

## Adam Clarke:

## Introduction

The Messiah represented as a slender twig shooting up from the root of an old withered stem, which tender plant, so extremely weak in its first appearance, should nevertheless become fruitful and mighty, Isaiah 11:1-4. Great equity of the Messiah's government, Isaiah 11:5. Beautiful assemblages of images by which the great peace and happiness of his kingdom are set forth, Isaiah 11:6-8. The extent of his dominion shall be ultimately that of the whole habitable globe, Isaiah 11:9. The prophet, borrowing his imagery from the exodus from Egypt, predicts, with great majesty of language, the future restoration of the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah, (viz., the whole of the twelve tribes of Israel), from their several dispersions, and also that blessed period when both Jews and Gentiles shall assemble under the banner of Jesus, and zealously unite in extending the limits of his kingdom, Isaiah 11:10-16.

The prophet had described the destruction of the Assyrian army under the image of a mighty forest, consisting of flourishing trees growing thick together, and of a great height; of Lebanon itself crowned with lofty cedars, but cut down and laid level with the ground by the axe wielded by the hand of some powerful and illustrious agent. In opposition to this image he represents the great Person who makes the subject of this chapter as a slender twig shooting out from the trunk of an old tree, cut down, lopped to the very root, and decayed; which tender plant, so weak in appearance, should nevertheless become fruitful and prosper. This contrast shows plainly the connection between this and the preceding chapter, which is moreover expressed by the connecting particle; and we have here a remarkable instance of that method so common with the prophets, and particularly with Isaiah, of taking occasion, from the mention of some great temporal deliverance, to launch out into the display of the spiritual deliverance of God's people by the Messiah; for that this prophecy relates to the Messiah we have the express authority of St. Paul, Romans 15:12. "He joins this paragraph, with respect to the days of the Messiah, with the fidelity that was in the days of Hezekiah." - Kimchi, in Isaiah 11:1. Thus in the latter part of Isaiah's prophecies the subject of the great redemption, and of the glories of the Messiah's kingdom, arises out of the restoration of Judah by the deliverance from the captivity of Babylon, and is all along connected and intermixed with it.

## Verse 4

With the rod of his mouth "By the blast of his mouth" - For  $\text{x}'\text{x}\odot\text{x}'\text{x}$  (beshebet), by the rod, Houbigant reads  $\text{x}'\text{x}\odot\text{x}'\text{x}^a$  (beshebeth), by the blast of his mouth, from  $\text{x}\text{x}\odot\text{x}'$  (nashab), to blow. The conjecture is ingenious and probable; and seems to be confirmed by the Septuagint and Chaldee, who render it by the word of his mouth, which answers much better to the correction than to the present reading. Add to this, that the blast of his mouth is perfectly parallel to the breath of his lips in the next line.

## Verse 5

The girdle "The cincture" - All the ancient Versions, except that of Symmachus, have two different words for girdle in the two hemistichs. It is not probable that Isaiah would have repeated  $\text{x}\text{x}-\text{x}\text{x}$  (azer), when a synonymous word so obvious as  $\text{x}-\text{x}'\text{x}\text{x}$  (chagor) occurred. The tautology seems to have arisen from the mistake of some transcriber. The meaning of this verse is, that a zeal for justice and truth shall make him active and strong in executing the great work which he shall undertake. See note on Isaiah 5:27.

## Verse 6

The wolf also shall, etc. "Then shall the wolf," etc. - The idea of the renewal of the golden age, as it is called, is much the same in the Oriental writers with that of the Greeks and Romans: - the wild beasts grow tame; serpents and poisonous herbs become harmless; all is peace and harmony, plenty and happiness: - Occidet et serpens, et fallax herba veneni Occidet.

Vega. Eclog. 4:24.

"The serpent's brood shall die. The sacred ground  
Shall weeds and noxious plants refuse to bear."  
- Nec magnos metuent armenta leones.

Virg. Eclog. 4:22.

"Nor shall the flocks fear the great lions."  
Non lupus insidias explorat ovilia circum,  
Nec gregibus nocturnus obambulat: acrior illum  
Cura domat: timidae damae cervique fugaces  
Nunc interque canes, et circum tecta vagantur.

Virg. Georg. 3:537.

"The night wolf that round the enclosure prowled,



to be accomplished.

The Lord **יהוה** - For **אֲדֹנָי** (Adonai), thirty-three MSS. of Kennicott's, and many of De Rossi's, and two editions, read **יְהוָה** (Yehovah).

The islands of the sea - The Roman and Turkish empires, say Kimchi.

#### Verse 13

The adversaries of Judah **וְאֵת יְהוּדָה** - **צֹרֵרִים** (tsorerim), Postulat pars posterior versus, ut intelligantur inimicitiae Judae in Ephraimum: et potest (**צֹרֵרִים** (tsorerim)) inimicitiam notare, ut (**נִחֻמִּים** (nichumim)) poenitentiam, Hosea 11:8. - Secker.

#### Verse 15

The Lord - shall smite it in the seven streams **וְשִׁבְעֵי נָחַל** - The Chaldee reads **וְשִׁבְעֵי נָחַל** (hecherib); and so perhaps the Septuagint, who have **ἑπτὰ ποταμοὶ**, the word by which they commonly render it. Vulg. desolabit; **וְשִׁבְעֵי נָחַל** shall desolate. The Septuagint, Vulgate, and Chaldee read **וְשִׁבְעֵי נָחַל** (hidrichahu), **וְשִׁבְעֵי נָחַל** shall make it passable, adding the pronoun, which is necessary: but this reading is not confirmed by any MS.

Here is a plain allusion to the passage of the Red Sea. And the Lord's shaking his hand over the river with his vehement wind, refers to a particular circumstance of the same miracle: for he caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, Exodus 14:21. The tongue; a very apposite and descriptive expression for a bay such as that of the Red Sea. It is used in the same sense, Joshua 15:2, Joshua 15:5; Joshua 18:19. The Latins gave the same name to a narrow strip of land running into the sea: *tenuem producit in aequora linguam*. Lucan. 2:613. He shall smite the river to its seven streams. This has been supposed to refer to the Nile, because it falls into the Mediterranean Sea by seven mouths: but R. Kimchi understands it of the Euphrates, which is the opinion of some good judges. See the Targum. See below.

Herodotus, lib. i, 189, tells a story of his Cyrus, (a very different character from that of the Cyrus of the Scriptures and Xenophon), which may somewhat illustrate this passage, in which it is said that God would inflict a kind of punishment and judgment on the Euphrates, and render it fordable by dividing it into seven streams. **וְשִׁבְעֵי נָחַל** Cyrus, being impeded in his march to Babylon by the Gyndes, a deep and rapid river which falls into the Tigris, and having lost one of his sacred white horses that attempted to pass it, was so enraged against the river that he threatened to reduce it, and make it so shallow that it should be easily fordable even by women, who should not be up to their knees in passing it. Accordingly he set his whole army to work, and cutting three hundred and sixty trenches, from both sides of the river, turned the waters into them, and drained them off.