

## Adam Clarke:

## Introduction

The Jews reproved for their reliance on Egypt, Isaiah 30:1-7. Threatened for their obstinate adherence to this alliance, Isaiah 30:8-17. Images the most elegant and lofty, by which the intense gloriousness of Messiah's reign at the period when all Israel shall be added to the Church is beautifully set forth, Isaiah 30:18-26. Dreadful fall of Sennacherib's army, an event most manifestly typical of the terrible and sudden overthrow of Antichrist; as, unless this typical reference be admitted, no possible connection can be imagined between the stupendous events which took place in Hezekiah's reign, and the very remote and inconceivably more glorious displays of Divine vengeance and mercy in the days of the Messiah, Isaiah 30:27-33.

## Verse 1

And that cover with a covering - Who ratify covenants - Hebrews Who pour out a libation. Sacrifice and libation were ceremonies constantly used, in ancient times by most nations in the ratifying of covenants: a libation therefore is used for a covenant, as in Greek the word  $\lambda\iota\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$ , for the same reason, stands for both. This seems to be the most easy explication of the Hebrew phrase, and it has the authority of the Septuagint,  $\lambda\iota\beta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega\ \iota\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$ ,  $\iota\mu\ \iota\sigma\chi\acute{\iota}\sigma\tau\alpha\iota$ ...

## Verse 4

Hanes - Six MSS. of Kennicott's, and perhaps six others, with four of De Rossi's, read  $\text{חֲנָנִים}$  (chinnam), in vain, for  $\text{חֲנָנִי}$  (Hanes); and so also the Septuagint, who read likewise  $\text{ἐργασίαν}$  (yageu), labored, for  $\text{ἐργασίαν}$  (yaggiu), arrived at.

## Verse 5

Were - ashamed - Eight MSS. (one ancient) of Kennicott's, and ten of De Rossi's, read  $\text{חֲנָנִים}$  (hobish), without  $\text{ח}$  (aleph). So the Chaldee and Vulgate.

But a shame - But proved even a shame - Four MSS. (three ancient) after  $\text{כִּי}$  (ki), add  $\text{יִמ}$  (im), unless, which seems wanted to complete the phrase in its usual form.

## Verse 6

The burden -  $\text{מַשָּׂא}$  (massa) seems here to be taken in its proper sense; the load, not the oracle. The same subject is continued; and there seems to be no place here for a new title to a distinct prophecy.

Does not burden of the beasts of the South in this place relate to the presents sent by Hoshea king of Israel to the South - to Egypt, which lay south of Judea, to engage the Egyptians to succor him against the king of Assyria?

Into the land of trouble and anguish - Through a land of distress and difficulty - The same deserts are here spoken of which the Israelites passed through when they came out of Egypt, which Moses describes, Deuteronomy 8:15, as that great and terrible wilderness wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought; where there was no water. And which was designed to be a kind of barrier between them and Egypt, of which the Lord had said, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way, Deuteronomy 17:16.

Shall not profit them - A MS. adds in the margin the word  $\text{לָהֶם}$  (lamo), them, which seems to have been lost out of the text: it is authorized by the Septuagint and Vulgate.

## Verse 7

Their strength is to sit still - Rahab the Inactive - The two last words,  $\text{חֲנָנִים}$  (hem shabeth), joined into one, make the participle pihel  $\text{חֲנָנִים}$  (hameshabbeth). I find the learned Professor Doederlein, in his version of Isaiah, and note on this place, has given the same conjecture; which he speaks of as having been formerly published by him. A concurrence of different persons in the same conjecture adds to it a greater degree of probability.

## Verse 8

For ever and ever - For a testimony for ever -  $\text{לְעוֹלָם}$  (leed). So the Syriac, Chaldee, Vulgate, and Septuagint, in MSS. Pachom. and 1. D. 2:  $\text{לְעוֹלָם}$ , which two words have been lost out of the other copies of the Septuagint.

## Verse 12

In oppression - In obliquity -  $\text{בְּעִשְׁתָּן}$  (beakesh), transposing the two last letters of  $\text{בְּעִשְׁתָּן}$  (beoshek),

in oppression, which seems not to belong to this place: a very probable conjecture of Houbigant.

#### Verse 13

Swelling out to a high wall – A swelling in a high wall – It has been observed before, that the buildings of Asia generally consist of little better than what we call mud walls. – All the houses at Ispahan, – says Thevenot, Vol. II., p. 159, – are built of bricks made of clay and straw, and dried in the sun; and covered with a plaster made of a fine white stone. In other places in Persia the houses are built with nothing else but such bricks, made with tempered clay and chopped straw, well mingled together, and dried in the sun, and then used: but the least rain dissolves them. – Sir John Chardin’s MS. remark on this place of Isaiah is very apposite: Murs en Asie etant faits de terre se fendent ainsi par milieu et de haut en bas. – The walls in Asia being made of earth often cleave from top to bottom. – This shouts clearly how obvious and expressive the image is. The psalmist has in the same manner made use of it, to express sudden and utter destruction: –

Ye shall be slain all of you;

Ye shall be like an inclining wall, like a shattered fence. –

Psalm 62:4.

#### Verse 14

He shall not spare – And spareth it not – Five MSS. add the conjunction  $\times$  (vau) to the negative;  $\times\text{---}\times\text{---}\times$  (velo).

#### Verse 17

At the rebuke of five shall ye flee – At the rebuke of five, ten thousand of you shall flee – In the second line of this verse a word is manifestly omitted, which should answer to one thousand in the first: the Septuagint supply  $\text{יֶלְדֵי־אֶלֶף}$ ,  $\text{יְרֵבָבָה$  (rabbim). But the true word is  $\text{יְרֵבָבָה}$  (rebabab), as I am persuaded any one will be convinced, who will compare the following passages with this place: –

How should one chase a thousand;

And two put ten thousand ( $\text{יְרֵבָבָה}$ ) to flight? –

Deuteronomy 32:30.

And five of you shall chase a hundred;

And a hundred of you shall chase ( $\text{יְרֵבָבָה}$ ) ten thousand. –

Leviticus 26:8.

#### Verse 18

And therefore will he be exalted – Even for this shall he expect in silence – For  $\text{יָרֹם}$  (yarum), he shall be exalted, which belongs not to this place, Houbigant reads  $\text{יָדֹם}$  (yadum), he shall be silent: and so it seems to be in a MS. Another MS. instead of it reads  $\text{יָשׁוּב}$  (yashub), he shall return. The mistakes occasioned by the similitude of the letters  $\text{ד}$  (daleth) and  $\text{ר}$  (resh) are very frequent, as the reader may have already observed.

#### Verse 19

For the people shall dwell in Zion – When a holy people shall dwell in Sion –  $\text{בְּיָדֵינוּ}$ ,  $\text{בְּיָדֵינוּ}$ , Septuagint;  $\text{אֲמֹרֶת־קֹדֶשׁ}$  (am kadosh). The word  $\text{אֲמֹרֶת־קֹדֶשׁ}$  (kadosh), lost out of the text, but happily supplied by the Septuagint, clears up the sense, otherwise extremely obscure. When the rest of the cities of the land were taken by the king of Assyria, Zion was preserved, and all that were in it.

Thou shalt weep no more – Thou shalt implore him with weeping – The negative particle  $\text{לֹא}$  (lo) is not acknowledged by the Septuagint. It may perhaps have been written by mistake for  $\text{לֹא}$  (lo), to him, of which there are many examples.

#### Verse 20

Though the Lord – Though Jehovah – For  $\text{אֲדֹנָי}$  (Adonai), sixteen MSS. and three editions have  $\text{יְהוָה}$  (Yehovah), many of De Rossi’s have the same reading; all my own have  $\text{יְהוָה}$  (Yehovah).

#### Verse 21

When ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left – Turn not aside, to the right or to the left – The Syriac Chaldee, and Vulgate, translate as if, instead of  $\text{כִּי־בְּעֵינֵינוּ}$  (ki-(vechi), they read  $\text{לֹא־בְּעֵינֵינוּ}$  (lo-(velo).

#### Verse 22

Ye shall defile – Ye shall treat as defiled – The very prohibition of Moses, Deuteronomy 7:25, only thrown out of the prose into the poetical form: – The graven images of their gods ye shall burn with fire: thou shalt

not desire the silver or the gold that is on them; nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein; for it is an abomination to Jehovah thy God.â€•

## Verse 25

**When the towers fall** – When the mighty fall – xʔxːxːxː<sup>TM</sup>xː (migdalim), Ĩ̂ĭĭũĩ̂ĩ̂ĩ̂...Ĩ̂ĭĭũĩ̂ĩ̂ĩ̂...ĭ̂ , Sym.; Ĩ̂ĭĭũĩ̂ĩ̂ĩ̂...Ĩ̂ĭĭũĩ̂ĩ̂ĩ̂...ĭ̂ , Aquila; xːxːxːxː<sup>TM</sup>xY (rabrebin), Chard.; all signifying mighty sizes.

## Verse 26

**Shall be sevenfold** - The text adds x<sup>a</sup>x<sup>a</sup>x<sup>a</sup>x<sup>a</sup> x<sup>a</sup>x<sup>a</sup>x<sup>a</sup>x<sup>a</sup> x<sup>a</sup>x<sup>a</sup>x<sup>a</sup>x<sup>a</sup> (keor shibath haiyamayim), as the light of seven days, manifest gloss, taken in from the margin; it is not in most of the copies of the Septuagint. It interrupts the rhythmical construction, and obscures the sense by a false, or at least an unnecessary, interpretation.

By moon, sun, light, are to be understood the abundance of spiritual and temporal felicity with which God should bless them in the days of the Messiah, which should be sevenfold, i.e. vastly exceed all that they had ever before possessed.

### Verse 27

And the burden thereof is heavy – And the flame raged violently – **חַיִּים עֹלָם**” (massaah); this word seems to be rightly rendered in our translation, the flame, Judges 20:38, Judges 20:40, etc.; a sign of fire, Jeremiah 6:1; called properly **חַיִּים עֹלָם**<sup>a</sup> (masseeth), an elevation, from its tending upwards.

### Verse 28

To sift the nations with a sieve of vanity – To toss the nations with the van of perdition – The word **חֶסֶן** “**חֶסֶן**” (lahanaphah) is in its form very irregular. Kimchi says it is for **חֶסֶן** “**חֶסֶן**” (lehaniph). Houbigant supposes it to be a mistake, and shows the cause of it; the joining it to the **ח** (he), which should begin the following word. The true reading is **חֶסֶן** “**חֶסֶן**” (lehaniph haggoyim), – to sift the nations. – The Vulgate seems to be the only one of the ancient interpreters who has explained rightly the sense; but he has dropped the image: *ad perdendas gentes in nihilum*, – to reduce the nations to nothing. – Kimchi’s explanation is to the following effect: – **חֶסֶן** “**חֶסֶן**” (naphah) is a van with which they winnow corn; and its use is to cleanse the corn from the chaff and straw: but the van with which God will winnow the nations will be the van of emptiness or perdition; for nothing useful shall remain behind, but all shall come to nothing, and perish. In like manner, a bridle is designed to guide the horse in the right way; but the bridle which God will put in the jaws of the people shall not direct them aright, but shall make them err, and lead them into destruction. – This latter image the prophet has applied to the same subject afterwards, Isaiah 37:29: – *“I will put my bridle in thy jaws, And turn thee back by the way in which thou camest.”*

**And as for the former it is to be observed, that the van of the ancients was a large instrument, somewhat like a shovel, with a long handle, with which they tossed the corn mixed with the chaff and chopped straw into the air, that the wind might separate them. See Hammond on Matthew 3:12.**

**There shall be a bridle in the jaws - A metaphor taken from a headstrong, unruly horse: the bridle checks, restrains, and directs him.**

What the true God does in restraining sinners has been also attributed to the false gods of the heathen. Thus Aeschylus, prom. Vinct. 691: -

$$\begin{aligned} & \{ \pm 1 \} \gg a \in \{ \mu \in \mathbb{I} : \frac{1}{2} \pm \frac{1}{3} \leq \mu \leq \frac{1}{2} \pm \frac{1}{2} \\ & \text{or } \frac{1}{2} \leq \mu \leq \frac{1}{2} \pm \frac{1}{2} \} \text{ or } \frac{1}{2} \leq \mu \leq \frac{1}{2} \pm \frac{1}{2} \end{aligned}$$

â€œBut the bridle of Jupiter violently constrained him to do these things.â€•

### Verse 30

The Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard - Kimchi understands this of the great destruction of the Assyrian host by the angel of the Lord. Instead of  $\text{x'x-x}\phi\text{x}\text{x}\text{x}$  (*bezaaph ats*),  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$ with swift anger,  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$ five of Dr. Kennicott's MSS. and one of my own, read  $\text{x'x-x}\phi\text{x}\text{x}\text{x}$  (*bezaam aph*),  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$ with detestation indignant.  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$  For  $\text{x}\text{x}\text{x}$  (*ats*),  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$ swift,  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$ which is the common reading, forty-two of Kennicott's, forty-three of De Rossi's, and two of my own, have  $\text{x}\text{x}\text{x}$  (*ats*),  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$ wrath or fury.  $\hat{\text{a}}\hat{\text{e}}\hat{\text{o}}$  The former reading,  $\text{x}\text{x}\text{x}$  (*ats*), is not found in any Bible previously to that of Van der Hooght, in 1705; and there it seems to be a typographical mistake.

### Verse 31

**Which smote with a rod âœHe that was ready to smite with his staffâ€ - âœPost x\*x@x\*x” (ashshur), forte excidit x\*x@x\*x” (asher).â€ - Secker. After x\*x@x\*x” (ashshur), probably x\*x@x\*x” (asher), âœwhich, âœhas been omitted.**

### Verse 32

The grounded staff - The rod of his correction - For  $\text{𐤌𐤓𐤁𐤁}$  (*musadah*), the grounded staff, of which no one yet has been able to make any tolerable sense, Le Clerc conjectured  $\text{𐤌𐤓𐤁𐤁𐤌}$  (*musarah*), of correction; (see Proverbs 22:15); and so it is in two MSS., (one of them ancient), and seems to be so in the Bodleian MS. The Syriac has  $\text{ܡܕܢܐܝܐ}$  (*deshuebedah*), Virgo domans, vet subjectionis, - the taming rod, or rod of subjection.

With tabrets and harps - With every demonstration of joy and thanksgiving for the destruction of the enemy in so wonderful a manner: with hymns of praise, accompanied with musical instruments. See Isaiah 30:29.

With it - Against them - For  $\text{ܒܗ}$  (*bah*). against her, fifty-two MSS. and five editions read  $\text{ܒܡܐ}$  (*bam*), against them.

### Verse 33

For Tophet is ordained - Tophet is a valley very near to Jerusalem, to the southeast, called also the valley of Hinnom or Gehenna; where the Canaanites, and afterwards the Israelites, sacrificed their children, by making them pass through the fire, that is, by burning them in the fire, to Molech, as some suppose. It is therefore used for a place of punishment by fire; and by our blessed Savior in the Gospel for hell-fire, as the Jews themselves had applied it. See Chald. on Isaiah 33:14, where  $\text{ܡܕܢܐܝܐ ܡܕܢܐܝܐ}$  (*mokedey olam*) is rendered - the Gehenna of everlasting fire. Here the place where the Assyrian army was destroyed is called Tophet by a metonymy; for the Assyrian army was destroyed probably at a greater distance from Jerusalem, and quite on the opposite side of it: for Nob is mentioned as the last station, from which the king of Assyria should threaten Jerusalem, Isaiah 10:32, where the prophet seems to have given a very exact chorographical description of his march in order to attack the city; which however he never reached. - L.