilated in the second line answering to the fear and joy expressed in the first. The Prophet Jeremiah, Jeremiah 33:9, has the same natural and elegant sentiment: -
 And this city shall become to me a name of joy;
 A praise and an honor for all the nations of the earth;
 Which shall hear all the good that I do unto them:
 And they shall fear, and they shall tremble, at all the goodness
 And at all the prosperity that I procure unto her.

And David: -

I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
 Psalm 139:14
 His tibi me rebus quaedam divina voluptas
 Percipit atque horror.
 Lucret. 3:28.
 Recenti mens trepidat metu,
 Plenoque Bacchi pectore turbidum
 Laetatur.
 Hor. Carm. 2:19. 50:5.

Verse 6

The praises of the Lord And the praise of Jehovah - Thirty-three MSS. and three editions have $\times^a\times^a\times^a$ (uthehillath), in the singular number; and so read the ancient versions, and one of my own MSS.

Verse 7

The rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee - Vitringa on the place understands their ministering, and ascending or going up on the altar, as offering themselves voluntarily: ipsi se, non expectato sacerdote alto, gloriae et sanctificationi divini nominis ultro ac libenter oblaturi. They, waiting for no priest, go and freely offer themselves to the glory and sanctification of the sacred name. This gives a very elegant and poetical turn to the image. It was a general notion that prevailed with sacrificers among the heathen, that the victim's being brought without reluctance to the altar was a good omen; and the contrary a bad one. Sabinos petit aliquanto tristior; quod sacrificanti hostia aufugerat. Sueton. Titus, cap. 10. Accessit dirum omen, profugus altaribus tauris. It was an omen of dreadful portent when the victim fled away from the altar. Tacit. Hist. 3:56. - L.

Verse 8

And as the doves to their windows And like doves upon the wing? - Instead of $\times\phi\times\omega$ (el), to, forty-two MSS. of Kennicott's, and one of mine, have by $\times\phi\times\omega$, upon. For $\times^a\times^a\times^a\times^a\times^a$ (arubboteyhem), their windows, read $\times^a\times^a\times^a\times^a\times^a$ (ebrotheyhem), their wings, transposing a letter. - Houbigant. The Septuagint render it $\iota\phi\iota\ \dots\ \iota\frac{1}{2}\ \iota\frac{1}{2}\iota\mu\iota\ \iota\phi\iota\ \iota\phi\iota\ \iota\phi\iota$, with their young; they read $\times^a\times^a\times^a\times^a$ (ephrocheyhem), nearer to the latter than to the present reading. - L.

Verse 9

The ships of Tarshish first The ships of Tarshish among the first - For $\times^a\times^a\times^a\times^a$ (barishonah) twenty-five MSS. and the Syriac read $\times\gamma\times^a\times^a\times^a\times^a$ (kebarishonah), as at the first. The ships of Tarshish AS at the first; that is, as they brought gold and silver in the days of Solomon.

Verse 13

And I will make the place of my feet glorious - And that I may glorify the place whereon I rest my feet - The temple of Jerusalem was called the house of God, and the place of his rest or residence. The visible symbolical appearance of God, called by the Jews the shechinah, was in the most holy place, between the wings of the cherubim, above the ark. This is considered as the throne of God, presiding as King over the Jewish state; and as a footstool is a necessary appendage to a throne, (see note on Isaiah 52:2 (note)), the ark is considered as the footstool of God, and is so called, Psalm 99:6; 1 Chronicles 28:2.

The glory of Lebanon - That is, the cedar.

Verse 19

Neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee - Nor by night shall the brightness of the moon enlighten thee - This line, as it stands in the present text, seems to be defective. The Septuagint and Chaldee both express the night, which is almost necessary to answer to day in the preceding line, as well as to perfect the sense here. I therefore think that we ought, upon the authority of the Septuagint and Chaldee, to read either $\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}$ (velailah), and by night, instead of $\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}$ (ulenogah), and for brightness; or $\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}$ (ulenogah ballailah), adding the word $\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}$ (ballailah), by night. - L.

Verse 21

Of my planting - $\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}\text{w}^{\text{w}}$ (mattai); so, with the Keri, read forty-four MSS. (seven ancient) and six editions; with which agree the Syriac, Chaldee, and Vulgate.

Verse 22

I the Lord will hasten it in his time - There is a time set for the fulfillment of this prophecy: that time must come before it begins to take place; but when it does begin, the whole will be performed in a short space. It is not, therefore, the time determined for the event that shall be hastened, but all the circumstances of the event; all the parts of the prediction shall be speedily completed. I the Lorde in hys tyme sodeynly schal boun thys. - Old MS. Bible. And because it is the Lord, therefore it will be done: for although it be difficult, he is almighty.