

# ST. JEROME: COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH

INCLUDING ST. JEROME'S TRANSLATION OF ORIGEN'S HOMILIES 1–9 ON ISAIAH

TRANSLATED AND WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
BY  
THOMAS P. SCHECK



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To my nineteen-year-old son Peter:  
“You’ve already made me proud.”

And to the memory of my dear sister Amy (1960–2014):  
“I shall miss our conversations.”

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture
<i>Adv Haer</i>	Irenaeus's <i>Adversus haereses</i>
ANF	Ante Nicene Fathers
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–)
<i>CRm</i>	Origen's <i>Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans</i>
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum (Vienna, 1866–1957)
CWE	Collected Works of Erasmus (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974–)
<i>DCB</i>	<i>A Dictionary of Christian Biography</i> , ed. W. Smith and H. Wace (4 vols., London, 1877–87)
<i>Dem</i>	Irenaeus's <a href="#">The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching</a> , ed. A. Robinson, DD (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920)
DRB	Douay Rheims Bible
<i>DTC</i>	<i>Dictionnaire de théologie catholique</i> , ed. A. Vacant et al. (15 vols., Paris, 1903–50)
<i>EEC</i>	<a href="#">Encyclopedia of the Early Church</a> , ed. A. Di Berardino (2 vols., New York: Oxford University Press, 1992)
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistle</i>
<i>Eus Is</i>	Eusebius of Caesarea's <i>Commentary on Isaiah</i> = Eusebius of Caesarea, Eusebius Werke IX. <a href="#">Der Jesajakommentar [Commentarius in Isaiam]</a> , ed. Joseph Ziegler, Die griechische christlichen Schriftsteller (GCS) (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975)
FOTC	Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947–)
GSC	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller
<i>HE</i>	Eusebius's <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
<i>HQG q</i>	Jerome's <i>Hebrew Questions on Genesis</i> , question
<i>JBC</i>	<a href="#">Jerome Biblical Commentary</a> , ed. R. E. Brown et al. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968)
<i>L &amp; S</i>	<i>Lewis and Short's Latin Dictionary</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1879, 1993)
<i>LB</i>	Desiderius Erasmus's <i>Opera omnia</i> , ed. Jean Leclerc (10 vols., Leiden, 1703–6; repr. Hildesheim, 1961–62)

NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NPNF1	Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, first series
NPNF2	Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, second series
<i>OCD</i>	<a href="#"><i>The Oxford Classical Dictionary</i></a> , 3rd ed., ed. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996)
<i>PE</i>	Eusebius, <i>Praeparatio evangelica</i>
PG	Patrologia graeca, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1844–64)
PL	Patrologia latina, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1844–64)
RSV	Revised Standard Version
<i>Ruf Apol</i>	St. Jerome's <i>Apology against Rufinus</i>
<i>Vir Ill</i>	Jerome's <i>De viris illustribus</i>
<i>WHTO</i>	<a href="#"><i>The Westminster Handbook to Origen</i></a> , ed. J. McGuckin (Louisville: Westminster John Knox), 2004

## INTRODUCTION: THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ST. JEROME (347–420)

[I desire] ... to pursue vigorously the explanation of Holy Scripture and to transmit to the Latin world the erudition of the Hebrews and the Greeks.<sup>11</sup>

—St. Jerome

The above quotation comes from St. Jerome's final written work and may have been written shortly before his death. It seems to capture well what he must have regarded as the chief purpose of his life: to instruct and edify the Latin-speaking church of the West by means of newly composed exegetical works that had assimilated and compiled the learning of rabbinic Judaism and of Greek Christian writers from earlier centuries.<sup>22</sup> Jerome was not the first Christian theologian to rely heavily on Greek sources, such as Origen (185–254), in his own Latin exegesis; he was preceded by Sts. Hilary of Poitiers and Ambrose of Milan. But in the novel enterprise of incorporating Hebrew learning into Christian scholarship, Jerome had no Latin predecessor. Without an intensive and extensive knowledge of his sources, it is difficult to appreciate adequately Jerome's learning. He was quite controversial in his own lifetime and to some extent marginalized. Moreover, he was a man with character defects, such as his irascible criticisms, sometimes exaggerated, of those with whom he argued. Yet in spite of these flaws, the medieval Catholic Church would eventually recognize him, more than eight centuries after his death, as one of the four great Doctors of the Latin church, alongside St. Augustine (354–430), St. Ambrose (d. 397), and Pope St. Gregory the Great (d. 604).<sup>33</sup> In 1516 a great St. Jerome renaissance was inaugurated throughout Europe by the scholarly work of the Catholic priest and Doctor of Sacred Theology Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536).<sup>44</sup> Erasmus's deservedly famous complete edition of St. Jerome's works made Jerome's writings productive and easily accessible throughout the century. This culminated in their being consulted heavily by the bishops of the Council of Trent (1545–63), who spoke of St. Jerome as "the greatest doctor in explaining the Sacred Scriptures."<sup>55</sup> Jerome would later become the subject of Pope Benedict XV's encyclical

1 Jerome, *In Ieremiam* 3, praef. (CCSL 74, 119). There is a close parallel in *Com in Zach* 6:9–5.

2 Cf. P. Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 50–1.

3 This was formally ratified by Pope Boniface VIII on September 20, 1295.

4 See Desiderius Erasmus, *Patristic Scholarship: The Edition of St. Jerome*, ed. J. Brady and J. Olin, CWE 61 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); L. Halkin, *Erasmus: A Critical Biography*, trans. John Tonkin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

5 *Doctor Maximus in Exponendis Sacris Scripturis*; cited by F. X. Murphy, "Saint Jerome," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967–6), 7:759. To verify the large-scale

*Spiritus Paraclitus* in 1920, which echoes Trent in speaking of Jerome as “one whom the Catholic Church recognizes and venerates as the greatest doctor divinely given to it for explaining the Sacred Scriptures.”<sup>66</sup> His writings would be energetically commended by Pope Pius XII in *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943). These exhortations indicate that Catholic scriptural scholarship has much to reap from St. Jerome.

Jerome was probably born in 347, though important scholars like J. N. D. Kelly, following the evidence of Prosper of Aquitaine, still date his birth to 331. If the latter year is correct, he would have been approaching ninety at the time of his death. He was born in Stridon, a village in the western Balkans under northern Italian influence. Jerome was not baptized as an infant, in keeping with a common custom of the time of postponing baptism until the adult years.<sup>77</sup> His parents were wealthy, and, from this circumstance, Sutcliffe infers that they were apparently “not particularly zealous in their attachment to their religion,” since they were “in easy circumstances.”<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, J. Gribomont conjectures that they may have been devout Christians, based on the fact that three of their children later entered religious life.<sup>99</sup> This is all speculation. What is certain is that Jerome’s parents sent him to Rome, probably at around the age of twelve, to complete his literary studies. Over the next eight years, he acquired a thorough education, studying under Aelius Donatus, the most famous teacher of literature of the period.<sup>110</sup> Jerome honed his skills as a young scholar by transcribing a great number of Latin authors for his personal library.<sup>111</sup> His own skill in Latin prose composition was perfected to the point that Jerome’s letters would come to rank alongside the epistolary collections of Cicero,

exploitation of Jerome’s writings at Trent, see the indices of [Concilium Tridentinum](#), ed. S. Merkle (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1911). J. Reumann, “[Anglicans, Lutherans, and St. Jerome](#),” *Lutheran Forum* 33, no. 2 (1999): 29–6 (31) says that in the sixteenth century, the authority of Jerome was so well respected that the Council of Trent did not assert the distinctiveness and superiority of the episcopate over the priesthood, as some participants wished. “It remained for Vatican II to say that ‘the fullness of the Sacrament of Orders is conferred by episcopal consecration’ ([Lumen Gentium 21](#)).”

6 *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 12 (1920): 385–22 (385). “uem Doctorem Maximum sacris Scripturis explanandis divinitus sibi datum catholica agnoscit et veneratur Ecclesia.”

7 Rufinus of Aquileia, Basil the Great, Gregory Nazianzus, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, and Augustine, all born of Christian parents, were baptized as adult believers. F. X. Murphy, [Rufinus of Aquileia \(345–11\): His Life and Works](#) (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), 6, describes this as “sad, if not cynical, concession of the day to the follies of youth.”

8 E. Sutcliffe, “[Jerome](#),” in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, *The West from the Fathers to the Reformation*, ed. G. Lampe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 80.

9 J. Gribomont in J. Quasten, *Patrology*, 4 vols. (Utrecht-Antwerp: Spectrum), 3:195.

<sup>110</sup> Aelius Donatus’ two treatises on Latin grammar dominated European learning until the twelfth century. He also wrote commentaries on Terence and Virgil. See G. Conte, [Latin Literature: A History](#) (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 627–8.

<sup>111</sup> The influence of Latin classical authors on Jerome is the subject of the book by H. Hagendahl, [Latin Fathers and the Classics: A Study on the Apologists, Jerome and Other Christian Writers](#) (Göteborg, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1958).



Seneca, and Pliny the Younger as the most celebrated in Latin literature.<sup>112</sup> In Rome Jerome also acquired the rudiments of Greek, though his eventual mastery of the Greek language was attained later after he had lived in the East for many years.

Prior to his baptism, Jerome may have allowed himself some experience of sensuality.<sup>113</sup> Though some of his medieval hagiographers ascribed virginity to him, Jerome himself, through cryptic allusions, seems to have denied that he was a virgin.<sup>114</sup> A. Cain concludes: “This certainly would help to explain why Jerome, as an adult monk, idealized virginity and displayed such contempt for human sexuality.”<sup>115</sup> In any case, Jerome did not break off his ties with his Christian friends with whom he was accustomed on Sundays to visit the tombs of the apostles and martyrs.<sup>116</sup> At the age of eighteen or nineteen, Jerome requested baptism, in Lent 367, possibly from Pope Liberius. Later that year he traveled to Gaul, where, in Trier, he made a decision to pursue the monastic life. Here he made copies of some works by St. Hilary of Poitiers (d. 368).<sup>117</sup>

This appears to be the beginning, at least retrospectively,<sup>118</sup> of Jerome’s theological formation from the writings of Origen of Alexandria (185–254).<sup>119</sup> The influence of Origen on Jerome deepened over time and is evident in several of Jerome’s works. Jerome briefly describes Origen’s life and literary output in very admiring fashion in [De viris illustribus \(On Famous Men\) 54](#), as a complement to his summary in [Eep. 33](#). In [Vvir III 100](#), Jerome reports that Hilary had imitated Origen in his commentaries on the Psalms but also added some original material. Moreover, in his *Commentary on Job*, Hilary had translated freely from the Greek of Origen. Repeatedly, Jerome will encounter theologians and exegetes of untainted orthodoxy who adopted an irenic attitude toward Origen of Alexandria and recognized that he was the early church’s exegete par excellence. In addition to his antiquity and to his Spirit-filled fidelity to New Testament modes of Old Testament interpretation, Origen’s word-perfect knowledge of

<sup>112</sup> This, at least, is the assessment of one of their English translators. Cf. [Select Letters of St. Jerome](#), trans. F. A. Wright, Loeb Classical Library 262 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), xiii. The other great English translator of Jerome’s letters is [The Principal Works of St. Jerome](#), trans. W. Fremantle, NPNF2 6 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1893). In French, there is [Saint Jérôme Lettres](#), ed. J. Labourt, 8 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1949–3).

<sup>113</sup> J. Gribomont, in J. Quasten, *Patrology*, 3:213.

<sup>114</sup> [Ep. 48.20](#) to Pammachius (NPNF2 6:[87](#)); [Ep. 7.4](#) to Chromatius, Jovinus, and Eusebius (NPNF2 6:[9](#)).

<sup>115</sup> St. Jerome, [Commentary on Galatians](#), trans. A. Cain, FOTC 121 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 4.

<sup>116</sup> *In Hiez.* 12.244–3 (commenting on Ezek 40:5–3).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. St. Hilary of Poitiers, [Commentary on Matthew](#), trans. D. H. Williams, FOTC 125 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

<sup>118</sup> M. Hale Williams, [The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 45, thinks that Jerome “iscovered” Origen at a later date, while under the influence of Gregory Nazianzus in Constantinople.

<sup>119</sup> For full documentation, see P. Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*, 100–7.

[Eep. Epistle](#)

[V Vir III](#) Jerome’s *De viris illustribus*

the Greek Bible was famous. Jerome later remarked that he would gladly trade his knowledge of Scripture with Origen, who “knew the Scriptures by heart, and he toiled day and night in the study of their meaning.... Who can fail to admire his enthusiasm for the Scriptures?”<sup>220</sup> Indeed, the twenty-eight years of labor Origen had invested in the *Hexapla*, a six-column edition of the Old Testament that will be described more fully below, left an indelible impression on subsequent Christian scholars who became aware of Origen’s indefatigable research.

In his early writings, Jerome adopted the same irenic stance toward Origen that had been represented by men such as St. Pamphilus the Martyr, Eusebius of Caesarea, St. Hilary, Didymus, St. Ambrose, Rufinus, St. Gregory Nazianzus, and St. John Chrysostom. For example, Jerome described Origen as the “greatest teacher of the church after the apostles,” a man endowed with “immortal genius,” who was of “incomparable eloquence and knowledge”; Origen “surpassed all previous writers, Latin or Greek.”<sup>221</sup> The young Jerome attributed Origen’s bad reputation to the envy of his detractors, who could not endure his eloquence, not to any defect in his orthodoxy. Even in his translations of Origen at this early stage of his career, Jerome endeavored to protect Origen’s reputation from careless misrepresentation, especially against the anachronistic charge of proto-Arianism. Jerome did this by glossing his translations of Origen, removing passages that might be subject to misunderstanding in the post-Nicene church, and by adding clarifications directly into his translation of Origen’s text.<sup>222</sup>

Jerome moved to Aquileia in northeastern Italy, where he continued to study Scripture and theology and lived as an ascetic for seven years. In 374 he began living as a hermit in the desert of Chalcis, a region located slightly east of Syrian Antioch.<sup>223</sup> During this period Jerome made the acquaintance of a converted Jew named Baranina, who introduced him to the Hebrew language. There had always been a large supply of Jewish converts to Christianity who were fluent in the Semitic languages. Jerome’s uniqueness was in his being the first Latin Christian scholar who, on his own initiative, endeavored to master the original languages of the Old Testament and make productive use of these languages in his scholarly works. He would eventually attain competence in both Hebrew and Aramaic (which he also calls Chaldean or Syrian). A famous incident in his life occurred at Chalcis. Jerome dreamed that he was standing before the judgment seat of Christ. In a vision he was condemned for being a Ciceronian rather than a Christian. He was sentenced to a scourging, in the midst of which he begged Christ for mercy and vowed never again to touch pagan literature. Jerome recounts the experience in [E.P. 22.30](#) to Eustochium. The interpretation of this incident and its actual influence on Jerome’s life

<sup>220</sup> [Ep. 84.8](#).

<sup>221</sup> Jerome, *Hebrew Names*, preface; [Vir III 54.8](#); [Ep. 33.4](#) to Paula; Jerome’s preface to his translation of Origen’s *Homilies on Song of Songs*.

<sup>222</sup> See my English translation of Origen’s *Homilies on Isaiah*, found in appendix [1](#), for further discussion and illustration of Jerome’s earliest translation methods.

<sup>223</sup> For a study of the letters Jerome wrote during this period, see A. Cain, [The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[E.P. Epistle](#)

are a complex matter.<sup>224</sup>

Jerome went to Antioch in 379 and was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Paulinus. He heard lectures there from Apollinaris of Laodicea, an Alexandrian grammarian, who had mastered Greek literature and philosophy and had written an important apologetic work in thirty books, *Against Porphyry*. Although Apollinaris's work does not survive, it had a formative influence on Jerome. In [E<sup>Ep</sup> 84.3](#), Jerome said that he had learned biblical interpretation from Apollinaris, though he distanced himself from Apollinaris's heterodox understanding of the incarnation.<sup>225</sup> Modern scholarship sometimes distinguishes the ancient schools of exegesis into "Antiochene typology" (good) and "Alexandrian allegory" (bad). It seems ironic that Jerome admits to learning *Alexandrian* methods of exegesis in *Antioch*. In any case, the modern categorization is faulty and misleading.<sup>226</sup>

From Antioch Jerome went to Constantinople, where he became a pupil of St. Gregory Nazianzus (d. 389), whose eloquence he respectfully mentions in the present work at [3.3](#). This saintly Cappadocian father likewise encouraged Jerome to combine Bible study with the assimilation of Origen's scriptural exegesis.<sup>227</sup> Jerome continued to do so in emulation of his orthodox predecessors. More than that, Jerome would adopt Origen's comprehensive pattern of life, scholarship, and asceticism as a model for his own.

Jerome's fluency in Greek at this point in his life is demonstrated by the fact that he undertook translations of Origen's *Homilies on Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah*.<sup>228</sup> He also translated Eusebius of Caesarea's *Chronicle of World History*. These projects were completed around 381. Eusebius was another Christian author deeply indebted to Origen's works, as will be discussed in greater detail below. Thus, both directly and indirectly, Jerome was being

<sup>224</sup> Cf. Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book*, 26–7.

#### [E<sup>Ep</sup> Epistle](#)

<sup>225</sup> Apollinaris said that the Son of God did not fully assume human flesh, but that the divinity itself took the place of the human mind and spirit.

<sup>226</sup> Cf. J. Behr, [Formation of Christian Theology, vol. 2, The Nicene Faith, part 1](#) (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), 12: "ot surprisingly, given our own concern for history, investigations into patristic exegesis have usually proceeded by drawing up an opposition between Antiochene typology, based in a Semitic sense of history (and therefore good) and Alexandrine allegory, based in a Platonic escape from the history represented in the text (and therefore bad). Again, it is increasingly realized that such facile contrasts say more about our own prejudices and that they are simply inadequate as models for understanding patristic exegesis. This is also paralleled, and strengthened, by an increasing dissatisfaction among scriptural scholars with the historical-critical methodologies that so fascinated twentieth-century scriptural scholarship."

<sup>227</sup> See C. Beeley, [Re-Reading Gregory of Nazianzus: Essays on History, Theology, and Culture](#) (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

<sup>228</sup> Cf. Origen, [Homilies on Jeremiah](#), trans. John Clark Smith, FOTC (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1998); Origen, [Homilies 1–4 on Ezekiel](#), trans. Thomas P. Scheck, ACW (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2010). In an appendix to this volume, I have provided a new English translation of Jerome's Latin version of Origen's *Homilies on Isaiah*.

formed theologically and exegetically under Origen's influence on ecclesiastical literature. Jerome also translated Origen's *Homilies on the Song of Songs*, which he dedicated to Pope Damasus.<sup>229</sup> At about this time, he also wrote his *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, a work also heavily indebted to Origen.<sup>330</sup>

Returning to Rome in the early 380s, Jerome undertook important scholarly activity under the patronage of Pope Damasus. However, he also became embroiled in controversy with his brother monks and priests in part as a result of the insulting, contentious, and defamatory style of his polemical writings, as well as for the excesses of his brand of asceticism.<sup>331</sup> When the young St. Blesilla, daughter of the Roman noblewoman Paula and sister of Eustochium, died from excessive fasting, Jerome was widely blamed, since he was her spiritual director. After the death of his patron, Pope Damasus, in December 384, the situation became so serious that an official ecclesiastical inquiry was conducted. Jerome was condemned for contentiousness and slander in a formal judgment that was delivered orally, and he was requested to leave the city altogether.<sup>332</sup> Having been banished by the "senate of the Pharisees," as he calls the priestly council of Rome, he traveled to Palestine and visited the holy sites. Jerome also made a brief visit to Egypt, where he stayed for thirty days with Didymus the Blind (d. 398). Soon he would publish his own Latin translation of Didymus's Greek *Treatise on the Holy Spirit*. Jerome was well aware that Didymus had been immersed in the writings of Origen as well, and he wanted to make this material available to Latin readers.<sup>333</sup> Unfortunately, Jerome was inspired to translate Didymus partly by a base motive: he aimed to show Latin readers that St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, whom he intensely disliked, had plagiarized much of his own book on the Holy Spirit from Didymus. Rufinus of Aquileia would later expose Jerome's ill will and come to Ambrose's defense in his *Apology against Jerome* 2.22–25.<sup>334</sup>

## 62 *The Hexapla, and the Hexaplaric and other Recensions*

[Ps. 45\(46\):1–3](#)<sup>11</sup>

<sup>229</sup> These are available in ACW.

<sup>330</sup> See the new translation by R. J. Goodrich and D. J. D. Miller in ACW.

<sup>331</sup> For commentary on these controversies, see Rufinus, *Apology against Jerome* 2.38–9.

<sup>332</sup> Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, [Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies](#) (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 113; A. Cain, *The Letters of Jerome*, 99–28.

<sup>333</sup> See R. A. Layton, [Didymus the Blind and His Circle in Late-Antique Alexandria](#) (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004).

<sup>334</sup> Cf. NPNF 3:470–1. For an assembly of passages in Jerome that attack Ambrose, see D. Hunter, [Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 234–6. There is now a fine translation of St. Ambrose' [Exposition of the Holy Gospel according to Saint Luke with Fragments on the Prophecy of Isaias](#), trans. Theodosia Tomkinson, 2nd ed. (Etna, CA: Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, 1998, 2003).

1 Cf. *Un palimpsesto Ambrosiano dei Salmi Esapli* (Giov. Mercati) in *Atti d. R. Accademia d. Scienze di Torino*, 10 Apr. 1896; and E. Klostermann, *die Mailänder Fragmente der Hexapla*, The MS. does not supply the Hebrew column.

HEBREW.	HEB. TRANSLITERATED.	AQUILA.
למנצח	λαμανασση	τῷ νικοποιῷ·
לבני קרח	[λ]αβνηκορ	τῶν υἱῶν Κόρε
על עלמות	αλ. αλμωθ	ἐπὶ νεανιοτήτων
שיר	σιρ	ᾄσμα.
אלהים לנו	ελωειμ. λανου <sup>*2</sup>	[ὁ θεὸς ἡμῖν (?)]
מחסה ועז	μασε. σουζ	ἐλπίς καὶ κράτος,
עזרה	εζρ	βοήθεια
בצרות	βσαρῶθ	ἐν θλίψεσιν
נמצא מאד	νεμσα μωδ	εὐρέθη <sup>*3</sup> σφόδρα.
על כן	αλ. χεν·	ἐπὶ τούτῳ
לא נירא	λω. νιρα	οὐ φοβηθησόμεθα
בהמיר	βααμιρ	ἐν τῷ ἀνταλλάσσεσθαι
ארץ	ααρς	γῆν,
ובמוט	ουβαμωτ	καὶ ἐν τῷ σφάλλεσθαι
הרים	αριμ	ὄρη
בלב	βλεβ	ἐν καρδίᾳ

2In the MS. λανου appears in the third column, where it has displaced Aquila' rendering.

3MS. εὐρέθης

Ⲕⲓⲙⲓⲛ

ιαμιμ

θαλασσῶν.

*The Hexapla, and the Hexaplaric and other Recensions. 63*

[Ps. 45\(46\):1–3.](#)

SYMMACHUS.	<sup>L4xx.</sup>	THEODOTION. <sup>15</sup>
ἐπινίκιος·	εἰς τὸ τέλος·	τῷ νικοποιῶ <sup>*6.</sup>
τῶν υἰῶν Κόρε	ὑπὲρ τῶν υἰῶν <sup>*7</sup> Κόρε	τοῖς υἰοῖς κόρε
ὑπὲρ τῶν αἰωνίων	ὑπὲρ τῶν κρυφίων	ὑπὲρ τῶν κρυφίων
ὡδή.	ψαλμός.	ὡδή <sup>*8.</sup>
ὁ θεὸς ἡμῖν	ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν <sup>*9</sup>	ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν
πεποίθησις καὶ ἰσχύς,	καταφυγὴ καὶ δύναμις,	καταφυγὴ καὶ δύναμις,
βοήθεια	βοηθὸς	βοηθὸς
ἐν θλίψεσιν	ἐν θλίψεσι	ἐν θλίψεσιν
εὐρισκόμενος σφόδρα.	ταῖς εὐρούσαις ἡμᾶς <sup>*10</sup> σφόδρα.	εὐρέθη <sup>+11</sup> σφόδρα.
διὰ τοῦτο	διὰ τοῦτο	διὰ τοῦτο
οὐ φοβηθησόμεθα	οὐ φοβηθησόμεθα	οὐ φοβηθησόμεθα
ἐν τῷ <sup>*12</sup> συγχεῖσθαι	ἐν τῷ ταρασσεσθαι	ἐν τῷ ταρασσεσθαι

4Septuagint

5Or Quinta? Cf. H. Lietzmann in G. G. A. p. 332: "ie letzte Columme ist nicht, wie man anfangs glaubte, Theodotion, sondern die Quinta mit Interlinearvarianten."

6With marginal variants εἰςτὸτέλος ψαλμός (Lxx.).

7With interlinear variant τοῖςυἰοῖς (Th.).

8With marginal variants εἰςτὸτέλος ψαλμός (Lxx.).

9MS. 1<sup>a</sup> manu ἡμῖν (? Aq. Sym.).

10With interlinear variant εὐρεθήσεταιἡμῖν.

11With interlinear variant ταῖςεὐρούσαις ἡμᾶς (Lxx.).

12MS. ταῖς

γῆν	τὴν γῆν	τὴν γῆν
καὶ κλίνεσθαι	καὶ μετατίθεσθαι	καὶ σαλεύεσθαι <sup>13</sup>
ὄρη	ὄρη	ὄρη
ἐν καρδίᾳ	ἐν καρδίᾳ	ἐν καρδίᾳ
θαλασσῶν.	θαλασσῶν.	θαλασσῶν.

In 385 Jerome settled in Bethlehem, where he set up a monastery. Being within range of Caesarea, he traveled there frequently to consult its magnificent library,<sup>335</sup> which included a copy of Origen’s *Hexapla* in which the entire text of the Old Testament was displayed in six columns in the Hebrew and various Greek versions.<sup>336</sup> This work assisted Jerome enormously in his biblical translations and commentaries, since he could consult its Greek versions for assistance in translating and comprehending the meaning of the Hebrew text. Jerome copied and otherwise obtained important manuscripts of the Scriptures and the writings of Origen and other Greek writers. It was at this time, in the early Bethlehem period, when Jerome completed commentaries on Ephesians, Philemon, Galatians, and Titus.<sup>337</sup> In 398 he published his famous [Commentary on Matthew](#).<sup>338</sup> All of these New Testament commentaries are heavily indebted to Origen’s Greek exegesis.<sup>339</sup> The remaining period, during which Jerome lived in Bethlehem until

13With interlinear variant μετατίθεσθαι (LXX.).

<sup>335</sup> For a description of the library, see the article on “[Disciples of Origen](#)” in the *Westminster Handbook to Origen*, ed. J. McGuckin (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004). For a description of Jerome’s own library, see Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book*.

<sup>336</sup> For a reconstruction of Origen’s *Hexapla* on Isaiah, see PG 16:2, 1611–986, and *Origenis Hexaplorum Quae Supersunt*, tomus II, ed. Fridericus Field (Hildesheim: Olms, 1964).

<sup>337</sup> See [The Commentaries of Origen and Jerome on St Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians](#), trans. R. Heine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); [St. Jerome’s Commentaries on Galatians, Titus, and Philemon](#), trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010). Of the Galatians commentary, a second translation, independent and very erudite, has now appeared: St. Jerome, *Commentary on Galatians*, trans. Cain.

<sup>338</sup> See St. Jerome, [Commentary on Matthew](#), trans. Thomas P. Scheck, FOTC 117 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

<sup>339</sup> A. Harnack, [Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag der exegetischen Arbeiten des Origenes](#) (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1919), 65, complained of the lack of studies on Jerome’s commentaries to determine Origen’s influence upon them. In an appendix to the same work, Harnack himself undertook an examination of Jerome’s commentaries on Galatians, Titus, and Philemon for this purpose. I have endeavored to integrate Harnack’s conjectures and conclusions in the notes to my translation of *St. Jerome’s Commentaries on Galatians, Titus and Philemon*.



his death in 419/420, was also very productive. Jerome continued his famous epistolary exchanges and later combated the Pelagian heresy in his *Dialogue against the Pelagians* and his *Commentary on Jeremiah*.

## THE ORIGENIST CONTROVERSY

During the decade of the 390s and beyond, Jerome became embroiled in “Origenist” controversies, which began in Palestine and spread to Rome and Constantinople. The Palestinian controversy was instigated by St. Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis, who, for all his orthodoxy, was one of the most tragically contentious and disruptive churchmen of the epoch. He is also one of the theological fathers of iconoclasm, having written three treatises against making and venerating images, whether of Christ, the Virgin, martyrs, angels, or prophets. He rejected such usages and called images forgeries and idolatry.<sup>440</sup> Epiphanius entered Palestine in 393 and accused Jerome’s bishop, John of Jerusalem, as well as the monk Rufinus of Aquileia, of being “Origenist” heretics. This was because they refused to sign a petition circulated by a monk named Atarbius (described memorably by F. X. Murphy as a “credential-less nonentity”) declaring Origen to be a heretic. At this point, Jerome reversed his earlier irenicism toward Origen and obsequiously signed the petition. A quarrel ensued that led Epiphanius to violate canonical norms by ordaining Jerome’s brother Paulinian to the priesthood in Palestine. John of Jerusalem responded by excommunicating Jerome and his monks. A reconciliation was temporarily achieved in 397 through the mediation of St. Melania, and Jerome was reinstated. But an even worse controversy over Origenism was soon to break out in Rome and Constantinople.<sup>441</sup> In the latter city, Epiphanius and his cobelligerent Theophilus of Alexandria intrigued against St. John Chrysostom, which led ultimately to John’s exile from his bishopric in Constantinople.<sup>442</sup> Jerome was complicit in this action, having translated Theophilus’s violent invective against Chrysostom into Latin.<sup>443</sup>

What charges did Jerome raise against Origen’s orthodoxy during his anti-Origen period? He does not hesitate to tell us. Origen had identified the two seraphim of [Isaiah 6:2](#) with the Son and the Holy Spirit in his [Homily on Isaiah 1.2](#) (which was translated into Latin by Jerome himself), and in his *Commentary on Isaiah*. Significantly, however, Origen reports that this interpretation was not original to himself, but that he had learned it from a Hebrew convert to

<sup>440</sup> Cf. Quasten, *Patrology*, 3:391.

<sup>441</sup> The best primary sources of information are the respective apologies written by Rufinus and Jerome. Good secondary discussions are found in H. de Lubac, [Medieval Exegesis](#), trans. M. Sebanc and E. M. Macierowski, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998–2009), vol. 1; Kelly, *Jerome*, and F. X. Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*. See also my introductions to St. Jerome’s [Commentary on Matthew and St. Pamphilus, Apology for Origen, With the Letter of Rufinus on the Falsification of the Books of Origen](#), trans. Thomas P. Scheck, FOTC 120 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2010).

<sup>442</sup> The tragic tale is explained well by D. Attwater, [St. John Chrysostom: Pastor and Preacher](#) (London: Harvill, 1959), 106–5.

<sup>443</sup> Cf. Kelly, *Jerome*, 260–3.



Christianity.<sup>444</sup> Under the pressure exerted by Origen's contemporary episcopal accusers, such as Theophilus and Epiphanius, Jerome came to believe that this interpretation anticipated Arianism, the heresy condemned at the Council of Nicaea in 325 that asserted that the Son of God was a creature subordinate to the Father. During the Origenist controversy, Jerome expressed the opinion that his seraphim interpretation constituted the gravest error of all in Origen's theology. In 396 Jerome writes to Vigilantius:

Origen is a heretic, true; but what does that take from me who do not deny that on very many points he is heretical? He has erred concerning the resurrection of the body, he has erred concerning the condition of souls, he has erred by supposing it possible that the devil may repent, and—an error more important than these—he has declared in his commentary upon Isaiah that the Seraphim mentioned by the prophet are the divine Son and the Holy Ghost.<sup>445</sup>

Thus, in the assessment of St. Jerome of Stridon, Origen's most serious theological error was his suggestion that the seraphim of [Isaiah 6:2](#) represent the Son and the Holy Spirit. From a modern standpoint, Jerome's accusation actually bodes well for the case of Origen's fundamental ecclesiastical orthodoxy. For modern critical scholarship has demonstrated that Origen's interpretation did not at all have the "impious" and "blasphemous" character that Jerome would later ascribe to it. The assimilation of the Word and the Spirit (Wisdom) to the cherubim and seraphim came from Judeo-Christian sources and was already found in the work of [St. Irenaeus](#), [DDem 10](#).<sup>446</sup> Thus if the interpretation menaces Origen's orthodoxy and turns him into a proto-Arian, it simultaneously menaces the orthodoxy of Irenaeus, a step no modern or ancient scholar would wish to take. Consequently, Jerome's indictment proves too much. The other reproaches Jerome raises against Origen concern his doctrine of the preexistence of souls, the devil's restoration, and the nature of resurrection bodies. However, these conjectures were speculative and tentative in nature, not dogmatic assertions made by Origen. In fact, the question about the origin of souls was not decided by the church until the fifth century. This would make it illegitimate to accuse Origen of heresy on a point that had not yet been decided by church authority.<sup>447</sup>

It appears that Jerome lacked the patience and expertise to judge fairly with respect to Arian matters. This has been shown by T. C. Lawler, who describes Jerome's handling of the technical terms used by his contemporary Greek orthodox theologians as "not brilliant."<sup>448</sup> For instance, Lawler observes that Jerome seems to have been unaware of the fact (or perhaps chose to

<sup>444</sup> Cf. [De Principiis 1.3.4](#).

<sup>445</sup> Cf. [Ep. 61.2](#) to Vigilantius; NPNF2, 6:131–2.

[DDem](#) Irenaeus' [The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching](#), ed. A. Robinson, DD (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920)

<sup>446</sup> Cf. H. de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 1:255.

<sup>447</sup> Cf. B. P. Blosser, [Become Like the Angels: Origen's Doctrine of the Soul](#) (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

<sup>448</sup> T. C. Lawler, "[Jerome's First Letter to Damasus](#)," in *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten*, ed. P. Granfield and J. Jungman (Muenster: Aschendorff, 1970), 2:550.

ignore it) that the Alexandria Synod of 362, which had been presided over by Athanasius, had admitted that the term *hypostasis* could be used in the meaning of “person,” and that therefore one could rightly speak of three *hypostases*.<sup>449</sup> Yet in his letter to Damasus, Jerome had claimed that such a formulation was alien to the Christian faith. Lawler concludes that Jerome’s criticisms of his contemporaries “must be taken as irrelevant or exaggerated.”<sup>550</sup> It appears to me that this sort of modern expert assessment could be applied to Jerome’s critique of Origen’s treatment of the seraphim. The interpretation Origen has handed down does not need to imply Arianism. I shall discuss this matter further in the introduction to my translation of Jerome’s translation of Origen’s *Homilies on Isaiah* 1–9 in appendix 1.

Many other modern writers have analyzed Jerome’s attitude toward Origen during the Origenist controversies, in which he changed sides from being one of Origen’s most vocal advocates and defenders into being Origen’s most immoderate and violent accuser. In a very learned treatment, F. X. Murphy concluded that, in spite of Jerome’s inflamed rhetoric about his alleged repudiation of the “heretic” Origen, Jerome did not really differ from his orthodox contemporaries in his deep reverence for Origen as the church’s exegete par excellence. Murphy writes: “It was a needless controversy. In reality, the two men [Jerome and Rufinus] were agreed on their attitude toward Origen. Their misunderstandings were due to the machinations of their friends.”<sup>551</sup> I agree that it was a needless controversy, but I would perhaps place more direct responsibility on Jerome’s impatience and contentious personality than Murphy does, since, independently of his friends, Jerome continues to rage against both Origen and Rufinus until the day of his death. The worst and most slanderous of Jerome’s anti-Rufinus polemic is found in his *Commentary on Jeremiah*, which is his final work and was written long after Rufinus’s death. In any case, most of Jerome’s accusations of Origen applied to a handful of doctrinal speculations, not dogmatic assertions. They certainly did not touch Origen’s basic principles for the Christian exegesis of Scripture.

H. de Lubac says that Jerome’s rhetoric against Origen and Rufinus during the Origenist controversy is “somewhat untruthful,” since he makes a distinction between Origen the dogmatist and theologian, whom he allegedly repudiated, and Origen the exegete and philosopher, whom he allegedly admired.<sup>552</sup> De Lubac thinks that this distinction was both artificial and facile, and that Jerome was well aware of this, since he proposed other defensive tactics to explain his *volte-face*. De Lubac queries that, assuming that all interpreters can make some mistakes, how could Origen simultaneously be so blameworthy in Jerome’s eyes? Besides, did not Jerome quite often depend on Origen’s doctrine? Was theology not, in fact, identically the science of scriptures? Praising Origen as an interpreter did not mean that reference was made only to his critical erudition. It meant that one talked of his homilies and his commentaries, not merely of the *Hexapla* or the scholia. De Lubac consequently calls into question the consistency of Jerome’s statements respecting Origen:

<sup>449</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 551.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>551</sup> Murphy, *Rufinus of Aquileia*, 110

<sup>552</sup> H. de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 1:177.

How, therefore, are we to understand that so faithful an interpreter of all the Scriptures had at the same time corrupted them, to the point of becoming a heterodox purveyor of doctrine? And, as Rufinus had long before objected to Jerome: “Who that was once Master of the Churches could be said to have been a heretic?” [[RRuf Apol 1.21](#)].<sup>553</sup>

The point I wish to make here is that the best of modern critical scholarship now recognizes that much of Jerome’s rhetoric in the Origenist controversies was irrelevant and exaggerated, and that Rufinus’s position by and large deserves to be vindicated. Jerome’s inconsistency and even untruthfulness with respect to his attitude toward Origen is further shown by the way he would eventually find fault with Rufinus’s method of translating Origen, when it was directly from Jerome that Rufinus learned the method.<sup>554</sup> Until the day of his death, Jerome resented Rufinus as the one who had exposed to the world Jerome’s own inconsistency with respect to Origen and for other matters that will be discussed below. To conceal all this, Jerome endeavored to darken both Origen’s and Rufinus’s reputation to posterity. He was largely successful in throwing dust into the eyes of his readers during the centuries in which genuine historical criticism of the issues was asleep. One of the unfortunate results of Jerome’s misleading rhetoric was that Origen would eventually be listed among the heretics by the Emperor Justinian at the Fifth Council of Constantinople in 543. As a result, his Greek writings would mostly be destroyed. Jerome and Epiphanius were culpable in this affair, since it is they who planted the seeds for Origen’s ruin. Had Jerome not vacillated, the outcome might have been different.

## THE LATIN VULGATE

During the final three decades of his life, Jerome played a fundamental role in the translation of the Bible that came to be known as the Latin Vulgate. This project began as an official commission to Jerome from Pope Damasus (d. 384) to revise the existing Latin versions of the four Gospels and the Psalter. Incidentally, Jerome’s revision of the Gospels is of extreme text-critical importance, because it represents in Latin the text of Greek codices that were already ancient in the late fourth century and therefore much closer in time to the archetypes than any complete Greek manuscripts now extant.<sup>555</sup> Although he sometimes misleadingly laid claim to it, the rest of the Vulgate New Testament does not appear to be St. Jerome’s work, but comes from earlier Latin translators to whom he himself ascribes it in his commentaries.<sup>556</sup> Souter has even shown, by means of a careful study of Jerome’s use of the text of Matthew’s Gospel in his own [Commentary on Matthew](#), that this text is not identical with the Vulgate revision made by Jerome himself (and critically edited by Wordsworth and White). Souter reports that of 104 incidental quotations, only thirty-three harmonize with the Vulgate text

[R Ruf Apol](#) St. Jerome’ *Apology against Rufinus*

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*, 177–8.

<sup>554</sup> See appendix [1](#).

<sup>555</sup> Cf. Sutcliffe, “erome,” 84.

<sup>556</sup> Cf. Kelly, *Jerome*, 88; F. Cavallera, “[Saint Jérôme et la Vulgate des Actes, des Épîtres, et de l’apocalypse](#),” *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* (1920): 269–2.

while the other seventy-one are definitely different. The situation is the same with respect to Jerome's use of the other Gospels. Souter draws the following conclusion: "From all this it is clear that Jerome had no particular respect for his own revision ... even when he was writing a commentary on a Gospel."<sup>557</sup> It would require centuries for Jerome's New Testament version to obtain any official or exclusive authority in the Catholic Church, and when it did obtain such exclusive and sacrosanct authority among some Catholic scholars and theologians, it did so in contradiction to Jerome's own attitude toward his translation.<sup>558</sup>

It was through private scholarly and apologetic interests, rather than official ecclesiastical sanction, that Jerome continued the project by newly translating the entire Old Testament directly from the Hebrew and Aramaic originals.<sup>559</sup> His whole intention, clearly stated in the preface to the Vulgate Isaiah,<sup>660</sup> was to prevent the Jews once and for all from being able to scoff at Christians, "and to refute them on their own ground by appealing, when controversy arose, to a version which they had to acknowledge as indisputably accurate and which nevertheless spoke unmistakably of the coming of Christ."<sup>661</sup> He repeats this precise justification of the Vulgate in his [Apology against Rufinus 3.25](#),<sup>661</sup> where he tells Rufinus that he had first translated Origen's Hexaplaric recension of the LXX for native Latin speakers; then he began a new translation directly from the Hebrew, the purpose of which he describes as follows:

And, for the confutation of the Jews, to translate the actual copies of the Scriptures which they confess to be the truest, so that when a dispute arises between them and the Christians, they may have no place of retreat and subterfuge, but may be smitten most effectually with their own spear.<sup>662</sup>

Jerome's translation of the Old Testament directly from the Hebrew was thus intended to facilitate Jewish evangelization and Christian apologetics; the Latin Vulgate was not originally destined for public liturgical use in Christian churches. In fact, in the prologue to the Vulgate Ezra, Jerome begs the dedicatees, Domnio and Rogatianus, *not* to make the translation known to the public, but to be content to read it privately, since he knows that his translations are causing controversy when used publicly. Augustine had, in fact, discouraged Jerome from translating the Old Testament from the Hebrew after trying unsuccessfully to use a portion of it in the liturgy.<sup>663</sup> Eventually, Augustine became persuaded of the value of Jerome's new

<sup>557</sup> A. Souter, "[Notes on Incidental Gospel Quotations in Jerome's Commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel](#)," *JTS* 42 (1941): 12–8 (13).

<sup>558</sup> This point is exemplified well in the controversy generated by Erasmus of Rotterdam's new translation of the New Testament in 1516. See his *Ep.* 337 to Martin Dorp.

<sup>559</sup> For a succinct account of Jerome's work on the Vulgate, see H. Sparks, "[Jerome as Biblical Scholar](#)," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1, *From the Beginnings to Jerome*, ed. P. Ackroyd and C. Evans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 510–1.

<sup>660</sup> PL 28:774.

<sup>661</sup> Cited by Kelly, *Jerome*, 160.

,LXX Septuagint

<sup>662</sup> NPNF2, 3:532.

<sup>663</sup> Cf. [Augustine, Ep. 28.2](#).

translation from the Hebrew, but only in the capacity of an auxiliary version to the Old Latin.<sup>664</sup>

Whatever were Jerome's original aims, after many centuries, the resulting version of the Bible, completed in 404, was destined to become a theological classic in the West. By the seventh century, Jerome's version of the Hebrew Scriptures was accepted for public use in the West, though it did not receive the name *Vulgate* till the sixteenth century.<sup>665</sup> While embroiled in controversy with Protestants, the Council of Trent (1545) decreed the Latin Vulgate to be the "authentic" version of the Bible in the Latin church. The great modern expert on the Council of Trent, H. Jedin, concluded that there was no room for any doubt that the Tridentine decree on the "authenticity" of the Vulgate was not intended to restrict the study of the original languages of the Bible, still less to stop it. Rather, the intention was to declare that the Latin translation of the Bible in use in the Roman Church was free from any dogmatic error.<sup>666</sup> In 1943 Pope Pius XII concurred in an official interpretation of the Tridentine decree that the church was testifying and affirming that the Vulgate may be "quoted safely and without fear of error in disputations, in lectures and in preaching; and so its authenticity is not specified primarily as critical, but rather as juridical."<sup>667</sup>

In conclusion to this brief summary of Jerome's life and works, one can say that Jerome was undoubtedly one of the most learned of the Latin fathers. His work *Vir III* offers the reader a glimpse into the range and depth of Jerome's reading.<sup>668</sup> It is true that in this pioneering work of patrology, Jerome depends heavily upon, some would say plagiarizes, notices found first in Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History and Chronicle*.<sup>669</sup> Yet the work still makes clear that Jerome's ambition even as a young man was to master and transmit to the West knowledge of the antecedent Greek and the Latin exegetical traditions. Moreover, Jerome knew well the biblical languages, Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic, a linguistic aptitude that distinguishes him sharply from his contemporary Augustine, who knew well only the Latin language and had no access to the Greek tradition of exegesis and theology except by means of Latin translations, which, even when they were available, he tended not to use.<sup>770</sup> Augustine was a far more influential *theologian* in the Western church, because of his rank as a bishop, his greater interest and skill in philosophy, and his more systematic and dogmatic approach to theological topics,

<sup>664</sup> Cf. [Ep. 82.3405](#); [Civ 18.43](#).

<sup>665</sup> Cf. E. Sutcliffe, "erome," 99. It is interesting to note that for Jerome, the term *vulgate edition* of the Bible does not refer to *his* new vernacular translation from the Hebrew, but to the Old Latin versions, which were Latin translations of the Greek Septuagint in common use in the churches of his day.

<sup>666</sup> H. Jedin, [A History of the Council of Trent](#), 2 vols. (St. Louis: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1961 [first published as *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1957)]), 2:92, 96.

<sup>667</sup> [Divino Afflante Spiritu 21](#).

*Vir III* Jerome' *De viris illustribus*

<sup>668</sup> For English translations, see NPNF 3:359–4 and St. Jerome, [On Illustrious Men](#), trans. T. Halton, FOTC 100 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999).

<sup>669</sup> Cf. P. Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*, 90.

<sup>770</sup> See *ibid.*, 149–23.

which eventually gave birth to medieval scholasticism. However, Jerome's legacy as an *exegete* was greater, for obvious reasons.

Jerome's intention in his Latin exegetical writings was to make the Greek tradition of exegesis and theology productive in the Latin West, as well as the learning of the Hebrews. Courcelle puts it nicely: "The purpose of his life, he said, was to transmit to the Latin world the erudition of the Hebrews and the Greeks."<sup>771</sup> This endeavor to transmit what came before him is, in my judgment, Jerome's greatest contribution to Christian theology. He is a witness of fundamental importance to the mind of the Catholic Church in the interpretation of God's Word. For the most part, Jerome did not want to innovate in his scriptural interpretations but to speak from the heart of the church, both Eastern and Western. Centuries later, when the Council of Trent spoke of St. Jerome as "the greatest doctor in explaining the Sacred Scriptures,"<sup>772</sup> it expressed the church's gratitude toward a man whose entire life had been dedicated to ecclesiastical scholarship.

### ORIGEN AS THE MASTER EXEGETE

To shed more light on Jerome's hermeneutical method in his commentaries on Scripture, we can consult two ancient reports that testify to the respect in which Origen's exegesis of the Hebrew prophets was held by authoritative church leaders and future saints. The first stems from St. Gregory Thaumaturgus (213–275), a pupil of Origen himself. He describes his teacher's method and influence on him in these terms:

And he [Origen] *became the interpreter of the prophets to us*, and explained whatsoever was dark or enigmatical in them ... and set them in the light, as being himself a skilled and most discerning hearer of God, who alone of all men of the present time with whom I have myself been acquainted, or of whom I have heard by the report of others, has so deeply studied the clear and luminous oracles of God, as to be able at once to receive their meaning into his own mind, and to convey it to others.... To speak in brief, he was truly a paradise to us after the similitude of the paradise of God.<sup>773</sup>

Notice how Gregory calls attention to Origen's divinely inspired ability to explain the *prophets* according to their divine meaning. Origen was so attentive to the voice of the Holy Spirit, he had so carefully studied the divine scriptures, that he was able to comprehend their meaning and communicate it to others.

A remarkably similar report concerning the first attempts in Christian learning of the great Cappadocians Gregory Nazianzus and Basil of Caesarea is preserved by Rufinus of Aquileia (345–411) in his translation of Eusebius of Caesarea's [\*Ecclesiastical History\*](#). This translation was carried out at the request of his patron, Bishop Chromatius of Aquileia. To the work Rufinus appended his own additions in order to bring the work up to date and cover the eighty-year

<sup>771</sup> Ibid., 50–1, citing Jerome, *In Ieremiam* 3, praef. (PL 25:757 B).

<sup>772</sup> *Doctor Maximus in Exponendis Sacris Scripturis*; cited by [Pope Benedict XV, \*Spiritus Paraclitus\* 1](#) (1920).

<sup>773</sup> Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Panegyric to Origen* 15 (ANF 6:36).



period between Eusebius's final redaction and Rufinus's day. In [11.7](#), Rufinus writes:

[Gregory Nazianzus] removed Basil from the professor's chair which he was occupying and forced him to accompany him to a monastery, where for thirteen years, they say, having put aside all the writings of the worldly pagans, they gave their attention solely to the books of holy scripture, the understanding of which they did not presume to derive from themselves *but from the writings and the authority of those of old, who were themselves known to have received the rule of understanding from apostolic tradition*. They sought the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in these vessels of clay *by examining their commentaries on the prophets in particular*.<sup>774</sup>

The italicized sentences refer chiefly to Origen's exegetical writings on the prophets, which were the most celebrated of the ancient commentaries. Rufinus is testifying to the fact that the Cappadocians—and we should recall that St. Jerome studied for a time directly under Gregory Nazianzus—believed that the church's scriptures could not be separated from her most ancient interpreters, who were transmitters of apostolic tradition and modes of exegesis. Rufinus's summary of the Cappadocians is strikingly parallel with the words of Gregory Thaumaturgus cited above. Indeed, M. Hale Williams has insightfully noticed how in the latter passage Rufinus's description of Gregory Nazianzus and Basil resonates on several levels with aspects of St. Jerome's career.

First there is a renunciation of pagan literature in favor of the Bible and Christian exegesis.... Then, there is the Cappadocians' deference toward their illustrious predecessors. Rufinus's understanding of the proper mode of Christian scholarship, based on the authority of tradition rather than on individual creativity, seems remarkably like that articulated by Jerome in his programmatic statements on the commentary.<sup>775</sup>

The last statement is verified in Jerome's *Commentary on Isaiah* as well, where Jerome says that it is his wish to transmit to his readers what men of the church before him have taught.<sup>776</sup> Jerome's exegetical procedure differs markedly from Augustine's.<sup>777</sup>

<sup>774</sup> [The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia](#), books 10 and 11, trans. P. Amidon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 11.7 (70–1).

<sup>775</sup> Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book*, 130.

<sup>776</sup> See [6.1](#).

<sup>777</sup> Plumer, in [Augustine's Commentary on Galatians](#), trans. E. Plumer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 53, finds it "stonishing" that Augustine did not draw upon Jerome's erudite exegesis of Galatians in his own commentary on Paul's text, though he had access to Jerome's work. "At the very least, one would have expected him to borrow some linguistic point or other from Jerome, particularly as we find Augustine very soon afterwards emphasizing the importance of linguistic expertise for the interpreter of the Bible, painfully conscious of his own lack in this regard, and (no doubt thinking primarily of Jerome) commending the work of the Hebraists to biblical interpreters [[De Doctrina Christiana 2.11.16](#); [2.16.23](#)]. Yet where is the evidence of Augustine's

My conclusion from all this is that in his own scriptural commentaries, Jerome was endeavoring to carry on the legacy of the Cappadocian fathers by his reliance upon Origen's exegesis of the prophets. Jerome admits as much in [vVir III 75](#), where he reports that he possessed Origen's twenty-five-book *Commentary on the Twelve [Minor] Prophets*, transcribed by the hand of the martyr St. Pamphilus himself, "which I hug and guard with such joy, that I deem myself to have the wealth of Croesus." Throughout all periods of his life, he recommends Origen's works for study. In 392 Jerome responded to critics who accused him of dependence on Origen in his own exegetical writings with these words:

They say that I made excerpts from Origen's works, and that it is illegitimate to touch the writings of the old masters in such a way. People think that they gravely insult me by this. For myself, however, I see in this the highest praise. It is my express desire to follow an example of which I am convinced that it will please all men of discernment and you too.<sup>778</sup>

Origen had reflected deeply on the Christian meaning of the Old Testament, that is, its meaning in the light of the paschal mystery. He had transmitted his understanding of this meaning to posterity in his Greek writings. His successors, the Cappadocian fathers, assimilated this ancient perspective into their own works. Jerome carried the legacy forward into the Latin tradition. The range of his reading in Origen is therefore extensive and his knowledge of Origenian texts far exceeds our own (since the majority of Origen's works are lost). Courcelle summarizes the influence of Origen's writings upon Jerome's corpus this way:

To Jerome, Origen appears as the indispensable source. If he writes a commentary on a book or merely on a verse of Scripture, Jerome searches out a corresponding homily by Origen on such a book or verse. If by chance he cannot find such a homily, for instance in commenting on a passage of [Psalm 126](#), he apologizes, saying that Pamphilus no longer possessed the homily. But he regrets the thought that Origen did write it and that time destroyed it. Similarly, he notes that the twenty-sixth of Origen's thirty books on Isaiah cannot be found.... If Jerome knows that Origen did not make any particular commentary on a book of Scripture, for instance the Book of Daniel, he looks for explanations in another of Origen's works, namely the *Stromateis*. But he feels particularly satisfied when he has at his disposal for a single subject (as in the case of the Psalms, Isaiah, and Hosea) a large amount of Origen's works to compile. It is therefore not surprising that Jerome's contemporaries were even then charging him with compiling Origen.<sup>779</sup>

Without Origen, there would have been no St. Jerome, since Origen lies underneath Jerome as the principal source of his exegesis.

having taken his own advice?"

V [Vir III](#) Jerome' *De viris illustribus*

<sup>778</sup> *Commentariorum in Michaeum*, libri 2, PL 25:1189.

<sup>779</sup> P. Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*, 111–2.



It is noteworthy that, in the sixteenth century, the Catholic theologian and patristic scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam clearly apprehended that one of Origen's greatest achievements was in his supplying an abundance of material that was received with approval in later exegesis.<sup>880</sup> Erasmus says that Origen was an important source from which Greek writers such as Chrysostom, Theophylact, Basil, and Gregory of Nazianzus, and Latins such as pseudo-Jerome [= Pelagius], Ambrose, Hilary, and Jerome drew their chief exegetical ideas. In his prefatory letter to his edition of St. Ambrose's writings, Erasmus writes:

It must be confessed, but not in reproach, that the greater part of Ambrose's writings were drawn from Greek commentaries, especially Origen, but in such a way that he excerpted what was sound while disguising what was incompatible with orthodox Catholic teaching, or controversial, without adducing errors or betraying authors.<sup>881</sup>

St. Ambrose assimilated Origen without publicly reproaching him, even when Origen was in error. The early St. Jerome followed this same irenic pattern. Erasmus thinks that the irenic approach to Origen of St. Ambrose and of the early Jerome has been more helpful to the church. It is this more irenic approach to Origen that seems to be prevailing in the present day.<sup>882</sup> In his later years, however, Jerome, according to Erasmus, "made it his business to see that the world knew about Origen's errors, but not about the sound points he made."<sup>883</sup>

### JEROME'S *COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH*

We now turn our attention specifically to Jerome's *Commentary on Isaiah*, which Kelly describes as "the most successful and instructive example of his eclectic exegetical method."<sup>884</sup> Speaking of Jerome's scriptural exegesis more generally, one recent expert has remarked: "The greatest achievement of Jerome's career as a biblical scholar was his commentaries on the Hebrew Prophets. No other patristic writer, either in Greek or in Latin, came close to equaling the comprehensiveness of Jerome's exegesis of the Prophets."<sup>885</sup> Interestingly, in the seventeenth century, the learned Catholic Scripture scholar Richard Simon expressed the opinion that Jerome's commentaries were the most thorough and instructive of his works:

In his knowledge of Hebrew, Chaldean, Greek and Latin, Jerome possessed the necessary qualities for properly interpreting the Scriptures in a greater degree than all the other

<sup>880</sup> *Ep.* 1844 (Allen [1928], vol. 7, 102): "rigenes omnibus fere Graecis scriptoribus materiam suppeditavit." Cf. *In Psalmum 38* = *LB* 5:432B–35B: "rigen was a great doctor of the Church from whose sources the minds of nearly all the Greeks were irrigated."

<sup>881</sup> *CWE* 13, *Ep.* 1855 (August 1527).

<sup>882</sup> For instance, in recent catecheses on Origen, Pope Benedict XVI commends Origen's writings to Catholics.

<sup>883</sup> Erasmus, *Apology against Latomus*, *CWE* 71:67. One can observe Jerome doing this in his *Commentary on Jeremiah*.

<sup>884</sup> Kelly, *Jerome*, 301.

<sup>885</sup> Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book*, 66.

Fathers. Not only had he read and examined the Greek versions in Origen’s “Hexapla,” but he had also frequently conferred with the most erudite Jews of his day, and he rarely took any steps in his scriptural work without first consulting them. In addition to this he had read every author, both Greek and Latin, who had written upon the Bible before him, and finally, he was well versed in profane literature.<sup>886</sup>

Simon is greatly esteemed by certain leaders in the postconciliar guild of Catholic Scripture scholarship.<sup>887</sup> This makes his admiration of St. Jerome all the more notable when we consider the neglect of the same Jerome by the modern guild.

The following chart shows the approximate length (in Migne columns) of Jerome’s translations of Origen’s homilies and of his own commentaries on Scripture.<sup>888</sup>

Table 1. Length of St. Jerome’s translations of Origen’s homilies and of his own commentaries on Scripture

Date	Title	Dedicatee(s)	Length (PG 1511–17, PL 22–30)
379–82	<a href="#">Origen’s 9 Hom in— Isaiah</a>		35
	<a href="#">Origen’s 14 Hom in— Jer</a>		96
	<a href="#">Origen’s 14 Hom in— Ezek</a>	Vincentius	96
383–84	Origen’s 2 Hom in— Cant	Damasus	21
386–87	<i>In Philemonem</i>	Paula and Eustochium	17
	<i>In Galatas</i>	“ ”	130
	<i>In Ephesos</i>	“ ”	115

<sup>886</sup> *Critical History of the Old Testament* (1685), book 3, chap. 9, cited in A. Largent, [Saint Jerome](#), trans. H. Davenport with preface by G. Tyrrell (New York: Benziger, 1900), 146.

<sup>887</sup> See *JBC* 70:6.

<sup>888</sup> I have supplemented the chart found in P. Jay’ [L’xégèse de Saint Jérôme d’près son “ommentaire sur Isaie”](#) (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985), 49.

<sup>14</sup> *Patrologia graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1844–4)

<sup>15</sup> *Patrologia latina*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1844–4)

	<i>In Titum</i>	" "	45
388–89	<i>In Ecclesiasten</i>	" "	107
392	<a href="#">Origen's 39 Hom in Lk</a>	" "	99
392–93	<i>In Nahum</i>	" "	41
	<i>In Michaeam</i>	" "	79
	<i>In Sophoniam</i>	" "	50
	<i>In Aggaeum</i>	" "	29
	<i>In Habacuc</i>	Chromatius, bishop of Aquileia	63
396	<i>In Ionam</i>	" "	35
	<i>In Abdiam</i>	Pammachius	21
397	<i>In Visiones Isaiae</i>	Amabilis, bishop	53
398	<i>In Mattaeum</i>	Eusebius of Cremona, monk	201
406	<i>In Zachariam</i>	Exsuperius, bishop of Toulouse	124
	<i>In Malachiam</i>	Minervius and Alexander, bishops	37
	<i>In Osee</i>	Pammachius	131
	<i>In Ioelem</i>	" "	41
	<i>In Amos</i>	" "	107
407	<i>In Daniele</i>	Pammachius and Marcella	93

408–10	<i>In Isaiam</i>	Eustochium	661
410–14	<i>In Ezechielem</i>	" "	475
414–416	<i>In Hieremiam</i>	Eusebius of Cremona	223

Jerome's *Commentary on Isaiah* was written between 408 and 410, immediately after the completion of his commentaries on the Minor Prophets (406) and Daniel (407).<sup>889</sup> It is the lengthiest of his commentaries and by far his longest extant work, occupying more than 660 columns in the Migne edition. It surpasses by some two hundred columns the commentary on Ezekiel, even though the two prophetic books are of the same size. After finishing the Isaiah commentary, he turned to Ezekiel (411–414).<sup>990</sup> Finally he wrote his *Commentary on Jeremiah* (415–419), the completion of which was interrupted by his death.<sup>991</sup>

Earlier in his scholarly career, while he was a pupil of Gregory Nazianzus, Jerome translated nine homilies of Origen on Isaiah. He does not mention them in the body of his *Commentary on Isaiah*, but they clearly influenced his own exegesis and are of great importance from a number of perspectives. Therefore I have appended a new translation of them in appendix [1](#). At [3.3](#), Jerome reports that he has already written a treatise on [Isaiah 6](#). He is speaking of [EEp. 18](#) to Damasus, a new translation of which has been given in appendix [2](#). Moreover, under the lemma to [Isaiah 63:17–19](#), at [17.32](#), Jerome makes a passing reference to an earlier treatment he has written that explains Paul's use of Isaiah in [Romans 9:14–29](#). In appendix [3](#), I have provided a new translation of this portion of [EEp. 120](#) to Hedibia. Thus the reader is supplied in this volume with most of what St. Jerome has written or translated on the Book of Isaiah.

Jerome states at [5.1](#) that in 397, at the request of Bishop Amabilis, he had written a historical exposition of the ten visions of [Isaiah 13–23](#) based on the Hebrew. And in the same preface, Jerome makes known to his readers his decision to integrate this earlier work to Amabilis unchanged into his Isaiah commentary, as the fifth book. Then in the sixth and seventh books, Jerome says that he will provide a "spiritual" interpretation of the same chapters of Isaiah ([13–23](#)) that he had previously interpreted historically. Thus, to some extent, books five through seven interrupt the system of his commentary, which normally links, and does not separate, the historical and the spiritual interpretation.<sup>992</sup> The significance for the reader is that [Isaiah 13–23](#) is interpreted by Jerome with "unbearable breadth."<sup>993</sup>

<sup>889</sup> Cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology*, 3:234; Kelly, *Jerome*, 299. Jerome's *Commentary on Daniel* has been translated by Gleason Archer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958).

<sup>990</sup> I have a new translation of Jerome's *Commentary on Ezekiel* under way.

<sup>991</sup> See the new English translation by Michael Graves, *Jerome: Commentary on Jeremiah*, Ancient Christian Texts (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011).

[E.Ep. Epistle](#)

[E.Ep. Epistle](#)

<sup>992</sup> See preface to books [6](#) and [7](#).

Jerome makes heavy use of etymologies while explaining the meaning of the text.<sup>994</sup> His probable source is Origen, but I leave it to others to investigate and explain these.<sup>995</sup> Although Jerome's interpretive method clearly emphasizes the christological and ecclesiological application of Isaiah's text, he does not negate history. He normally operates at two levels: historical and spiritual.<sup>996</sup> The latter term is also called anagogical, tropological, mystical, and, less frequently, allegorical, but always with the meaning of a symbolic, figurative, or typological interpretation that points the hearer upward to Christ and the church and that makes the passage religiously edifying and instructive for the baptized Christian.<sup>997</sup> A good sample of his terminology is found at [8.1](#), where he equates allegory with tropology, a term he elsewhere identified with anagogy. Sutcliffe agrees that there are generally two senses of exegesis for Jerome, the literal and the spiritual, and that the scriptural basis for this division is the teaching of Paul, that the letter kills but the spirit gives life ([2 Cor 3:6](#)).<sup>998</sup>

A discussion of the underlying Greek terms may be illuminating. In Lampe's *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, the first meaning given to ἀναγωγή (anagogy) is "elevation, ascent." The noun ἀναγωγεύς means "one who guides upwards." In the spiritual sense, the "ascent" occurs from sense perception and images to divine realities. The anagogical interpretation of Scripture leads the hearer upward, then, from human realities to the divine Logos. Jerome's other favorite term, τροπολογικῶς (tropologically), means "allegorically, mystically." A τροπολογία (tropology) is a figurative expression, or an allegorical/spiritual meaning in contrast with the historical literal interpretation. The Pauline (cf. [Gal 4:24](#)) term ἀλληγορία (allegory) is used as a synonym for tropology and contrasts with the literal interpretation.

In the lemma, Jerome presents a translation of the Hebrew (i.e., a citation of the Vulgate, sometimes revised). The length of the lemma depends on the internal demands of the text and the amount of commentary he feels is necessary. If the passage is clear in meaning, he records only the Hebrew lemma, especially when there is no difference in meaning between the Hebrew and the Septuagint ([10.5](#)). He says, however, that in obscure passages, he will record both versions "so that the diligent reader may recognize the extent to which the common translation differs from the other versions and from the Hebrew truth" ([3.31](#)). Jerome erroneously assumes here, and in many passages, that his current Hebrew text is the same one

<sup>993</sup> Grützmacher, [Hieronymus: Eine biographische Studie zur alten Kirchengeschichte, vol. 3, Sein Leben und seine Schriften von 400 bis 420](#) (Berlin: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1969), 179 ("nerträglicher Breite").

<sup>994</sup> See Jay, *L'xégèse de Saint Jérôme sur Isaïe*, 292–7; A. Kamesar, [Jerome, Greek Scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 103–5; R. Hanson, "[Interpretation of Hebrew Names in Origen](#)," *Vigiliae Christianae* 10 (1956): 103–3.

<sup>995</sup> Michael Graves has done a thorough job of this in his new translation of Jerome's *Commentary on Jeremiah*.

<sup>996</sup> Hale Williams discusses these relations with respect to Jerome's commentaries on the Minor Prophets in her monograph, *The Monk and the Book*, chapter 3. Jay discusses spiritual interpretation in *L'xégèse de Saint Jérôme sur Isaïe*, 241–5.

<sup>997</sup> Cf. Jay, *L'xégèse de Saint Jérôme sur Isaïe*, 150–92.

<sup>998</sup> Sutcliffe, "erome," 89.

used by the Septuagint translators.

In [13.19](#) he adds that the reason he records both versions is so that what seems obscure in one may be disclosed by the other. He mentions zealous persons who denounce his work as incomplete unless he also discusses the version of the Septuagint ([10.3](#)).<sup>999</sup> In another passage, he refers to the Old Latin (LXX) reading of the text, which he calls the “vulgate edition,” and says:

The common translation (*vulgata editio*) and the Hebrew have many discrepancies between them on this passage. This is why we have briefly touched upon both versions, lest we leave behind an occasion for carping at us φιλεγκλημοσιν [to those who are fond of fault-finding]. ([7.22](#))

Where necessary, therefore, he adds the translation of the Septuagint in the Old Latin version. He then interprets the text historically and literally.<sup>999</sup>

Jerome’s originality as a Latin exegete is found in his belief that knowledge of the “Hebrew truth” was an asset to the Christian interpreter of the Old Testament. Previous exegetes largely based their commentaries on the Greek Septuagint and its Latin version (the Old Latin). Jerome was very aware of this and he wanted to display the exegesis of his Christian predecessors and its Septuagintal textual basis in his own work.<sup>1100</sup> But Jerome was also convinced that the Latin-speaking Christian church would benefit by becoming more familiar with the Hebrew (Jewish) tradition of interpretation. At [2.42](#), in a comment on [Isaiah 5:7](#), he says: “We want to introduce Latin ears to what we have learned from the Hebrews.” He then reports a remarkable word play that Isaiah has created, which is only detectable when the passage is read in the Hebrew language. “Indeed in the Hebrew language he [Isaiah] has produced an elegant construction and sound of the words.”

Jerome also frequently reports how contemporary Jews interpret the text of Isaiah. Scholars have demonstrated, however, that sometimes Jerome has taken over even these reports from his Greek predecessors, such as Origen and Eusebius, who had recorded the Jewish traditions in their Greek commentaries. Erasmus of Rotterdam (d. 1536) had noticed Jerome’s profound reliance on Greek sources.<sup>1101</sup> Based in part on Erasmus, in 1706 Bernard de Montfaucon noticed that whenever Eusebius said that he had learned something from “the Hebrews” or from “a Hebrew teacher,” Jerome also claimed to have learned that information from a Hebrew.<sup>1102</sup> In an illuminating study, G. Bardy showed that Jerome took from Origen and Eusebius all of what he claimed to know firsthand from the Jews.<sup>1103</sup> Bardy did not question

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<sup>999</sup> On Jerome’ use and terminology for the literal sense, see Jay, *L’xégèse de Saint Jérôme sur Isaïe*, 127–0.

<sup>1100</sup> See [6.1](#).

<sup>1101</sup> See his *Hyperaspistes* 1 and 2 (CWE 76, 77).

<sup>1102</sup> B. de Montfaucon, Praef. in *Comm. in Isaiam Eusebii* IV, 3; PG 24:88; cited by M. Graves, [Jerome’ Hebrew Philology: A Study Based on His Commentary on Jeremiah](#) (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 3.

<sup>1103</sup> G. Bardy, “[Jérôme et ses maîtres hébreux](#),” *Revue Bénédictine* 46 (1934): 145–4. J. Gribomont follows this judgment in J. Quasten, *Patrology*, 4.235.

Jerome's competence in Hebrew, but simply wanted to show that his statements about learning a particular exegetical tradition from the Jews cannot all be taken at face value. M. Hale Williams has qualified some of Bardy's conclusions and faulted him for analyzing a very limited number of instances of Jerome's use of Jewish interpretation. Sometimes Bardy distorts the evidence, she says, by neglecting to notice the way Jerome adds important details to the Jewish traditions presented by Origen and Eusebius, which suggests that he had independent access to the Jewish materials.<sup>1104</sup> Recent studies by Kamesar and Graves confirm that, in spite of the question about the integrity of Jerome's reports about personally consulting Hebrews, Jerome had a very real knowledge of Jewish textual and historical scholarship, and this formed the backbone of his own Scripture scholarship.<sup>1105</sup>

Sometimes, to avoid excessive length, Jerome displays the reading of the Septuagint only when it offers a reading that differs in significant respects from what Jerome regarded as the Hebrew *Vorlage* or original. But in much of the commentary, especially in the second half, he offers complete lemmata of both versions. Jerome sometimes expresses his puzzlement over the Septuagint rendering of the Hebrew; however, he does not openly contest the Septuagint's authority, but rather explains its meaning, even when he openly admits that he does not understand why it rendered the way it did. Jerome endeavors to base his Christian apologetics and scriptural exposition more directly on the Hebrew readings, yet he simultaneously expounds the ecclesiastically authoritative LXX as well. An interesting example of this can be seen at [3.16](#) on [Isaiah 7:14](#): "Behold the virgin will conceive and bear a son, and you will call his name Emmanuel." On the basis of his knowledge of Semitic languages, Jerome defends on Semitic linguistic grounds the correctness of the Christian (Matthean) interpretation of Isaiah's prophecy, which had been based upon the LXX reading.

When accused by Christian contemporaries of sometimes disparaging the authoritative Septuagint readings of Scripture and of preferring the Hebrew text to them, Jerome denied that this was his intention. Certainly his interpretation of [Isaiah 7:14](#) amounts to being a dramatic defense of the Septuagint's controversial translation of the Hebrew *alma* by the Greek *parthenos*. In another work, Jerome writes: "But we neither charge the Septuagint with errors, as jealous people slander us; nor do we regard our own work as a censure of them."<sup>1106</sup> Jerome conceived his interpretive task as constructive, private, and supplementary, not destructive and publicly dismissive of the Septuagint (i.e., the Old Latin translation of it). He himself recognizes the Old Latin as the theologically authoritative version of the Bible that was in public use in the church's liturgies. Jerome preaches his homilies based on this version.<sup>1107</sup> In writings from all periods of his career, Jerome cites the Bible in the Old Latin and bases his exegesis and theology on it.<sup>1108</sup> But he supplemented the church's knowledge of the Old Latin with a new translation

<sup>1104</sup> M. Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book*, 227–8.

<sup>1105</sup> Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek Scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible*, 193–5; M. Graves, *Jerome's Hebrew Philology*. P. Nautin had gone so far as to accuse Jerome of not even knowing the Hebrew language.

LXX Septuagint

:LXX Septuagint

<sup>1106</sup> Preface to *Hebrew Questions on the Book of Genesis*.

<sup>1107</sup> Cf. [Ep. 57.11](#).

<sup>1108</sup> Cf. Jay, *L'xégèse de Saint Jérôme sur Isaïe*, 92–3; S. Jellicoe, [The Septuagint and Modern Study](#) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 254.

based on the Hebrew, for private and apologetic use. His own position is well summarized in [RRuf Apol 2.35](#):

By all this it is made clear, first that the version of the Seventy translators which has gained an established position by having been so long in use, was profitable to the churches, because by its means the Gentiles heard of the coming of Christ before he came; secondly, that the other translators are not to be reproved, since it was not their own works that they published but the divine books which they translated; and, thirdly, that my own familiar friend should frankly accept from a Christian and a friend what he has taken great pains to obtain from the Jews and has written down for him at great cost.<sup>1109</sup>

Jerome validly argues for the legitimacy of his enterprise of appealing directly to the Hebrew text. Understandably, Jerome resented the animosity that his Scripture scholarship generated from fellow Christians, especially when his aims had been misrepresented. On the other hand, it seems equally understandable how traditional Christians would be incensed at Jerome's attacks on the canon of Scripture that was in use in the churches.<sup>1110</sup>

#### JEROME'S SOURCES

In [1.1](#) Jerome reviews his exegetical predecessors, both Latins and Greeks. He reports that among the Latins, Victorinus, the martyr-bishop from Pettau, has written a valuable work on Isaiah of stylistic simplicity. He adds that among the Greeks, Origen of Alexandria was the first to write a commentary on the Book of Isaiah, which he did in thirty books in accordance with the four versions (Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint, and Theodotion). Origen's commentary reached the vision of the four-footed creature in the desert (cf. [Isa 30:6](#)), but the twenty-sixth book of Origen's commentary is lost. In the preface to book [5](#), Jerome says that Origen's work abounds in allegories and interpretation of names. Jerome further reports that Origen wrote twenty-five homilies<sup>1111</sup> as well as *Excerpts*, or detailed commentary notes. Jerome also relates that Didymus (the Blind), whose intimate friendship he recently enjoyed, published eighteen books, beginning from [Isaiah 40:1](#), and continuing to the end of the book. Moreover, Apollinaris has expounded the book "in his own manner by a system of intervals bounded by short stopping points—or rather, abridgments, and flies across the distances of a long road."

At [2.58](#) Jerome appears to allude to an interpretation found in the commentary on Isaiah by Basil (the Great) of Caesarea. Gryson and the editors of the new critical edition have identified a number of seeming parallels to Basil's work, and I have incorporated these references into the footnotes. The authenticity of Basil's commentary was questioned by Erasmus in the sixteenth century, and modern scholars are quite divided on the matter. According to Quasten, the

[RRuf Apol](#) St. Jerome' *Apology against Rufinus*

<sup>1109</sup> Cf. NPNF2, 3:[517–8](#).

<sup>1110</sup> See Rufinus, *Apology against Jerome*, 2.35. I will say more of this below.

<sup>1111</sup> He translated nine of these himself. See appendix .



opinion prevails at present that the work is not authentic.<sup>1112</sup> Hence, its author is often referred to as pseudo-Basil. This commentary itself borrows heavily from Eusebius's *Commentary on the Psalms* and *Commentary on Isaiah*.<sup>1113</sup>

### *Origen's Hexapla*<sup>1114</sup>

Jerome's reference to Origen's commentary, homilies, and *Excerpts* confirms that, both directly and indirectly, Jerome had access to the multiple Greek versions of the Old Testament displayed in Origen's *Hexapla*.<sup>1115</sup> In order to give the reader a mental picture of Origen's *Hexapla*, I will transcribe a small sample of it that has been published in Swete's standard work on the Septuagint.

The Hexapla: [Psalm 45\(46\):1–3](#)<sup>1116</sup>

1	2	3	4	5	6
Hebrew Text	Hebrew Greek letters	inAquila	Symmachus	Septuagint (LXX)	Theodotion
למנצה	Λαμανοσση	τῷ νικοποιῶ	ἐπινίκιον	εἰς τὸ τέλος	τῷ νικοποιῶ

The first column of Origen's *Hexapla* contained the Hebrew version of the Old Testament. Such a location demonstrates how Origen recognized in some sense the primacy of the Hebrew text. This obtains in spite of what appears to be Origen's firm adherence to the divine inspiration and ecclesiastical authority of the Septuagint version. Indications are that Origen's Hebrew text is in substantial agreement with the Masoretic Text (MT), which is the medieval Hebrew text on which modern versions of the Hebrew Old Testament are based.<sup>1117</sup> This text was transliterated into Greek in the second column. Then Aquila's Greek version occupied the third column of

<sup>1112</sup> Quasten, *Patrology*, 3:219.

<sup>1113</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 218.

<sup>1114</sup> For a reconstruction of Origen's *Hexapla* on Isaiah, see PG 16:2, 1611–986; and Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum Quae Supersunt*. A very helpful new study is Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek Scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible*, 4–2.

<sup>1115</sup> P. Nautin argued that since the *Hexapla* was never copied, by Jerome's day the original no longer existed in Caesarea. Therefore, Jerome could not have known it. Cf. Pierre Nautin, *Origène: sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 326–2. This view, uncritically accepted by some scholars, has been refuted in detail by Jay, *L'égèse de Saint Jérôme sur Isaïe*, 410–7 and Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book*, 150–4.

<sup>1116</sup> This chart has been transcribed from H. B. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, rev. R. R. Ottley (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1989; originally published by Cambridge University Press, 1914), [62–3](#).

<sup>1117</sup> Cf. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, 104.

Origen's *Hexapla*.<sup>1118</sup> Aquila was a Jewish scholar of the second century who published a slavishly literal Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament intended to replace the Septuagint that was in use by the Christians. He was a native of Sinope in Pontus (though some modern scholars conjecture that he was Palestinian) and lived under Emperor Hadrian (117–138). Jellicoe writes: “The extraordinary feature of Aquila’s version is its extreme literalness, which renders it of inestimable value to the textual critic in determining the Hebrew which underlies it.”<sup>1119</sup> Jerome and Origen admitted the fidelity of his translation to the Hebrew.<sup>1120</sup>

The fourth column of Origen's *Hexapla* was occupied by Symmachus's version, between Aquila's translation and the Septuagint.<sup>1121</sup> According to Epiphanius, Symmachus lived in the time of Emperor Severus (193–211) and was a Samaritan who became a Jewish proselyte. Eusebius ([HHE 6.16ff.](#)) on the other hand claims that he was an Ebionite. Jerome follows Eusebius ([VVir III 54](#)). Symmachus's rendering is more literary than Aquila's. Jerome judged that he aimed to express the spirit of the Hebrew rather than the letter. Finally, the sixth column of Origen's *Hexapla* was occupied by the version of Theodotion, whose translation was completed during the reign of Commodus (180–192).<sup>1122</sup> Jerome calls him an Ebionite ([VVir III 54](#)), whereas Irenaeus makes him a proselyte at Ephesus ([AAAdv Haer 3.21.2](#)). Theodotion's translation is a revision of the Septuagint, harmonized with the Hebrew text. It is of singular importance for the Book of Daniel, because it contains the deuterocanonical portions of the book translated from Hebrew into Greek. Theodotion's version of Daniel, not the Old Latin, was in use in the Christian churches of Jerome's day.

### *Excursus on the Greek Septuagint*

The fifth column of Origen's *Hexapla* was occupied by a recension of the Septuagint itself.<sup>1123</sup> The Greek Septuagint (from the Latin *septuaginta*, meaning “seventy” and frequently referred to by the Roman numerals LXX) is the Alexandrian Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible that was begun in the third century BC

<sup>1118</sup> See *ibid.*, 76–3; Jay, *L'xégèse de Saint Jérôme sur Isaïe*, 103–.

<sup>1119</sup> See Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, 80.

<sup>1120</sup> Cf. Origen, *Comm on Gen* 1.16; [Ep. ad Afric 2](#); [Jerome, Ep. 32](#); *Ep. ad Damas*; *Comm on Is 49.5–*; *Comm on Hos 2.16–7*.

<sup>1121</sup> Cf. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, 94–9; Jay, *L'xégèse de Saint Jérôme sur Isaïe*, 105–.

[HHE](#) Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica*

[VVir III](#) Jerome' *De viris illustribus*

<sup>1122</sup> See Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, 83–4; Jay, *L'xégèse de Saint Jérôme sur Isaïe*, 106–.

[VVir III](#) Jerome' *De viris illustribus*

[AAAdv Haer](#) Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses*

<sup>1123</sup> For the place of the Septuagint in Jerome's commentary on Isaiah, see Jay, *L'xégèse de Saint Jérôme sur Isaïe*, 111–6.

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and that became the Bible of the Jewish Diaspora.<sup>1124</sup> However, the Septuagint is more than a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament; it contains Greek additions to some books of the Hebrew Bible, as well as independent works. Some of these books, such as Sirach, Tobit, and 1 Maccabees, are Greek translations of Hebrew or Aramaic texts, while others are Greek compositions. Ancient (pre-Christian) Jews originally held the Septuagint in extremely high regard, some even claiming that it was a divinely inspired translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The oldest Jewish historical tradition about this is recorded in the *Letter of Aristeas* (100 BC), which reports that Ptolemy II Philadelphus (ruler of Egypt from 283–246 BC) wanted to provide a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures for the library at Alexandria.<sup>1125</sup> Seventy-two Jewish translators (six from each of the twelve tribes) were commissioned for the translation of the Pentateuch. Working together, they harmonized their translations by mutual comparison, that is, by collating the manuscripts, in a manner apparently similar to the way the text of Homer had been standardized.

The first-century AD Jewish scholar Philo introduces to this historical tradition the important element of divine inspiration. He says that the translators were secluded on the island of Pharos off the coast of Alexandria and then came under divine inspiration, “as though dictated to by an invisible prompter.”<sup>1126</sup> The seventy-two translators allegedly produced a word-perfect identical translation of the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch. Philo does not mention Aristeas’s letter. Rabbinic tradition later added a new embellishment: that the translators worked independently in isolated cells and God inspired them individually.

The additional Greek books that were added to the Hebrew canon include Esdras, Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), 1, 2, 3, and 4 Maccabees, Additions to Esther and Daniel (Susanna, Bel and the Dragon), Judith, Tobit, Baruch, and the Letter of Jeremiah. This longer list of Old Testament books is called the Alexandrian or Septuagint Canon of Holy Scripture. (Protestants refer to the books as “the Apocrypha,” i.e. “things hidden away.”) In later centuries, rabbinic Judaism rejected the Septuagint in its entirety in a reaction against Christianity. It commissioned new Greek translations to be made of the Hebrew Bible, for example, those by Symmachus and Aquila. The Jewish rabbis had been in conflict with the Christians, who preferred the Septuagint translation. Christians based their apologetics upon this translation, because it had been used by the apostles and church fathers. Eventually, Jews adopted what is called the Palestinian Canon, which contains only the Hebrew books with none of the Greek additions.

Many of the earliest Christian fathers accepted Philo’s version of the divine inspiration of the Septuagint.<sup>1127</sup> St. Augustine believed that both the original Hebrew OT and the Greek

<sup>1124</sup> *Diaspora* is a Greek word that means “cattering” and refers to the scattering of the Jewish people throughout the Greek-speaking Mediterranean world.

<sup>1125</sup> See [The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha](#) ed. J. Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983–5), 2:7–4; [Aristeas to Philocrates \(Letter of Aristeas\)](#), trans. and ed. Moses Hadas, Dropsie College Edition, Jewish Apocryphal Literature (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951).

<sup>1126</sup> [Philo, De Vita Mosis 2.25–4.](#)

<sup>1127</sup> See [Justin Martyr, Apology 1.31](#); [Dialogue with Trypho 68, 71](#); Pseudo-Justin, *Exhortation to the Greeks* 13; [Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.212](#); [Clement of Alexandria, Stromateis 1.149](#);

Septuagint were divinely inspired.<sup>1128</sup> In practice Jerome's view seems similar to this, but eventually he came to reject as a legend the later embellished tradition about the translators being sequestered into seventy separate cells, a legend that was used to defend the divine inspiration of the Septuagint.<sup>1129</sup> He cites, as evidence against this embellishment, the silence of Aristeas and Josephus regarding the cells. Indeed, the latter scholars write that the LXX translators were assembled in a single hall and consulted with each other. Jerome seems perfectly justified in doubting on historical grounds the story about the seventy cells. However, he takes his hesitations about the LXX one step further. In some passages in his writings, Jerome rejects the canonicity of some of the books added in the Septuagint. In the "Helmeted Preface" to his version from the Hebrew of the Books of Samuel and Kings, Jerome lists as books to be reckoned as apocryphal writings Wisdom, Sirach, Judith, Tobit, and Maccabees.<sup>1130</sup> The fact that Jerome stigmatized both 1 Maccabees, which existed in Hebrew in his day, but was excluded from the canon of the Jews, as well as Tobit, which Jerome says he found existing in an Aramaic text, but which had also been excluded by contemporary Jews, shows that it was indeed the authority of the Jews, and not the Hebrew or Aramaic language alone, that served as Jerome's criterion of canonicity.<sup>1131</sup> Consequently, Jerome can be fairly labeled a "Judaizer" in respect to his views on the canon of Scripture. *Judaizer* is the very term that he often used, along with the term *half-Jews*, to describe Christian chiliasts.<sup>1132</sup> Yet, in his preferred canon of Sacred Scripture, he sided with post-Christian rabbinic Jews over against pre-Christian Judaism and over against the Christian church itself.

For his choice of the Jewish over the Christian canon, Jerome was severely taken to task by some of his contemporaries. In response to the criticism he received, Jerome backpedaled, going so far as to deny that his earlier statements in the preface to the Vulgate against the canonicity of the LXX additions to Daniel had represented his own view. In his [Apology against Rufinus 2.33](#), Jerome writes:

For I have not been relating my own personal views but rather what they are wont to say against us. If I did not reply to their views in my preface, in the interest of brevity, lest it seem that I was composing not a preface but a book, I believe I immediately added the remark, for I said: "This is not the time to discuss such a matter."

Jerome implies here that he personally disagrees with the contemporary Jewish rejection of the LXX's additions to Daniel. Braverman (whose translation of Jerome was just cited) says that Jerome has certainly given a weak answer to Rufinus here. "The truth is that he never did later make time to defend the canonicity of these sections of Daniel, even in his *Commentary on Daniel* (407). In fact, he there indicates the

[Tertullian, Apology 18](#).

<sup>1128</sup> Cf. [City of God, 18.42–4](#).

<sup>1129</sup> Cf. preface to the Pentateuch (Genesis). PL 28 (ed. 1845):150–1; (ed. 1889):181–3; cited by J. Braverman, [Jerome's Commentary on Daniel: A Study of Comparative Jewish and Christian Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible](#) (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1978), 33.

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<sup>1130</sup> NPNF2, 6:490. Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 53.8](#); [107.12](#).

<sup>1131</sup> Cf. Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book*, 91.

<sup>1132</sup> Chiliasm will be discussed below.

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opposite.”<sup>1133</sup> Thus Jerome did not take full ownership of his case against the Septuagint canon. In [10.1](#) of the present commentary, he alludes to these controversies with bitterness and resentment. In my judgment, this bitterness is caused by the exposure of his own inconsistent statements.

Strangely enough, in his correspondence and written works, Jerome continued to cite *as Scripture* texts from these allegedly apocryphal writings.<sup>1134</sup> In the present commentary at [15.24](#), he cites [Wisdom 1:1](#) as “Scripture.” The Old Latin translation of the Septuagint was engrained in Jerome as the version of the Bible he had learned in his boyhood.<sup>1135</sup> Moreover, the Greek Christian sources on which his Latin exegesis was based made use of the Septuagint readings and canon. Sutcliffe thus assesses Jerome’s stance: “The reader gains the impression that the lessons on the Canon which Jerome had learnt in his youth still exercised their influence, which caused them, perhaps almost unnoticed by the author, to find expression in the writings of his advanced years.”<sup>1136</sup> Thus when the Roman Catholic Church eventually sided with Jerome’s critics (Augustine and Rufinus) by affirming the canonicity of the Greek writings added to the Hebrew canon, it was not being unfaithful to Jerome’s actual practice, only to his theory, which in any case he did not defend with consistency. In De Margerie’s assessment, Jerome’s vision of the *veritas hebraica*, though correct in principle, was far too narrow and too restricted to his Jewish contemporaries’ grasp of the sacred text. “In particular, due to a misunderstanding of the *veritas hebraica*, Jerome failed to recognize that the deutero-canonical books were part of the divinely inspired Scriptures.”<sup>1137</sup>

### *Origen’s Hexaplaric Recension of the* <sup>LLXX</sup>

It is important to recognize that Origen’s Hexaplaric text of the Septuagint is a recension that had been “corrected” by him in the following way. In the fifth column of the *Hexapla*, Origen, using critical signs adapted from the great Homeric critic Aristarchus, marked with an asterisk (\*) words or lines lacking in the Septuagint but present in the Hebrew (as attested by the other Greek versions); he marked with an obelus (†) words or lines that were lacking in the Hebrew.<sup>1138</sup> Origen did not himself advocate for a new text of Scripture based on this reconstructed text, but by means of his critical marks, desired merely to show to Christians what

<sup>1133</sup> Braverman, *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel*, 50.

<sup>1134</sup> For the most recent discussion of Jerome’s view of the canon, see E. Gallagher, “[The Old Testament ‘pocrypha’ in Jerome’s Canonical Theory](#),” *J ECS* 20, no. 2 (2012): 213–3.

<sup>1135</sup> Cf. Sutcliffe, “erome,” 95.

<sup>1136</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>1137</sup> B. de Margerie, [An Introduction to the History of Exegesis, vol. 2, The Latin Fathers](#). (Petersham, MA: St. Bede, 1995), 141.

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<sup>1138</sup> *Asterisk* comes from ἀστερίσκοσ, a small star used as a typographical mark placed before imperfect, deficient passages. *Obelus* comes from ὀβελός and refers to a critical mark shaped like a spit or small dagger placed opposite suspect passages. *Obelus* is also rendered “belisk,” a pointed square pillar; cf. [Jerome, Epp. 104, 108, 112](#).

readings were obtained among the Jews.<sup>1139</sup> Origen was wary of displacing the old Bible (the LXX) with a new version. Yet, his “corrected” text of the Septuagint was transmitted to posterity as the fifth column of the *Hexapla*.<sup>1139</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea believed that Origen’s revised LXX was the original authentic text. He reproduced and published it, aided by St. Pamphilus, around 307, at first with the critical signs included, but eventually they were deleted. The result was to circulate a version that was not the original text of the LXX and that, in reality, consisted of a mixture of the LXX with Aquila and Theodotion. This is called the Hexaplaric recension of the LXX.

The British Old Testament scholar S. R. Driver admired Origen’s work on the *Hexapla*,<sup>1139</sup> which he said was projected with the best intentions and became the means of preserving to posterity much of priceless value that would otherwise have perished. But Driver adds that Origen did not succeed in restoring the genuine translation of the LXX, since he (wrongly) assumed that the original Septuagint was that which agreed most closely with the Hebrew text as he knew it. Origen was guided partly by this Hebrew text and partly by the other versions of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, which were based substantially upon it. Where the Septuagint text differed from the current Hebrew text, Origen systematically altered it to bring it into conformity with the Hebrew. Driver comments:

This was a step in the wrong direction. Where a passage appears in two renderings, the one free, the other agreeing with the existent Hebrew text, it is the *former* which has the presumption of being the more original: the latter has the presumption of having been altered subsequently, in order that it might express the Hebrew more closely. Origen, no doubt, freed the text of the LXX from many *minor* faults; but in the main his work tended to obliterate the most original and distinctive features of the Version. To discover the Hebrew text used by the translators we must recover, as far as possible, the text of the Version *as it left the translators hands*; and Origen’s labors, instead of facilitating, rather impeded this process.<sup>1140</sup>

The important point being made here is that the modern science of textual criticism had not been discovered in Origen’s day. He, or rather his followers Eusebius and Pamphilus, who published his recension, evidently did not fully grasp the principles of textual transmission. In his own scholarship, Jerome inherited these mistakes and, like Eusebius, wrongly assumed that the Hebrew text that appeared in the first column of Origen’s *Hexapla* represented the original text on which the Septuagint version of the fifth column must have been based. In reality the Septuagint had followed a different Hebrew textual tradition that was alternative to the Masoretic Text, and at least a millennium older than the oldest Masoretic manuscripts available to modern scholars.<sup>1141</sup> This means that when Jerome accuses the Septuagint of “adding” something to the Hebrew, following the indications of Origen’s critical apparatus, he is wrongly

<sup>1139</sup> Rufinus pointed this out to Jerome in [Apology against Jerome 2.36](#).

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<sup>1140</sup> Cited in Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, 102–. Italics found in original.

<sup>1141</sup> Cf. K. Jobs and M. Silva, [Invitation to the Septuagint](#) (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 148.

assuming that his (Origen's) Hebrew *Vorlage* was identical with that used by the Septuagint translators. M. Hale Williams comments on this erroneous assumption:

Although modern textual critics of the Hebrew Bible are far from according the Septuagint the inspired status it enjoyed among Jerome's Christian contemporaries, they hold it in much higher esteem than did Jerome. Jerome's privileging of the Hebrew text used by the Jews, together with its attendant traditions of interpretation, as the ultimate sources of biblical truth was by no means a simple recognition of scientific fact. Rather, it was an idiosyncratic insight, which allowed Jerome to construct for himself a unique position as an authority on the scriptures.<sup>1142</sup>

Citing an example from Jerome's textual discussion in his *Commentary on Hosea* 2.9.11–13, M. Hale Williams identifies both the strength of Jerome's linguistic knowledge, and the weakness of his ability in the field of textual criticism when judged by modern standards.

He has no doubt identified correctly the alternative [Hebrew] reading that lies behind the version of the Septuagint. But his attribution of this variation to mistranslation, rather than to a different base text, is peculiar. He seems unable to imagine that the process of transmission had ever infected the Hebrew textual tradition with multiple readings.<sup>1143</sup>

M. Graves concurs with respect to Jerome's *Commentary on Jeremiah*: "Jerome believes that his Hebrew text always represents the original text of Jeremiah vis-à-vis the <sup>LLXX</sup>, whereas modern scholars generally conclude that the LXX more often reflects an earlier Hebrew text."<sup>1144</sup> Similar observations could be made of Jerome's practice in the *Commentary on Isaiah*. Modern scholarship now recognizes, in a way that Jerome was unable to imagine, the inestimable importance of the Greek Septuagint as a witness to an alternate Hebrew textual tradition.<sup>1145</sup>

#### EEUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA'S *COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH*

In his work [On Famous Men \(Vir III\) 81](#), Jerome writes a very favorable entry on Eusebius of Caesarea, in which he says that Eusebius wrote a commentary on Isaiah in *ten* books. In the preface to book 1 of his own Isaiah commentary, Jerome says that Eusebius composed his work in *fifteen* books. The discrepancy is probably explained by the fact that once Jerome had the work itself in his hands, he recognized its actual length. In his own Latin commentary, Jerome appears to have made extensive use of Eusebius's Greek *Commentary on Isaiah* (ca. 327), which

<sup>1142</sup> Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book*, 71.

<sup>1143</sup> Ibid., 127.

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<sup>1144</sup> Graves, *Jerome: Commentary on Jeremiah*, xlvii.

<sup>1145</sup> See Jobes and Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*.

V [Vir III](#) Jerome' *De viris illustribus*



is therefore the greatest documentable source of Jerome's exposition of Isaiah.<sup>1146</sup> Eusebius had himself relied heavily on Origen's nonextant commentary. In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius reports that, at Caesarea during the reign of Gordian (238–244), Origen composed a commentary on Isaiah in thirty books that was complete only up to the vision of the beasts in the desert ([Isa 30:6](#),<sup>LXX</sup>).<sup>1147</sup> Origen's work on Isaiah does not survive except for two short fragments found in Rufinus's translation of Pamphilus's *Apology for Origen*.<sup>1148</sup> Eusebius's commentary was known only in partial form until very recently.<sup>1149</sup> In 1706 the Benedictine scholar Montfaucon edited a fragmentary version in the series *Collectio nova Patrum et Scriptorum Graecorum*. This edition was based on four manuscripts from Paris. In the nineteenth century, it was reprinted by Migne with Montfaucon's preface and Latin translation in PG 24.77–526. In 1933 R. Devreesse identified elements in the Migne edition wrongly attributed to Eusebius that actually belonged to Basil of Caesarea, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Theodore of Heraclea. He also took note of genuine scholia from other sources of which Montfaucon was unaware.<sup>1150</sup> In 1934 A. Möhle, while conducting research for the Isaiah volume of the Göttingen Septuagint, announced the discovery of the nearly complete version of Eusebius's commentary in the margin of a Florentine biblical codex.<sup>1151</sup> The new material doubled what had previously been available. J. Ziegler inherited the task of editing both the commentary of Eusebius and the Isaiah volume of the Göttingen Septuagint. He made immediate use of Möhle's discovery in his 1939 edition of Isaiah, by printing the commentary's abundant citations of the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion in a separate Hexaplaric apparatus.<sup>1152</sup> Eusebius's commentary itself did not appear until 1975, when Ziegler published it as number 9 in the GCS edition of Eusebius's works. With that publication, the critical study of Eusebius's exegesis of Isaiah, and indirectly of Origen's and Jerome's, was placed on an entirely new foundation. In the footnotes of the present work, Eusebius's commentary is abbreviated as *EEus Is*.

Fortunately, in addition to the appearance of the Greek critical text, there is now also a

<sup>1146</sup> An English translation of Eusebius' work by Jonathon Armstrong has been announced by InterVarsity Press in the series Ancient Christian Texts.

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<sup>1147</sup> [HE 6.32](#).

<sup>1148</sup> Cf. St. Pamphilus, *Apology for Origen*, no. 116 (93); no. 137 (102).

<sup>1149</sup> I have followed Ziegler's introduction in *Der Jesajakommentar* [Commentarius in Isaiam], ed. Joseph Ziegler, GCS 9 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975), and M. J. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah: Christian Exegesis in the Age of Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).

.PG Patrologia graeca, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1844–4)

<sup>1150</sup> R. Devreesse, "[L'édiction du Commentaire d'usèbe de Césarée sur Isaïe: Interpolations et omissions](#)," *Revue Biblique* 42 (1933): 540–5.

<sup>1151</sup> A. Möhle, "[Der Jesaiakommentar des Eusebius von Kaisareia fast vollständig wieder aufgefunden](#)," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 33 (1934): 87–.

<sup>1152</sup> J. Ziegler, ed., *Isaias*, in *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graece* 14 (Göttingen, 1939; 2nd ed. 1967).



monograph on Eusebius's commentary in English; moreover, an English translation appears to be in preparation.<sup>1153</sup> With reference to the theological content of Eusebius's work, Hollerich indicates that Eusebius avoids subordinationist theological terminology, a feature that had characterized his writings prior to the Council of Nicaea in 325. This suggests that the work should be dated after the Nicene Council. Hollerich dates it to 325–327. Also, Eusebius's commentary completely ignores discussion of heresy in the church. "It divides the world into those who are members of the godly polity and those who are not—that is, according to belief and unbelief, not orthodoxy and heresy."<sup>1154</sup> This would seem to suggest that Jerome's pervasive discussions of heresy in his commentary derive not from Eusebius but from Origen's nonextant commentary and other sources.<sup>1155</sup> Moreover, Hollerich indicates that Eusebius's commentary "is devoted at tiresome length to vindicating Christianity's supplantation of Judaism."<sup>1156</sup> Since this same theme characterizes Jerome's commentary, it seems that Eusebius could be a major source for this motif.

Eusebius's commentary itself makes frequent and direct use of Origen's *Commentary on Isaiah*. Origen is named as a source at least six times in his work. It is well known that Eusebius revered Origen and collaborated with St. Pamphilus the Martyr in writing an [Apology for Origen](#).<sup>1157</sup> He also devoted book 6 of his [Ecclesiastical History](#) to telling Origen's remarkable story. Ziegler writes that even though Origen's Isaiah commentary has been lost, it is nevertheless preserved in large measure in the commentary by Eusebius.<sup>1158</sup> Many of Origen's discussions have been adopted in a somewhat altered form by Eusebius; yet even some of Origen's phrases and words have been literally repeated by Eusebius. Also, Ziegler observes that the text of Scripture that Eusebius cites has been taken from Origen. Until the publication of Eusebius's rediscovered commentary by Ziegler, Eusebius's dependence on Origen was assumed; now for the first time it has been proven.<sup>1159</sup> Hollerich conjectures that Jerome seems to have drawn on Eusebius much more than on Origen, his affinity for Eusebius being based on their shared commitment to literal interpretation, however much Jerome believed Eusebius fell short of it in practice (cf. [5.86](#) on [Isa 18:2](#)).

*Eusebius of Caesarea' Commentary on Isaiah* = Eusebius of Caesarea, Eusebius Werke IX. *Der Jesajakommentar* [Commentarius in Isaiam], ed. Joseph Ziegler, Die griechische christlichen Schriftsteller (GCS) (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975)

<sup>1153</sup> The monograph is Hollerich' *Eusebius of Caesarea' Commentary on Isaiah*.

<sup>1154</sup> Ibid., 25. See S. Gozzo, "[De Hieronymi commentario in Isaias librum](#)," *Antonianum* 35 (1960): 194–03.

<sup>1155</sup> My conjecture is confirmed by Grützmacher, *Hieronymus*, 3:181, at least with respect to Jerome' discussions of Ebion and Marcion in [7:3](#); [18:1](#).

<sup>1156</sup> Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea' Commentary on Isaiah*, 33.

<sup>1157</sup> See my new translation: St. Pamphilus, *Apology for Origen*.

<sup>1158</sup> Ziegler, *Der Jesajakommentar*, xxxi.

<sup>1159</sup> Ibid., xxxii. My hope is that the present translation of Jerome' commentary, which is supplied with the critical edition' scores of references to parallel passages in Eusebius' Greek work, will facilitate the task of scholars who wish to analyze Jerome' use of his Greek sources.

One could hypothesize that the preponderance of Eusebian material in Jerome's commentary is just an accident of historical preservation, which has given us Eusebius's *Commentary on Isaiah* but not Origen's, and that Origen was actually a common source of both. However, Jerome's frequent use of Eusebius even for [Isa. 30:6–66:24](#) suggests that he relied on him for the whole book. Most of the unidentified references in Jerome's discussion of [30–66](#) have now turned up in the new edition of Eusebius' commentary.<sup>1160</sup>

My own suspicion is that Jerome would have made an even more extensive use of Origen's commentary and scholia than he did of Eusebius's commentary. This cannot be verified, of course, since Origen's works do not survive; but when Jerome's exegesis here is compared with Origen's surviving exegesis elsewhere, the conclusion is that he took a great deal from Origen. In fact, I would conjecture that Origen's exegesis stands beneath the scores of references to Eusebius that I have placed in the footnotes of the present translation.

With respect to Jerome's use of Eusebius/Origen, Ziegler adds that it is shown above all in his scriptural citations.<sup>1161</sup> In this respect, Jerome probably did not even need to open his own Latin Bible, but often simply took the citations in Latin form out of Eusebius's Greek original.<sup>1162</sup> Ziegler's speculation is confirmed when one carefully observes how Jerome cites and comments on Scripture: more often than not, Jerome's Scripture citations and the language of his explanations conform to the readings of the Old Latin (LXX), even in sections of commentary where he explicitly states that he is offering explanations "according to the Hebrew."<sup>1163</sup> I have endeavored to assist the reader in detecting this by using quotation marks for echoes of the Septuagint lemma and italics for echoes of the Hebrew lemma.

### EXEGETICAL METHOD USED IN ST. JEROME'S *COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH*

The essence of the apostolic interpretation of the Old Testament is the conviction that all Scripture applies to Jesus Christ and testifies to him in anticipation of the salvation accomplished by him and in him. The OT can no longer be read as the Jews read it, now that Christ has come and fulfilled it, since Christ revealed its definitive sense and deeper implications. Christ has made men pass from law to grace, from the letter to the spirit, from figures to reality. The bishops of the Catholic Church articulate these principles in the dogmatic constitution of the [Second Vatican Council, \*Dei Verbum\* 4.15–16](#):

The principal purpose to which the plan of the old covenant was directed was to prepare for the coming of Christ, the redeemer of all and of the messianic kingdom, to announce this coming by prophecy, and to indicate its meaning through various types.... God, the inspirer and author of both Testaments, wisely arranged that the New Testament be hidden in the Old and the Old be made manifest in the New. For, though Christ

<sup>1160</sup> Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea's Commentary on Isaiah*, 56–7.

<sup>1161</sup> Ziegler, *Der Jesajakommentar*, xlviii.

<sup>1162</sup> *Ibid.*, xlviii.

LXX Septuagint

<sup>1163</sup> E.g., [14.10 \(51:9\)](#).

established the new covenant in His blood, still the books of the Old Testament with all their parts, caught up into the proclamation of the Gospel, acquire and show forth their full meaning in the New Testament and in turn shed light on it and explain it.<sup>1164</sup>

Thus in the Catholic understanding, the writings of the OT are prophetic and point forward to the coming of Christ. God has providentially arranged for the NT to be hidden in the OT, and for the OT to be revealed in the NT.

Jerome's method of exegesis is consonant with these principles. In the preface to book [1](#), Jerome says that he wants to demonstrate that Isaiah was not only a prophet, but an evangelist and an apostle. This recalls the way the New Testament writers received the prophecies of Isaiah. All four Gospels claim that John the Baptist's ministry fulfilled the prophecy of [Isaiah 40:3](#) (cf. [Matt 3:3](#); [Mark 1:3](#); [Luke 3:4](#); [John 1:23](#)). Matthew announces the fulfillment of [Isaiah 7:14](#) in the virgin birth of Christ ([Matt 1:22-23](#)) and of [Isaiah 9:1-2](#) in Jesus's Galilean ministry ([Matt 4:14-16](#)). [Matthew 12:17-21](#) identifies Jesus as the "servant" predicted in [Isaiah 42:1-4](#). In the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus inaugurated the good news publicly by proclaiming that his presence on earth signaled the fulfillment of the prophecy of [Isaiah 61:1-2](#) (cf. [Luke 4:16-21](#)). According to Jesus, Isaiah had foreseen his miracles (cf. [Matt 8:17](#); [11:4-5](#); [Isa 35:5-6](#); [53:4](#)) as well as the blindness and hypocrisy of the Pharisees ([Matt 13:14](#); [15:8-9](#); cf. [Isa 6:9-10](#); [29:13](#)). The passion narratives in all four Gospels are told in language that reflects the language of Isaiah's prophecies about the Suffering Servant ([Isa 53](#)). John quotes [Isaiah 6:10](#) as having been fulfilled in Jesus's ministry and then declares: "Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke of him" ([John 12:41](#)). Moreover, Paul says that [Isaiah 28:11-12](#) is being fulfilled in his churches (cf. [1 Cor 14:21](#)), and he applies [Isaiah 26:16](#) to Jesus Christ (cf. [Rom 9:33](#); [10:11](#)), as does St. Peter ([1 Pet 2:4-6](#)). In response to Paul's citation of Isaiah in [Romans 9:27-29](#), Jerome writes at [4.9](#): "Therefore, when the authority of such a great man has preceded, let every other interpretation cease." Jerome takes as decisive the Christian interpretation of Isaiah as embodied in the New Testament. Like Origen and Eusebius before him, he endeavored quite simply to sit at Jesus' feet, as a disciple, and to learn from him and from his earliest disciples how to read and interpret the Old Testament.

Regrettably, these Catholic and Christian principles of exegesis have been largely ignored in the postconciliar period, as D. Farkasfalvy has observed:

There is something ironic in the uncontentious ease with which chapter 4 of *Dei Verbum*, a surprisingly short summary of the Christian outlook on the Jewish Scriptures, was accepted and integrated into the document. The content of the chapter reflects, once again, a largely patristic point of view that modern biblical scholarship, both inside and outside Catholic circles, has not been able to integrate fully into contemporary exegesis. In fact, while the pre-conciliar patristic *ressourcement* proclaimed the "unity of the two Testaments" as central, Old Testament scholars were much less enthusiastic about joining ranks with a "Christian reading" of the Bible.<sup>1165</sup>

<sup>1164</sup> W. H. Abbott, SJ, ed., [The Documents of Vatican II](#), trans. J. Gallagher, chap. 4 (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 122.

When Farkasfalvy speaks of *Dei Verbum's* principles not being “integrated fully” into contemporary Catholic exegesis, he is speaking tactfully, to say the least. The reality is far more discouraging. R. E. Brown, for example, openly critiques the treatment of the OT in Vatican II as weakened by its “overemphasis on the importance of the Christian dimension in the OT.” He thinks that such formulae as *Dei Verbum* uses are “too scholastic to survive” and “may well belong to a passing era.” “It would be salutary if we would recognize the need to think of the OT books as old. They were primarily written for their contemporaries to teach them how to live in the love of God; *they were not primarily written to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ.*”<sup>1166</sup> Thus, according to the undisputed leader of American Catholic exegesis in the postconciliar era, *Dei Verbum* 4 simply got it wrong. Similarly the OT scholar J. McKenzie, SJ, disclaims any employment of “prediction, fulfillment, foreshadowing, revelation, allegory, typology, spiritual sense, fuller sense, or other similar techniques derived from the New Testament and the Fathers of the church,” asserting that such interpretive techniques are outdated.<sup>1167</sup> The great error of these scholars, of course, is their aspiration to read the Old Testament as if Christ and the church did not exist.<sup>1168</sup>

In response to the contemporary Catholic aversion to prediction, foreshadowing, and allegory, the reader should be reminded that St. Paul himself inaugurated the term *allegory* and used it to bolster his argument in [Galatians 4:21–31](#). When St. Paul and the author of Hebrews interpret passages from the Old Testament, Jerome bows before their authority and accepts their interpretive framework. He does not accuse them of using outdated and fundamentalist modes of exegesis. In [13.22](#), when Jerome observes that Paul in [2 Corinthians 6:2](#) cites [Isaiah 49:8](#) as having been fulfilled in the first advent of Christ, he responds: “Let us too follow in the tracks of his explanation, and trace his letters the way children trace the shadowy outlines of their teacher.” Programmatic texts for Jerome’s Christian hermeneutics of the Old Testament are: [Hebrews 10:1](#), [1 Corinthians 10:11](#), [Romans 15:4](#), and [2 Timothy 3:16–17](#).

It is also important to clarify that when Jerome offers a spiritual (Christian) interpretation of a passage, which he interchangeably calls the tropological or anagogical sense, he is not calling into question the historicity of the original passage. On the contrary, Jerome assumes that the Old Testament events occurred in history. The spiritual interpretation must be built upon the foundation of history. Jerome’s principles are the same as Origen’s in this regard; and as H. Crouzel intelligently reminds us, “In spite of the spontaneous reactions of many modern scholars it must not be concluded from the fact that Origen allegorizes a story that he does not

<sup>1165</sup> D. Farkasfalvy, [Inspiration & Interpretation: A Theological Introduction to Sacred Scripture](#) (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 190–1.

<sup>1166</sup> “he Problems of the Sensus Plenior,” *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 43 (1967): 468. Italics added.

<sup>1167</sup> *A Theology of the Old Testament* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974), 339–0.

<sup>1168</sup> For a critique of McKenzie, see Guillermo V. Villegas, [The Old Testament as a Christian Book: A Study of Three Catholic Biblical Scholars: Pierre Grelot, John L. McKenzie, Luis Alonso Schökel](#) (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1988), 192–3. For a critique of certain trends in modern Catholic Scripture scholarship, see L. Ayres and S. E. Fowl, “[Misreading the Face of God: The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church](#),” *Theological Studies* 60 (1999): 513–8.

believe in the historicity of the literal account, which is perfectly compatible with the quest for a spiritual meaning.”<sup>1169</sup> Similarly, Tillemont writes an assessment of Origen that can be applied to Jerome as well:

[Origen] has been blamed for having, throughout his writings, explained the whole of Scripture through allegory without following the letter. If he had claimed that the events reported by Scripture had not happened, he would assuredly have been worthy of blame. But if, assuming these events to be true, he tried to find in them more spiritual and elevated meanings by relating them to Jesus Christ and to the Church, he was only doing what Saint Paul taught through his words and through his example, and what Saint Augustine, Saint Gregory the Great, and nearly all the other Fathers tried to do after him.<sup>1170</sup>

In other words, with very few exceptions the church fathers assume the literal factuality of the Old Testament narratives, but in the context of providing homiletical edification to Christians, they wish to supplement the literal and historical meaning by the addition of spiritual meanings that point to Christ and the church and that bring encouragement and exhortation to Christians. When Jerome allegorizes a passage, he does not claim finality for his spiritual interpretations, and in fact he often offers more than one. Frequently, he challenges his hearers to pursue their own investigations into the mystical meaning. What he insists upon is that allegorical interpretations be pious and edifying (4.5).

Yet, what does Jerome mean when he says in 7.11: “Moreover, in this and in other passages of the Scriptures, very many things are recorded which cannot stand in accordance with history, so that we are compelled by the necessity of the facts to look for a deeper understanding”? There are statements like this in Origen’s writings as well. The context of Jerome’s statement concerns the Christian interpretation of predictions made by the prophets of Israel. The New Testament claims that Isaiah saw Christ’s glory and wrote of it (cf. [John 12:41](#)). Yet, Jerome admits that Isaiah wrote many prophecies that did not receive a *historical* fulfillment in every detail in the life of Christ. For instance, Jesus claimed that [Isaiah 35:5–6](#) was fulfilled literally in his healing ministry (cf. [Matt 11:5](#); [Luke 7:22](#)). Yet [Isaiah 35:6b–7](#) speaks of waters breaking forth in the desert and the parched haunts of jackals turning into swamps. Do such details also require a literal / historical fulfillment in order to verify Christ’s claims? Jerome would say certainly not. Where it is not possible to confirm the fulfillment of a prophetic detail in *history*, in a prophecy that generally does relate to Christ, the Christian interpreter may probe the prophetic texts for deeper symbolic meaning and find the messianic and ecclesiastical fulfillment on that level. This seems to be Jerome’s meaning.

Doubtless, the fact that the followers of Marcion denied that the Old Testament narratives had any use whatsoever played a role in inspiring Jerome and his predecessors to find a practical and spiritually edifying use even for seemingly insignificant details in the text of the Old Testament. At [3.12](#) and [7.9](#), Jerome refers to Marcion as the accuser of the God of the Old

<sup>1169</sup> H. Crouzel, [Origen](#), trans. A. S. Worrall (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989), 63.

<sup>1170</sup> Cited by H. de Lubac, [History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture according to Origen](#), trans. A. Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007), 81–2.

Testament. Jerome is ready to defend passages that Marcion accuses of inferiority. However, of much more fundamental importance was the influence of St. Paul, who had confronted the way the Jews and the Judaizing Christians sought to hold Christians to the literal observances of circumcision, Passover, unleavened bread, rules about food and drink, feasts, new moons, and the Sabbath. The Judaizing opponents of Paul did so by means of a literalistic interpretation of certain passages in the Old Testament. Such Jews and Judaizers saw no meaning more profound than the immediate one in the Old Testament ceremonial law.

Allegorical interpretation, inaugurated by Jesus and St. Paul, equipped the Christian reader to handle Jewish objections like this. Indeed, P. Martens, in a penetrating recent study, has shown that Origen's principal objection to Jewish literal exegesis of Scripture focuses on two issues in particular: the obligation to continue to adhere to Jewish ceremonial law (Sabbaths, sacrifices, food laws, etc.) and the identity of Jesus as the Messiah.<sup>1171</sup> In other words, Origen's critique of Jewish exegesis is not general or abstract, nor is it categorically dismissive of Jewish interpretive procedure; rather it is particular and focused on these specific dogmatic issues. Martens's insights can be applied to Jerome's exegesis, which follows the lines drawn by Origen.

## SIGNIFICANT THEOLOGICAL THEMES IN ST. JEROME'S *COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH*

### *Free Choice, Divine Foreknowledge, and Predestination*

Many topics could be discussed at this time, but I shall call attention to two themes that seem theologically important and that have proven interesting to me over the years. Jerome draws much of his anti-Gnostic material from Origen, as Harnack's valuable study has pointed out with respect to Jerome's New Testament commentaries.<sup>1172</sup> A significant byproduct of the anti-Gnostic polemic is Jerome's strong defense of the freedom of the human will in the process of salvation and damnation (cf. [14.14](#)). Jerome repeatedly says that the human being makes a meritorious contribution to his salvation and damnation; the divine foreknowledge of an individual's fate does not cause that person's destruction ([5.74](#)). The prophet Isaiah presupposes the existence of free choice of the will in [Isaiah 1:19–20](#),<sup>1172</sup> where he says: "If you be willing, and will hearken to me, you shall eat the good things of the land. But if you will not, and will provoke me to wrath, the sword shall devour you" (DRB). Jerome comments on this passage: "He preserves free choice, so that in both directions there is either punishment or reward, not on the basis of the predetermination of God, but on the basis of the merits of individuals" ([1.26](#)). At [13.19](#) he says:

All this is said in order that the human being's free choice may be shown; for it is God's to call, and ours to believe. And God is not immediately without ability, if we ourselves do not believe, but he leaves his power to our choice, so that [our] will justly obtains its reward.

<sup>1171</sup> Cf. P. Martens, [Origen and Scripture: The Contours of the Exegetical Life](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), [140–8](#).

<sup>1172</sup> Cf. A. Harnack, *Der kirchengeschichtliche Ertrag der exegetischen Arbeiten des Origenes*.  
DRB Douay Rheims Bible



Notice how Jerome presupposes that the grace of the divine call can be resisted by the human will; it is not forced upon man and does not inevitably prevail.

On the other hand, Jerome is aware that there are some (Origen) who extend freedom so far as to grant the hope of future repentance even to the devil, and who say that even that fallen angel can be purified; but Jerome firmly rejects this view ([6.29](#)). He says that limiting freedom in the case of the devil will not immediately expose the church to the Valentinian heresy, which asserts that there are different kinds of natures, and that there is one nature that never receives healing ([6.29](#); cf. [7.8](#); [10.3](#)). Jerome claims in [16.3](#) that Isaiah refutes the Valentinian views.

This is said against those who want there to be diverse natures [of souls], one that is lost and evil and cannot be saved, and another that is good and cannot perish. For if, as they think, the “sons of perdition” are evil by nature, how has that which was previously lost been found? After all, in the parables of the penitent ones, both the sheep that was lost from the hundred sheep [cf. [Luke 15:4](#)], and the drachma which had been lost from the ten [cf. [Luke 15:8](#)], are found again; moreover, the lost son is found, concerning whom the father had said to the one older by birth: “This brother of yours was lost, and has been found, he was dead and has come to life again” [[Luke 15:32](#)]. For nothing is ever lost except what was previously safe, and nothing ever dies but what was formerly alive. Therefore those who are now being called “sons of perdition” or of iniquity and wickedness, abandoned God through their own fault, and they began to be “sons of perdition” from being the Lord’s sons. For this same prophet says to them: “You have forsaken the Lord and provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel” [[Isa 1:4](#)].

These formulations are strikingly reminiscent of Origen and of the Greek theological tradition.

Jerome is acquainted with the texts in Isaiah that seem entirely to take away free will in human beings, for instance, [Isaiah 63:17](#), which appears to blame God for hardening human hearts. The passage reads: “O LORD, why dost thou make us err from thy ways and harden our heart, so that we fear thee not?” In Jerome’s commentary at [17.32](#), he explains the language as figurative, not literal: “It is not that God is the cause of human straying and hardness, but that his patience, which waits for our salvation, while he does not correct those who transgress, appears to be the cause of error and hardness.” Likewise at [15.17](#) he says that [Matthew 7:18](#) (“A good tree cannot produce bad fruit” [NASB]) “does not refer to the peculiar property of its nature, as the heretics think, but to the choice of the mind. After all, he adds: ‘Either make a tree good, and its fruit is good’ [[Matt 12:33](#)]. From this it is clear that it is by one’s own will that each person makes his own soul a good or evil tree whose fruit is varied.” Likewise, at [5.74](#) Jerome explains that even a divine verdict decreeing the destruction of a nation does not nullify human freedom or make the destruction inevitable. “It is not that the foreknowledge of God offered the cause of the devastation, but that the coming devastation was foreknown by the majesty of God.”

These are precisely the sorts of explanations of such passages used by Origen and the

Cappadocian fathers in their writings.<sup>1173</sup> One important corollary to such a robust understanding of human freedom is that the divine will for human salvation extends to all without exception. At [17.29](#) Jerome asks why many are not saved. The answer is because they have refused to believe. “And he is not immediately at fault if the majority refused to believe, but the will of the one who came was that everyone would believe and be saved.” In light of his assimilation of Greek exegetical sources on passages such as these, it should come as no surprise that Jerome’s understanding of predestination, foreknowledge, and free will is more in line with the emphasis of the early Greek theologians than with late Augustinian views (which in any case were developed in the decade following Jerome’s death with a very fragile basis in the antecedent Christian exegetical tradition). Even in his treatise against Pelagius, Jerome did not reproach Pelagius’s equation of predestination with foreknowledge, which was quite in line with the Greek theological tradition to which Jerome himself adhered.<sup>1174</sup> Referring to Jerome’s *Dialogue against the Pelagians*, Jerome’s great nineteenth-century Anglican translator, W. Fremantle, observed: “It cannot fail to appear that Jerome is not like Augustine, a thoroughgoing predestinarian, but a ‘synergist,’<sup>1175</sup> maintaining the co-existence of free will, and that he reduces predestination to God’s foreknowledge of human determination (see the *Dialogue*, especially [1.5](#), [2.6](#), [3.18](#)).”<sup>1176</sup> J. Ferguson confirms this conclusion when he writes, with respect to Jerome’s views articulated in his *Dialogue against the Pelagians*, that Jerome does not hold the extreme predestinarian views of Augustine.

He is rather a synergist, holding that God’s grace and man’s free will come together in the work of salvation, and equating predestination with prescience, that is to say, interpreting the doctrine not in terms of an arbitrary fiat of the Almighty that A shall be saved and B damned, but to mean that God having in His Almighty perfection complete knowledge of past, present and future, foreknows that A will so live as to be saved, and B will so live as to be damned.<sup>1177</sup>

Clearly Jerome understands the nature of the Pelagian heresy in a more delimited way than the late Augustine, who in the decade following Jerome’s death, developed a doctrine of arbitrary

<sup>1173</sup> Cf. H. Crouzel, “[Theological Construction and Research: Origen on Free-Will](#),” in *Scripture, Tradition and Reason: A Study in the Criteria of Christian Doctrine: Essays in Honor of Richard P. C. Hanson*, ed. R. Bauckham and B. Drewery (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 239–5.

<sup>1174</sup> See Thomas P. Scheck, [Origen and the History of Justification: The Legacy of Origen’s Commentary on Romans](#) (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), chapter 2; Scheck, “[Pelagius’ Interpretation of Romans](#),” in *Handbook on St. Paul in the Middle Ages*, ed. S. Cartwright (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 79–13.

<sup>1175</sup> *Synergism* is merely a transliteration of the Greek term συνεργέω, which means “cooperation” (from *cooperor*) or “orking together.” The term is scriptural (cf. [Mark 16:20](#); [Rom 8:28](#); [Jas 2:22](#)) and indicates that God and humanity collaborate or work together in the process of salvation.

<sup>1176</sup> “[Ieronymus](#),” *A Dictionary of Christian Biography*, ed. W. Smith and H. Wace (London, 1877–7), [3:46](#).

<sup>1177</sup> John Ferguson, [Pelagius](#) (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1956), 79–0.



predestination and denied the universality of the divine will for salvation. For Jerome the gist of Pelagius's error is his belief that Christians can attain perfection in this life apart from the assistance of divine grace.<sup>1178</sup> Pelagius's error does not, for Jerome, embrace his explanation that predestination in Holy Scripture equates to divine foreknowledge of free human choices. This latter view was a consensus position in Greek theology to which Jerome himself subscribed.

Jerome's more delimited understanding of Pelagius's errors has proved offensive to the Protestant writer H. von Campenhausen, who claims that the modern reader of Jerome's *Dialogue against the Pelagians* must conclude that "Jerome had not the slightest understanding of the real issue in the controversy, and stood much nearer in his attitude in the matter to Pelagius than to his alleged confederate Augustine!"<sup>1179</sup> Von Campenhausen is correct in seeing the similarity between Jerome and Pelagius on the issue of free will and predestination. But he is wrong in his assumption that it is the late Augustine alone who defines the scope of Pelagius's errors. It appears that for some streams of Protestant theology, and possibly for hyper-Augustinian schools of Catholic theology, the scope of the Pelagian heresy must be defined by Augustine alone rather than by the Catholic Church. Any dissent from the late Augustine is deemed "Pelagian," "proto-Pelagian," or "semi-Pelagian." This way of thinking is anachronistic and dogmatically reductionist, since the late Augustine defined as "Pelagian" views that went far beyond what the Catholic Church had articulated as the scope of Pelagius's errors.

### *Excursus on Augustine's Theological Innovations*

P. Burns summarizes the problematic nature of Augustine's later position on grace and free will, saying that for all the cogency of his arguments for the predestination of the elect and the working of their salvation, Augustine failed to meet the issue his opponents were pressing, the implied reprobation of the nonelect. "Predestination according to foreknowledge of God's own action seemed to entail reprobation according to God's foreknowledge of his own inaction."<sup>1180</sup> Burns observes that Augustine implicitly recognized the cogency of the arguments being used against him by his attempt to rationalize God's decision through its good effect among the saints. Similarly, in a very thorough investigation D. Ogliari concludes that Augustine's treatise *De dono perseverantiae* has lost the balance between the agency of man and that of grace that was present in *De gratia et libero arbitrio*.

Free will and human agency, at this stage, seem to have become mere "instruments for expressing the outworking of grace." ... The line of argument taken by the bishop of Hippo clearly emerges as a continual and intransigent insistence on the predestinarian "logic" of his theological construction on grace. So much so that the overriding role of divine agency overshadows, if not *de facto* replaces, a healthy form of libertarianism whose role in the process of the economy of salvation should not be underrated.<sup>1181</sup>

<sup>1178</sup> See the discussion by Graves, *Jerome, Commentary on Jeremiah*, xxxi.

<sup>1179</sup> H. von Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Church* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2000), 169.

<sup>1180</sup> *The Development of Augustine's Doctrine of Operative Grace* (Paris: Etudes Augustiniennes, 1980) 177, citing *De corrept. et grat.* 13, 40; *De dono persev.*, 8, 19.

Ogliari defines “libertarianism” to mean “the ability of human beings to act with free will and moral responsibility, with the proviso, however, that such ability is free of any determination caused by anything outside the agent, and with the guarantee that the agent could have acted otherwise.”<sup>1182</sup> According to Ogliari, Jerome holds that the *initium fidei* (beginning of faith) belongs to humanity. Citing a series of early Greek theologians followed by [Jerome’s \*Dial contra Pelag\* 3.1](#) and [Comm on Isa 13.19](#) (on [Isa 49:1–4](#)), Ogliari summarizes:

It is up to the latter to pray, whereas God bestows what has been prayed for. Man begins and offers and God brings to fulfillment what man cannot accomplish. It must be noticed that all these witnesses, with the exception of Jerome, precede the advent of Pelagianism and the controversy with Augustine. This shows that before the new elaboration of the theology of grace by the bishop of Hippo, the synergetic context in which the *initium fidei* was understood reflected the commonly held and professed doctrine of the Church in general, and that of the Eastern Fathers and theologians in particular.<sup>1183</sup>

Some modern scholars reproach Jerome with the label “Semipelagian.”<sup>1184</sup> To me this seems dangerous and anachronistic.<sup>1185</sup>

<sup>1181</sup> *Gratia et Certamen: The Relationship between Grace and Free will in the Discussion of Augustine with the So-Called Semipelagians*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 169 (Louvain: Peeters, 2003), 183.

<sup>1182</sup> *Ibid.*, n429

<sup>1183</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>1184</sup> For instance Louis Saltet, “t. Jerome,” *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1909). See <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08341a.htm>.

<sup>1185</sup> To my knowledge, the term *Semi-Pelagian* is first used in a Christian creedal statement in the Lutheran *Formula of Concord* (1580), Art. 2, 3, to condemn what are clearly Catholic understandings of grace. The term was then picked up by Dominican theologians of the early seventeenth century and used to condemn views of Jesuit theologians. Yet the magisterial orthodoxy of the Jesuit views is evidenced in the papal constitution *Unigenitus*, issued on 8 September 1713, in which Pope Clement XI condemned 101 propositions culled from the works of the French Jansenist Pasquier Quesnel. The condemnations contained within this constitution were confirmed by Clement XI in the Bull *Pastoralis Officii*, issued on 28 August 1718, by a decree of Innocent XIII, by Benedict XIII and the Roman Synod in 1725, and by Benedict XIV in the encyclical *Ex omnibus Christiani orbis regionibus*, published on 16 October 1756. See Heinrich Denzinger, [Sources of Catholic Dogma](#), 30th ed. (Kansas City, MO: Angelus Press, 1957), [1351–451](#); A. McGrath, “[Justification: Barth, Trent, Küng](#),” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34 (1981): 517–9. McGrath points out (527–8) that H. Küng has completely neglected to discuss the Catholic magisterial doctrine in his discussion of Karl Barth’s theology. See also M. Parmentier, “[Pelagius as the Bogeyman of Catholics and Protestants in the Seventeenth Century](#),” *Augustiniana* 53 (2003): 147–8.

## *Jerome's Repudiation of Chiliasm (Millennialism)*<sup>1186</sup>

Defining the “heresy” of chiliasm is a more complicated matter than the mere explication of the name would suggest. The term derives from the Greek word for one thousand (*chilias*), which Latins for the same reason call millenarianism (*mille* = one thousand). It is linked by Eusebius ([HHE 3.28.1–6](#)) and Augustine (*Haer* 8) to the heretic Cerinthus in the second century; however, there does not appear to be any historical basis for that linkage. In spite of its name, it cannot be said that the most fundamental error of chiliasm is its belief in a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth, since this is a scriptural teaching. [Revelation 5:9–10](#) predicts that Christ and his ransomed martyrs will reign together “on earth.” Those who persevere unto death through the final great tribulation instigated by the antichrist will wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb and reign with him ([Rev 7:14–15](#)). And in [Revelation 20:4–6](#) the duration of the reign of Christ on earth with his victoriously martyred saints is identified as a period of one thousand years, a term that occurs six times in [Revelation 20:1–7](#). [Revelation 20:4–5](#) states:

Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.

According to this text, the resurrection of the martyrs of the final persecution of the antichrist is separated by a thousand years from the resurrection of the rest of the dead. Even if the “thousand years” are interpreted nonliterally, the affirmation of a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth with his martyred saints is a Christian truth affirmed by Scripture, not a heretical doctrine. It affirms the important Catholic dogma of the unique merit that accrues to those who are martyred for Christ’s sake. The millennial reign of Christ with these special saints is therefore no Jewish tradition or fable, unless we repudiate the canonicity of the Apocalypse of John.

In fact, many orthodox Christians of the early centuries were guided by the conviction that the Apocalypse was penned by the apostle John, son of Zebedee. Relying on [Revelation 20](#), they believed fervently that there would be an earthly reign of the Messiah before the end of time, in which there will be a first resurrection of martyrs *on the earth* for one thousand years. According to Daniélou the essential affirmation of the early and orthodox form of chiliasm is

Of an intermediate stage in which the risen saints are still on earth and have not yet entered into their final state. Nothing, however, is said about the nature or duration of this stage, for this is one of the aspects of the mystery of the last days which has as yet

<sup>1186</sup> For a detailed discussion of millenarianism, see J. Daniélou, [A History of Early Christian Doctrine, vol. 1: The Theology of Jewish Christianity](#), trans. and ed. John A. Baker (Chicago: The Henry Regnery Company, 1964), 377–08. I have aimed to conform my present treatment of this issue to Daniélou’s, though I do not think he takes adequate account of the degree to which Jerome’s treatment distorts his opponents’ views.

[HHE](#) Eusebius’ *Historia ecclesiastica*

to be revealed.<sup>1187</sup>

Noteworthy here is that the Christian representatives of the original chiliastic doctrine did not even insist on the literalness of the thousand years in terms of duration of time. They clearly avoided a crassly materialistic interpretation of Christ's future reign on earth. Nor did they dispute the primacy of the spiritual fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in the church.<sup>1188</sup> What they insisted on was the unique merits and rewards owed to Christian martyrs and the fulfillment of these promised rewards during a literal reign of Christ on earth, subsequent to his second coming, but prior to the inauguration of the final state.

Millenarianism or chiliasm was a very widespread doctrine among early orthodox Christian writers. It was advocated in slightly different forms by Papias, Ps-Barnabas, St. Justin Martyr, St. Irenaeus, Tertullian, St. Methodius of Olympus, St. Victorinus of Petau, Lactantius, Apollinaris, and the early Augustine. This is an impressive list of representatives, considering that Papias was bishop of Hieropolis and a direct heir to apostolic teaching; Irenaeus was the most important Catholic theologian of the second century; Methodius and Victorinus were martyrs. Tertullian, it is true, eventually exited from the Catholic Church and became a Montanist, but his views on the millennium were traditional and had been inherited from his Catholic forebears. Indeed, chiliasm has a strong claim to being the consensus position of Christian theologians of the first two centuries, although Sts. Justin and Irenaeus admit that some disagreed with them.<sup>1189</sup> Augustine says that he entertained the spiritual form of chiliasm early on but then changed his mind.<sup>1190</sup> Furthermore, it is noteworthy that several orthodox opponents of the doctrine who arose in the third and fourth centuries, such as Eusebius and Dionysius of Alexandria, also openly contested the apostolic authorship of John's Apocalypse. Thus opposition to chiliasm was initially linked with opposition to the apostolicity and canonicity of John's Apocalypse.

In light of the historical evidence that exists for the antiquity of this doctrine, Daniélou traces chiliastic views at least as far back as the Christian community of the first century. He says that "this accounts for the respect in which they were held by a man of the stature of Irenaeus."<sup>1191</sup> Daniélou does not explain why he thinks that these teachings cannot be attributed to Christ. It appears to me, on the contrary, that it was precisely from Christ that these first-century Christians received their convictions. In [Matthew 19:28](#), Jesus promised his apostles: "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." It

<sup>1187</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 379.

<sup>1188</sup> *Ibid.*, 386: "Irenaeus does not exclude this exegesis in terms of the period of the Church, acknowledging that it is legitimate to apply the prophecy of the reconciliation of the animals to the union of the nations in the Christian body ([V. 33:4](#)). But he affirms that this allegorical interpretation does not exhaust the meaning of the prophecy, for God is rich in all things ([V. 33:4](#)), nor would the ecclesiological interpretation account for the whole prophecy ([V. 35:1](#))."

<sup>1189</sup> Cf. [Justin, Dial 80](#).

<sup>1190</sup> Cf. [City of God 20.7](#).

<sup>1191</sup> Cf. J. Daniélou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 383.

seems difficult to argue, as the late Augustine does, that the “new world” here refers to the historical Catholic Church.<sup>1192</sup> The early Christian adherents of chiliastic doctrine did not deny that there was an initial spiritual fulfillment of prophecies in the church Christ founded, but they insisted upon a future literal fulfillment of them when Christ returned to earth. Of the earliest saints, martyrs, and doctors who supported the doctrine of chiliasm, none of them apparently made any explicit reference to the continuance of procreation during the messianic reign, though this idea is present in Lactantius and Justin.<sup>1193</sup> Yet Lactantius speaks of marriage during the millennium only among those who are still alive at that time and not among the risen saints.<sup>1194</sup> Irenaeus and Tertullian do not speak at all of marriage during the millennium; moreover, the reintroduction of Jewish practices, such as circumcision, is not proposed by the above-mentioned authors as a feature of the millennium. So a Judaizing form of chiliasm was excluded from the start.

Daniélou admits that in general the doctrine of millenarianism contains a truth that is a part of the common stock of Christian teaching, and that occurs in the New Testament in 1 and 2 Thessalonians, in 1 Corinthians, and in Revelation, namely, the truth of the Parousia, Christ’s return to earth at the end of time to establish his kingdom.<sup>1195</sup> Marcion had attacked the church’s doctrine of Christ’s second coming to earth in judgment, and he was rightly refuted by Tertullian ([Adv Marc 3.24](#)). To that core dogmatic truth articulated by Daniélou, I would add that of the special status of the Christian martyrs and the unique merits that accrue to them by reason of their divinely graced perseverance unto death, since [Revelation 20:4–5](#) makes this explicit. It appears to me that the materialistic form of “chiliasm” condemned by St. Augustine in [City of God 20.7](#) is not that form represented either by [Revelation 20](#) or by orthodox writers including himself in his early years. Instead, Augustine rightly condemned the heretical ideas that after Christ’s return to earth, Christians, after the resurrection, would enjoy sensual pleasures, material feasts, and even procreation during Christ’s thousand-year kingdom. In addition it condemned the idea that Jewish law would be reinstated in that period.

Into modern times the Catholic Church maintains its opposition to “millenarianism” ([Catechism of the Catholic Church 676](#)).<sup>1196</sup> Yet a careful reading of that paragraph of the

<sup>1192</sup> B. Daley, [The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology](#) (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 134, says, “n thus translating the millenarian vision of Apoc 20 into ecclesiastical terms, Augustine undoubtedly laid the foundation for the widespread tendency of later Latin theology to identify the Kingdom of God, at least in its first stage of existence, with the institutional Catholic Church.”

<sup>1193</sup> Cf. J. Daniélou, [The Theology of Jewish Christianity](#), 394.

<sup>1194</sup> J. P. O’onnell, [The Eschatology of St. Jerome](#), *Dissertationes ad Lauream* 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 70–1.

<sup>1195</sup> J. Daniélou, [The Theology of Jewish Christianity](#), 377.

<sup>1196</sup> “he Antichrist’ deception already begins to take shape in the world every time the claim is made to realize within history that messianic hope which can only be realized beyond history through the eschatological judgment. The church has rejected even modified forms of this falsification of the kingdom to come under the name of millenarianism, especially the ‘ntrinsically perverse’ political form of a secular messianism.” This repudiation of “illenarianism” is

*Catechism* shows that the church's primary concern today in repudiating this doctrine is not to reproach the Christian form of chiliasm represented by John's Apocalypse and held by such lights as Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and the early Augustine. Rather, the target appears to be heretical, secular, Marxist, and National Socialist (Nazi) forms. Farkasfalvy seems to concur with my observations when he says, "The doubts about the scriptural character of [the book of] Revelation are clearly linked to the church's rejection of millenarism, *although forms of early millenarism—like that of Papias and of Irenaeus—were not condemned officially by the Church.*"<sup>1197</sup> De Lubac correctly observes that chiliasm was "fatally wounded" by Origen, whose perspective was adopted by Eusebius, Jerome, and Augustine and then became mainstream.<sup>1198</sup> However, when de Lubac concludes that Origen's opposition to this doctrine was one of the "greatest victories" of Origen's exegesis that "ensured the purity of the faith," this seems to me to drastically overestimate the danger posed by early Christian chiliasm and to unnecessarily alienate us from this most ancient form of Christian eschatology. In the place where de Lubac seems to rank the importance of Origen's antichiliasm views, in terms of his contribution to the Catholic dogmatic tradition, I would rate Origen's exegesis of Paul's writings.

Various forms of Christian millenarianism are still of importance today, since variations of this belief are accepted by millions of Protestant Christians in America who are members of evangelical and fundamentalist denominations. Their doctrine has spread worldwide through Protestant missionary endeavors. It appears to me that the core teaching is orthodox when it maintains in continuity with Papias and Irenaeus the fervent belief that Christ will one day return to earth and reign with his saints. Yet certain modern innovations do border on heresy, such as Protestant Dispensationalism, which affirms that the church will be gathered into heaven at the "Rapture," after which Christ will restore the theocratic kingdom of David in Jerusalem for one thousand years and fulfill all of God's promises to ethnic Israel. Such views are completely alien to ancient Catholic forms of chiliasm. The above discussion has been offered as a prelude to Jerome's treatment of chiliasm.

Jerome writes very polemically against a bogeyman that he calls chiliasm, or millennialism.<sup>1199</sup> In at least fifty passages in his writings, mostly in his commentaries on the prophets, Jerome denounces this "error"; yet he describes it only in a distorted depiction that has no historical representatives. This was the form that made the best foil for his own position.<sup>2200</sup> He adopts the tactics of a polemicist and makes no distinction between orthodox and unorthodox forms of this doctrine, or between the Jewish and Christian forms. O'Connell notes that Jerome's method of treating millenarian exegesis differs from his method of treating

based on the Decree of the Holy Office, 1944.

<sup>1197</sup> D. Farkasfalvy, *Inspiration & Interpretation*, 48n39. Italics added.

<sup>1198</sup> H. de Lubac, *History and Spirit*, 41–2, 117–8.

<sup>1199</sup> O'Connell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, 65, lists the following passages from Jerome's *Commentary on Isaiah* that relate to millenarism: [Isa 1:1](#); [11:6ff.](#); [19:23](#); [25:1](#); [27:13](#); [30:26](#); [35:3–](#); [54:1](#); [54:11–2](#); [55:2–](#); [58:14](#); [60:19–0](#); prol. to bk. [18](#); [65:13–4](#); [66:12](#); [66:22–3](#).

<sup>2200</sup> A complete list of passages and discussion is found in *ibid.*, chap. 4. The texts in the Isaiah commentary are: [1:1](#); [6:6](#); [19:23](#); [25:1](#); [25:4](#); [27:13](#); [30:26](#); [54:1](#), [11–](#); [55:2–](#); [58:14](#); [60:19–0](#); prol to bk. [18](#); [65:13–4](#); [66:22–3](#).



other errors.<sup>2201</sup> For in regard to other errors, even Origenism, Jerome often fails to indicate that the exegesis he gives is not his own or not approved by him. Yet, when there is an instance of millenarian exegesis, Jerome never fails to make clear that such teaching is unacceptable. Jerome does not consider this error exclusively Christian, for he often engages Jewish proponents of an earthly messianic kingdom. Jerome's hostility toward this doctrine seems excessive when we recall that Christian chiliasm did not advocate indulgence in material pleasures (such as procreation) during the millennial kingdom, or the other crassly materialistic ideas Jerome ascribes to them. Therefore, Christian millenarians can hardly be accused of the things for which Jerome seems to hold it responsible.<sup>2202</sup>

To me it seems that the Christian chiliasts whom Jerome denounces so severely deserve to be treated with greater respect. In [18.1](#) Jerome himself seems to sense that his rabid polemics against such lights of the church will provoke opposition from contemporary churchmen. In a different context, Rufinus, for example, when he observed Jerome publicly attacking the reputations of Sts. Ambrose and Pamphilus in connection with the Origenist controversy, wrote:

Is there any one to whose authority he will bow? Is there any one whom he will refrain from abusing? All the old Greek writers of the church, according to him, have erred. As to the Latins, how he disparages them, how he attacks them one by one, both those of the old and those of modern times, anyone who reads his various work knows well. Now even the Martyrs fail to gain any respect from him.<sup>2203</sup>

It appears to me that Jerome's polemical writing against Christian chiliasts could be criticized along these same lines.

## ST. JEROME AND MODERN THEORIES ABOUT THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

In the final section of this introduction, I want to introduce the reader to the so-called higher-critical study of the Book of Isaiah that has emerged in modern times and highlight some differences between Jerome and mainstream modern exegesis. Kelly claims that Jerome's exegesis of Isaiah was "unavoidably hampered" by his assumption that the entire book was written by one man.<sup>2204</sup> Jerome, it is true, believes that the prophecies recorded in the Book of Isaiah were uttered by a single Judean prophet, Isaiah son of Amoz, in the eighth and seventh centuries BC. Modern exegesis, in contrast, holds that Isaiah of Jerusalem contributed a minimal amount of material to what is now known as the Book of Isaiah. The basis for Jerome's view is both tradition and the heading of the book itself: "The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah" ([Isa 1:1](#)). In addition to this internal evidence, Jesus, Paul, the other writers of the New Testament, and Josephus attribute the prophecies of Isaiah to a single prophet. The evidence from the Isaiah scroll found at Qumran in 1947 is a clear witness to the unity of the

<sup>2201</sup> Ibid., chap. 4.

<sup>2202</sup> Ibid., 70–1.

<sup>2203</sup> *Apology against Jerome* 2.30.

<sup>2204</sup> Kelly, *Jerome*, 301.

prophecy, since there is no thought of a break between chapters [39](#) and [40](#). Since this scroll was copied from an earlier one, the tradition of unified Isaianic authorship of the entire book was well established by the third century BC.<sup>2205</sup> This is confirmed by the testimony of [Sirach 48:22–25](#).

Isaiah's fame in pre-Christian Judaism rested upon his comforting and authoritative preaching, his miracles, and his ability to foretell the future by the power of God. Christian sources inherited this admiration of Israel's greatest prophet and added to it the claim that Isaiah the prophet had foreseen the sufferings of Jesus and the establishment of the church (cf. [Matt 3:3](#); [Isa 40:3](#); [Matt 12:17–21](#); [Isa 42:1–4](#); [John 12:38](#); [Rom 10:16](#); [Isa 53:1](#)). Jerome simply takes such evidence at face value. At [3.2](#) and [5.38](#), Jerome says that the prophecies were uttered in their chronological order: [Isaiah 1–5](#) under Uzziah, [Isaiah 6](#) under Jotham, [Isaiah 7–14:27](#) under Ahaz, and [Isaiah 14:28–66](#) under Hezekiah.

Jerome's traditional approach to the authorship of Isaiah held sway for eighteen centuries until the so-called "Enlightenment" and the rise of "Rationalism" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when new theories were developed concerning the authorship of Isaiah.<sup>2206</sup> Rationalist scholars are those who endeavor to explain all human data by recourse to human reason alone, to the exclusion of God and the concept of divine revelation. Whereas Christian apologists from St. Justin Martyr to Thomas Aquinas to Blaise Pascal based their defenses of Christianity on miracles and fulfilled prophecy, Rationalists reject a priori the appeal to miracles, supernatural sources of knowledge, and truly predictive prophecies that would entail divine foreknowledge of the future.<sup>2207</sup> Applied to the prophecies of Isaiah, rationalism as a philosophical approach assumes that Isaiah's oracles predicting the demise of Babylon (chap. [13](#)), for example, or his naming of Cyrus hundreds of years in advance as a future deliverer of Israel (cf. [Isa 44:28](#); [45:1](#)), must have been written after the events. Consequently, philosophical prejudices seem to have contributed to the idea that some of Isaiah's prophecies are "predictions after the event" (*vaticinia ex eventu*). The German theologian J. Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) articulated the nature of the hermeneutical problem as follows:

At its core, the debate about modern exegesis is not a dispute among historians: it is rather a philosophical debate. Only in this way can it be carried on correctly; otherwise we continue with a battle in the mist. In this respect, the exegetical problem is identical with our time's struggle about the foundations as such.... The exegete should approach the exegesis of the text not with a ready-made philosophy, not with the dictate of a so-called modern or scientific worldview, which determines in advance what is permitted to be and what is not permitted to be. He may not exclude *a priori* that God is able to speak

<sup>2205</sup> Cf. E. J. Young, [The Book of Isaiah](#), 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965–2), [3:538–0](#).

<sup>2206</sup> See Brevard S. Childs, [The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture](#) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), chaps. [15](#) and [16](#); R. Margalioth, [The Indivisible Isaiah: Evidence for the Single Authorship of the Prophetic Book](#) (New York: Yeshiva University, 1964), 1–9.

<sup>2207</sup> For a defense of the traditional Christian views on Old Testament prophecy, see L. Feingold, [The Mystery of Israel and the Church, vol. 1, Figure and Fulfillment](#) (St. Louis: Miriam Press, 2010).



as himself in human words in the world.<sup>2208</sup>

To my knowledge Ratzinger makes no application of his principles to the scholarly treatment of the Book of Isaiah. On the contrary, he seems to take for granted a “Second Isaiah” who allegedly lived at the end of the Babylonian exile.<sup>2209</sup> Nevertheless, it appears to me that antecedent philosophical assumptions do play a role in leading some modern scholars to refuse to countenance the possibility that the Book of Isaiah is an anthology of authentic prophecies, delivered over a period of fifty years, deriving from a single Hebrew prophet, whose name is attached to the oracles.

Through much of the twentieth century, the higher-critical “consensus” of opinion has spoken of three “Isaiahs” who were largely independent of one another: first Isaiah ([1–39](#)) related to the Assyrian crisis of 739–700 BC; second (deutero-) Isaiah ([40–55](#)) related to the people in the Babylonian exile in 545–535 BC; and third (trito-) Isaiah ([56–66](#)) related to the return to Palestine from the Babylonian exile in 520–500 BC. This threefold division originated with Bernard Duhm’s commentary on Isaiah in 1892.<sup>2210</sup> With respect to so-called II Isaiah, Duhm isolated the four passages called the “Servant Songs” ([42:1–4](#); [49:1–6](#); [50:4–9](#); [52:13–53:12](#)) and attributed them to still another author. Interestingly, Duhm recognized that texts such as [Isaiah 7:15](#) are indeed “messianic prophecies,” but he attributed these passages to later editors and not to the original prophet.<sup>2211</sup>

Duhm was a liberal Protestant professor of Old Testament at the University of Basel and a proud pupil of Julius Wellhausen, the author of the JEDP source theory for the composition of the Pentateuch. It was Wellhausen who had boldly claimed that no historical knowledge whatsoever could be obtained from the Book of Genesis, since he thought Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were a mere “glorified mirage” projected back from later Hebrew history.<sup>2212</sup> Trained in

<sup>2208</sup> Cf. J. Ratzinger, “[Biblical Interpretation in Crisis](#),” The Erasmus Lecture (January 27, 1988), in *The Essential Pope Benedict XVI: His Central Writings and Speeches*, ed. John F. Thornton and Susan B. Varenne (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2007), 243–8 (253).

<sup>2209</sup> Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, [Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration](#) (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 347; “[Vicarious Representation](#),” trans. J. Wicks, *Letter & Spirit* 7 (2011): 209–0 (212).

<sup>2210</sup> B. Duhm, [Das Buch Jesaja](#) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1892).

<sup>2211</sup> Ibid., 54; cited by J. Sailhamer, [The Meaning of the Pentateuch: Revelation, Composition and Interpretation](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), [241](#). Sailhamer says that it is unlikely that [Isa 7:15](#) is a gloss, since it is present in the Qumran Isaiah manuscript.

<sup>2212</sup> Cf. *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, 6th ed. (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1927), 316; cited in W. Kaiser, [A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars](#) (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), [51](#). D. Farkasfalvy, *Inspiration & Interpretation*, 163, writes, “the philosophers of the nineteenth century sought a rational understanding of the Bible as a whole and wanted to insert it (together with a comprehensive theory about the origins of Christianity) into their general understanding of mankind’ religious history. They wanted ultimately to create a purely rationalistic synthesis that would eliminate the need to recognize anything supernatural or miraculous in the process of history. Instead, they would explain all phenomena by physical,

this sort of extreme rationalist skepticism, Duhm limited the genuine prophecies of the eighth-century-BC Isaiah of Jerusalem to [1:2–26](#), [29–31](#); [2:2–4](#), [6–19](#), [21](#); [3:1–9](#), [12](#), [13–4:1](#); [5:1–14](#), [17–29](#); [6:1–13](#) (to *remain*); [7:2–8a](#), [9–14](#), [16](#), [18–20](#); [8:1–18](#), [21–22](#); [9:2–7](#), [8–14](#), [17–10:4](#); [10:5–9](#), [13–14](#); [11:1–8](#); [14:24–25a](#), [26–27](#); [17:1–6](#), [9–14](#); [18:1–6](#); [20:1](#), [3–6](#); [21:16–17](#); [22:1–9a](#), [11b–14](#), [15a](#), [16–18](#); [28:1–4](#), [7–29](#); [29:1–4a](#), [5b–7](#), [9–10](#), [13–15](#); [30:1–7a](#); [8–17](#), [27–33](#); [31:1–4](#) (to *of them*), [5](#) (from *so*), [8a](#), [9b](#); [32:1–5](#), [9–18](#), [20](#).<sup>2213</sup> A careful analysis of the verses removed by Duhm’s critical knife and assigned to later interpolators shows that many of them are comforting utterances that promise forgiveness, hope, and restoration to the Jews; they are words that mitigate the threats of judgment by offering Israel the expectation of a Messiah, of a new future with God and a renewal of friendship. To Duhm it was simply unthinkable that the historical Isaiah of Jerusalem could have spoken tenderly and in such hopeful terms to the Jewish people.

In a remarkable study, the Jewish scholar R. Margalioth has demonstrated that one of the principal incentives for splitting up the Book of Isaiah was precisely this “anti-Semitic factor.”<sup>2214</sup> The German scholars Duhm and Marti in particular claimed that the “true” Isaiah who lived in the days of Hezekiah was solely a prophet of doom of the Jewish people. According to Marti, the “true” Isaiah believed that Israel had no future whatsoever. Marti viewed the Jewish people as “an accursed race, spurned by God and man, whose sovereignty has passed to the believing Christians.”<sup>2215</sup> Like Duhm before him, Marti “seeks to erase from the book every expression of nearness and amity between the God of Israel and His people.”<sup>2216</sup> According to this deeply engrained Protestant-Germanic prejudice, all expressions of consolation and hope that are scattered throughout the Book of Isaiah must necessarily be later additions. The theme of a remnant that runs like a scarlet thread through the book (cf. [Isa 10:20–23](#); [11:11](#), [16](#); [28:5](#); [37:31](#); [46:3](#)) is not accepted by Duhm or Marti as the original text.

Moreover, because he adhered to an evolutionary scheme for the development of Israelite religion, Duhm rejected the authenticity of [37:16](#) (Hezekiah’s prayer to God: “Thou hast made heaven and earth”). According to Duhm, the exclusively monotheistic tone of this prayer could not have existed before the exile. Oswalt critiques the evolutionary philosophical framework Duhm has imposed upon the Book of Isaiah in these words:

But even taking the most narrow view of the authentic writings of so-called “Isaiah of Jerusalem,” it must be plain that his message was identical to the content of Hezekiah’s prayer: God alone is master of the nations. Furthermore, evolution has proven itself unable to explain Israelite monotheism. Israel’s own explanation—revelation—demands

psychological, sociological, or other natural causes.”

<sup>2213</sup> This list was given by S. R. Driver, [An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament](#), 6th ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1897), 230.

<sup>2214</sup> Margalioth, *The Indivisible Isaiah*, 17, citing both Duhm and D. Karl Marti, *Das Buch Jesaja* (Tübingen: 1900).

<sup>2215</sup> Margalioth, *The Indivisible Isaiah*, 18n22.

<sup>2216</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

less credulity.<sup>2217</sup>

Thus application of Darwinian evolutionary theory to biblical literature is a major component of the higher critical theory of Isaiah. A framework that derives from this biological theory is being imposed on the literature of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>2218</sup>

With a few notable exceptions such as R. Margalioth, R. K. Harrison, E. J. Young, and J. Oswalt, Duhm's theory of three separate and independent "Isaiahs" as well as his evolutionary approach to the Israelite religion has determined the shape of Isaiah scholarship until the present day. Especially after Vatican II this framework was accepted rather uncritically by Catholic Old Testament scholars.<sup>2219</sup> Duhm opened a window to the complete disintegration of the idea that Isaiah is in any sense a coherent and theologically unified "book." For even scholars who accept a mere twofold or threefold division of Isaiah display a shocking lack of consensus as to the extent and origin of even these supposed compositional units that are presumed to contain certain theological motifs that are characteristic of the "author" and his times. When material within the unit is encountered that seems dissonant from the scholar's presumptions about what I, II, or III Isaiah would have said, the material is assigned to other anonymous writers spanning over five centuries. It is argued, for instance, that II Isaiah himself has inserted interpolations into I Isaiah,<sup>2220</sup> and vice versa!<sup>2221</sup> In ways that are left unexplained, modern scholars claim that redactors, glossators, and interpolators were permitted to insert their thoughts, synagogue sermons, conflicting theological views, and "prophecies" (*vaticinia ex eventu*) into the book before it received its final canonical form. Consequently, the claim of some popular writings that there has been broad scholarly agreement upon the nature and extent of I, II, and III Isaiah is refuted immediately when research is undertaken into the scholarly monographs written on Isaiah. It seems that the only genuine agreement among modern Isaian scholars is the negative judgment that the Book of Isaiah is not a compositional unity stemming from one author.

<sup>2217</sup> Cf. J. Oswalt, [The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–9](#) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), [654](#)n8.

<sup>2218</sup> A prominent critic of the common tendency to transfer science' evolutionary model to spiritual history is J. Ratzinger, "[Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: On the Question of the Foundations and Approaches of Exegesis Today](#)," in *Biblical Interpretation in Crisis: The Ratzinger Conference on Bible and Church*, ed. R. J. Neuhaus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 1–3 (10). He writes, "piritual processes do not follow the rule of zoological genealogies. In fact, it is frequently the opposite: after a great breakthrough, generations of descendants may come who reduce what was once a courageous new beginning to an academic commonplace."

<sup>2219</sup> Cf. [The Jerome Biblical Commentary](#) (1968) and [The New Jerome Biblical Commentary](#) (1993).

<sup>2220</sup> Margalioth, *The Indivisible Isaiah*, 5 summarizes Kraus' approach, which is typical: "raus enumerates eighteen words and expressions 'eculiar' to Isaiah 'he second.' Several of them, as he admits, are to be found also in Isaiah 'he first,' but in chapters that Kraus ascribes to Isaiah 'he second'"

<sup>2221</sup> J. L. McKenzie, SJ, [Second Isaiah](#) (Garden City: Doubleday, 1968), [3–](#), places [Isa 34](#) and [35](#) in his exposition of "econd Isaiah."

In light of its obvious basis in rationalism, it seems surprising that in American academic circles Duhm's theories about the composition of Isaiah would prevail the way they have throughout the twentieth century. When the formidable challenge to Duhm and Marti was presented on purely linguistic grounds by the Jewish scholar R. Margalioth, she was largely ignored. Yet she demonstrates beyond the shadow of a doubt that the vocabulary of the book is that of a single author. Words found in the first part of Isaiah are also found in the second part. Moreover, these words often appear in certain combinations that are unique to Isaiah. This phenomenon occurs so often that its convincing force seems overwhelming. In addition to these linguistic arguments, Margalioth shows that the unusualness of the phenomenon of a Hebrew prophet's predicting a name (Cyrus) is already stressed by the prophet himself, "who no fewer than seven times repeats that he is foretelling the future, with particular stress on his naming of Cyrus" [41:26; 42:9; 45:21; 46:10; 48:6; 48:7; 45:4].<sup>2222</sup> The phenomenon has a precedent in [1 Kings 13:2](#), where Josiah's name is predicted three hundred years before his birth; and in [Ezekiel 38–39](#) (Gog and Magog), a prophecy referring to the end times. Unfortunately, Margalioth's arguments seem to have had little effect in scholarship. The major exceptions are the conservative Protestants R. K. Harrison, E. J. Young, and J. Oswalt.

### *Brevard Childs's "Canonical Interpretation" of Isaiah*

In 1979 Brevard Childs offered a new approach to Isaiah as an alternative to Duhm's, since the old one had resulted in such extreme atomization and fragmentation of the text.<sup>2223</sup> Childs proposes a "canonical interpretation" of the book. This means that whatever the history of the formation of the book, it is its canonical form that the community of faith has identified as being authoritative. To be sure, Childs adheres to multiple authorship of Isaiah, and he dates the book after the exile. Moreover, he firmly denies that Isaiah was any sort of "clairvoyant," a word he uses to stigmatize the approaches taken by E. J. Young's and J. Oswalt's commentaries on Isaiah. But Childs argues that those responsible for the final shape of the book of Isaiah have conspicuously suppressed the historical settings of chapters [40–55](#) and [56–66](#) in order to strengthen the theological unity of composition. Furthermore, Childs says that "I Isaiah" had been rewritten in more than casual ways so as to reflect the teachings of the later sections. Childs calls into question the idea of three separate and independent compositional units. J. Oswalt summarizes the results of Childs's scholarship:

Thus it seems safe to say that at the present time, the idea of several independent books of Isaiah is in the eclipse. From ch. [1](#) to ch. [66](#), the various parts of the present book all reflect the other parts. Furthermore, one may say in general terms that the later chapters were written in the light of the former ones, while the former chapters show familiarity with the themes of the later ones. This is not merely a matter of repeating specific catchphrases or of superficial adoptions of particular themes. Rather, it is what one may call the necessary development of central themes that are introduced in the

<sup>2222</sup> Margalioth, *The Indivisible Isaiah*, 3–.

<sup>2223</sup> Brevard Childs, [\*Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture\*](#) (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979).

first section of the book.<sup>2224</sup>

Although Childs provoked a great deal of opposition to himself by his challenge of the status quo, the current direction of modern scholarship on Isaiah is toward admitting the linguistic, literary, ideological, and theological unity of the book in its present form. While this has not led most scholars to the reassertion of traditional authorship by Isaiah of Jerusalem, since modern scholars presuppose that Hebrew prophecy is not predictive, it has moved things in a better direction.<sup>2225</sup>

### *J. Oswalt*

In a recent full-scale Protestant commentary on Isaiah, J. Oswalt (my former Hebrew teacher) assumes unitary authorship of the anthology of prophetic oracles contained in the book. He argues that they were spoken by the Judean prophet Isaiah son of Amoz, between approximately 740 and 690 BC. The collection of Isaiah's sayings, sermons, thoughts, and writings was edited with brief editorial or transitional materials added either by Isaiah himself or those working with him, but not necessarily in chronological order.<sup>2226</sup> Oswalt claims that the present form of the Book of Isaiah is the most striking argument for the unity of the book. This is the only form of the book ever known to have existed. If the Book of Isaiah were really a collection of writings from at least three major authors and dozens of redactors or editors over a period of five centuries, it becomes very hard to explain how the book came to exist in its present form at all.<sup>2227</sup> Fully aware that many modern scholars cleave to the dogma of multiple "Isaiahs" and dozens of later redactors, glossators, and interpolators, Oswalt formidably (in my judgment) critiques this "consensus" as prejudiced by philosophical naturalism and insufficiently attentive to the form of the text that has come down to us. With regard to the former point, Oswalt writes:

Too much of the whole fragmentation of the book rests upon the assumption that it is not possible for a prophet of the eighth century B.C. to foretell accurately and to speak to the events of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. While this assumption is by no means the whole of the argument against the single authorship of the book, it still forms altogether too much of the basis for that argument. Once one grants that Isaiah of Jerusalem could have written such material, the arguments from style, vocabulary, themes, etc. become very nebulous.<sup>2228</sup>

<sup>2224</sup> John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–6* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 4.

<sup>2225</sup> It is noteworthy that in general terms the new approach proposed by Brevard Childs under the name "anonical exegesis" has captured the interest of Pope Benedict in *Jesus of Nazareth*, and of Farkasfalvy, who in his *Inspiration & Interpretation*, 200 says: "the theology of *Dei Verbum* has much to learn from and much to offer this trend." However, Childs' ideas have met with stiff opposition from other Catholic scholars such as J. L. McKenzie and J. Collins.

<sup>2226</sup> Cf. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–9*, 26.

<sup>2227</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>2228</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

Oswalt shows, moreover, that theology and prediction are inextricably intertwined throughout the Book of Isaiah, from beginning to end. “If specific prediction is denied to the prophet (or prophets), then their theology is groundless.”<sup>2229</sup> He identifies the great flaw in the scheme that claims that genuine Hebrew prophecy is not predictive: besides the fact that no extrabiblical evidence supports this idea, “II Isaiah” makes very strenuous efforts to deny it. For clearly the theme of [Isaiah 40–55](#) is the superiority of Israel’s God over the idols of the nations. This is proved in three ways: his ability to explain the past ([41:22](#)), tell the future ([41:23](#)), and do things that are radically new ([43:18–19](#)). That is, according to “II Isaiah” God alone transcends the bounds of the universe. But the conviction that these chapters had to be written about 540 BC rests squarely on the prior conviction that Isaiah of Jerusalem could not have known the future in any supernatural way. Oswalt draws the inference of such logic:

This conviction then involves the unknown Babylonian prophet [II Isaiah] in an irreconcilable contradiction. His God Yahweh cannot tell the future any more than the gods can, but he wishes his hearers to believe that Yahweh can. In order to prove this point, the prophet tries to get his readers to believe that it was really Isaiah of Jerusalem who said these things, all the while knowing this was not true. He even goes so far as to alter some of the earlier writings (e.g., ch. [13](#) with its reference to Babylon), or to insert some of his own (chs. [34–35](#)) in order to make those writings correspond more closely to his own work.<sup>2230</sup>

I find Oswalt’s critique of the higher-critical consensus compelling. With regard to the second point of giving an account for the publication of all the prophecies of the book under the name of Isaiah, Oswalt reproaches the hubris of scholarship’s tendency, inspired by Duhm’s bold conjectures, to reduce the original Isaianic nucleus to a smaller and smaller corpus of not much greater extent than the material of Amos or Hosea.

Yet we are asked to believe that of all the prophets, only Isaiah sparked a movement which would continue for some five centuries and eventually produce a book in the “founder’s” name that would be some five to six times the volume of the original input. That such a superstructure of thought must be created to reconcile the conclusion is at least questionable.<sup>2231</sup>

It appears to me that St. Jerome would concur with many of the arguments of scholars such as Young, Margalioth, and Oswalt in favor of the reality of miracles and predictive prophecy, and on behalf of the linguistic and theological unity of the Book of Isaiah, as well as those used in support of Isaiah’s historical authenticity. I have presented the views of these conservative exegetes sympathetically, because I am convinced that their principles of interpretation are by and large consonant with Jerome’s.

### *Legacy of St. Jerome’s Life and Works*

<sup>2229</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>2230</sup> See Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40–6*, [5](#).

<sup>2231</sup> Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1–9*, [20](#).



Although his new Bible translation was the subject of much controversy during his lifetime and required centuries to be fully accepted for liturgical and theological use in the Catholic Church, Jerome was immediately recognized as a preeminent scriptural commentator in the Latin church. In fact he was one of the few Latin fathers whose exegesis was treasured by Greek theologians as well. Less than two decades after St. Jerome's death, St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) made consistent use of St. Jerome's *Commentary on Isaiah* in his own Greek *Commentary on Isaiah*.<sup>2232</sup> Ironically (in light of Jerome's use of Greek sources), Cyril appears to have exploited the services of Alexandrian translators who made Jerome's Latin text accessible to him.<sup>2233</sup> In his influential book *De Institutione Divinarum Litterarum*, Cassiodorus (490–583) commends Jerome's "wonderfully written" eighteen book exposition of Isaiah. He echoes Jerome's own description of Isaiah from the opening preface: "[Isaiah] who, because he refers openly to the mysteries of Christ and the church, deserves to be called not so much a prophet as an evangelist."<sup>2234</sup> De Lubac points out that generally the most popular of Jerome's commentaries in the Carolingian age seem to be the commentaries on Isaiah, Matthew, and Galatians.<sup>2235</sup>

In the sixteenth century, the Catholic theologian Erasmus of Rotterdam published the first complete edition of Jerome's writings in nine folio volumes at the Froben Press in Basel in 1516. He wrote: "It is a river of gold, a well-stocked library, that one acquires who possesses Jerome and nothing else."<sup>2236</sup> In a letter to Pope Leo X in 1515, Erasmus assessed St. Jerome's stature as an exegete and theologian more fully in these terms:

I saw clearly that St Jerome is chief among theologians of the Latin world, and is in fact almost the only writer we have who deserves the name of theologian (not that I condemn the rest, but men who seem distinguished on their own are thrown into the shade by his brilliance when they are compared with him); indeed he has such splendid gifts that Greece itself with all its learning can scarcely produce a man to be matched with him. What Roman eloquence, what mastery of tongues, what a range of knowledge in all antiquity and all history! And then his retentive memory, his happy knack of combining unexpected things, his perfect command of Holy Scripture! Above all, with his burning energy and the divine inspiration in that amazing heart, he can at the same moment delight us with his eloquence, instruct us with his learning, and sweep us away

<sup>2232</sup> See M. Crawford, "[Scripture as a 'ne Book' Origen, Jerome, and Cyril of Alexandria on Isaiah 29:11](#)," *JTS* 64, no. 1 (April 2013): 137–3.

<sup>2233</sup> Cf. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Isaiah*, trans. R. C. Hill, 3 vols. (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2008), 1:3, 320n17.

<sup>2234</sup> PL 70:1114B.

<sup>2235</sup> Cf. H. de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 3:190.

<sup>2236</sup> *Ep.* 396. This letter forms the dedicatory epistle addressed to Archbishop William Warham in Erasmus' edition of St. Jerome (1516). For an English translation of the prefatory documents, see Desiderius Erasmus, [Patristic Scholarship: The Edition of St. Jerome](#), ed. J. Brady and J. Olin, CWE 61 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

with his religious force.<sup>2237</sup>

Like so many others, Erasmus ranked Jerome's commentaries on the prophets as his greatest and most learned works.<sup>2238</sup>

When Martin Luther radically denied the freedom of the human will, both in salvation and damnation, and made this dogma foundational to his religious revolt, Erasmus confronted him with scriptural arguments.<sup>2239</sup> But in addition to passages from the Bible, Erasmus also cited texts from St. Jerome's commentaries to show Luther that the mind of the ancient church opposed him. Luther responded by accusing Jerome of being an incompetent theologian and exegete. For instance, Erasmus referred to Jerome's exegesis of [Isaiah 63:17](#), which in reliance upon Origen maintained the existence of free will in salvation. Luther retorted: "For hardly any of the ecclesiastical writers have handled the Divine Scriptures more ineptly and absurdly than Origen and Jerome."<sup>2240</sup> In response to Jerome's interpretation of the divine choice of Jacob over Esau as being grounded not in an unalterable predestination to heaven or hell but in his divine foreknowledge of how they would turn out, Luther said that Jerome "does nothing but corrupt the Divine Scriptures and deceive the souls of the faithful with a notion hatched out of his own head and violently thrust upon the Scriptures."<sup>2241</sup> As an interpreter of Scripture, Jerome is "a man quite without either judgment or application."<sup>2242</sup> According to Luther, Jerome has earned for himself damnation to hell for his interpretations of Scripture.<sup>2243</sup> Erasmus responded forcefully to Luther's attack on Jerome in these words:

How hatefully he fumes against a man whose memory has been held sacred by God's church for so many centuries! Why is Jerome said to be dreaming about this passage when he is following, or rather translating, so many Greek Fathers? Why do not Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Ambrose also share in the beating, since they give the same interpretation?<sup>2244</sup>

<sup>2237</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *CWE 3, Ep. 335:232–5*.

<sup>2238</sup> Cf. Erasmus, *CWE 10, Ep. 1334*, 5 January 1523. This letter is also published in Erasmus, [Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings of Erasmus](#), edited by John C. Olin (New York: Fordham University Press, 1987), 181–11. In addition to describing St. Jerome's commentaries on the prophets as his masterpiece, Erasmus describes Virgil's *Georgics* this way, Ovid's *Medea*, Cicero's *De Oratore*, Augustine's *City of God*, Thomas Aquinas on the Eucharist, and Bernard on the Canticle.

<sup>2239</sup> Erasmus, [Controversies: De libero arbitrio, Hyperaspistes 1 and 2](#), ed. C. Trinkhaus, trans. Clarence H. Miller, *CWE 76, 77* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999, 2000).

<sup>2240</sup> Martin Luther, *On the Enslaved Will*; cited from [Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation](#), trans. P. S. Watson with B. Drewery, Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 224.

<sup>2241</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>2242</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>2243</sup> *Ibid.*, 302– (DSA WA 763–9).

<sup>2244</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *Hyperaspistes 2*, *CWE 77:668*.



Erasmus recognized that Jerome's exegesis was drawn from Greek sources and that therefore it represented a broad and very ancient consensus of interpretation. On this basis Erasmus recognized that Luther's attack on Jerome was essentially an attack on the heart of the Catholic exegetical tradition. After careful study of these polemics, C. Augustijn reached the conclusion: "In Luther's view the center of the Gospel is at stake here. Jerome is the quintessence of all theology which Luther detests."<sup>2245</sup> On the other hand, I have encountered no Catholic exegete and theologian who ever matched Erasmus in devotion to St. Jerome, both in terms of the selfless and ascetic dedication of his life to ecclesiastical scholarship, in conscious imitation of St. Jerome in opposing newly arisen heresies, and in the influence and assimilation of Jerome's exegesis and theology into his own.<sup>2246</sup> The Council of Trent spoke of St. Jerome as "the greatest doctor in explaining the Sacred Scriptures."<sup>2247</sup> The engagement with Jerome at the Tridentine council was so extensive that it appears to me that Erasmus deserves much of the credit for it, since he had edited the critical edition of St. Jerome that gave Catholic scholars access to the saint's writings.

The epithet used of Jerome by the Council of Trent, "The greatest doctor in explaining the Sacred Scriptures," would be picked up again in the early and mid-twentieth century by Popes Benedict XV and Pius XII, who warmly commended Jerome's Scripture scholarship to Catholic scholars.<sup>2248</sup> Benedict XV's encyclical *Spiritus Paraclitus* (1920) is one of the only papal encyclicals devoted entirely to the commendation of the writings of a church father. Echoing both Erasmus and the Council of Trent, he describes St. Jerome as "foremost" among the Catholic Church's teachers. "Him the Catholic Church acclaims and reveres as her 'Greatest Doctor,' divinely given her for the understanding of the Bible." Similarly, Pius XII, in *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943), commends Jerome as "the greatest Doctor of the Sacred Scriptures" and

<sup>2245</sup> C. Augustijn, [Erasmus: Der Humanist als Theologe und Kirchenreformer](#) (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 251.

<sup>2246</sup> Cf. Erasmus, [New Testament Scholarship: Paraphrases on Romans and Galatians](#), ed. Robert D. Sider, trans. and ann. John B. Payne, Albert Rabil Jr., and Warren S. Smith Jr., CWE 42 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984). The *Paraphrase on Titus* is found in CWE 44; the *Paraphrase on Matthew* in CWE 45. See also A. Reese, " ['So Outstanding an Athlete of Christ' Erasmus and the Significance of Jerome' Asceticism](#)," *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 18 (1998): 104–7; and J. Olin, " [Erasmus and Saint Jerome: The Close Bond and Its Significance](#)," *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 7 (1987): 33–3.

<sup>2247</sup> *Doctor Maximus in Exponendis Sacris Scripturis*; cited by Murphy, "aint Jerome," 759. I am aware that during the epoch of the "ouner Reformation," some Catholic scholars, such as St. Peter Canisius and Bishop Mariano Vittori, produced editions of St. Jerome's writings that plagiarized Erasmus' edition from start to finish, but then replaced Erasmus' prefaces with their own anti-Erasmus invectives. Very regrettable is the way Erasmus' Catholic critics endeavored to conceal their plagiarisms of his edition by defrauding the source of the acclaim that he had won for his edition of Jerome. See Hilmar M. Pabel, [Herculean Labours: Erasmus and the Editing of St. Jerome's Letters in the Renaissance](#) (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 287, 342, 346.

<sup>2248</sup> Cf. *Spiritus Paraclitus* = Encyclical of Pope Benedict XV on St. Jerome, September 15, 1920 (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 12:385–20); *Divino afflante Spiritu* (Sept. 30, 1943).

expresses regret that the precious treasures of Christian antiquity are almost unknown to many writers of the present day. Pius XII notes that students of the history of exegesis have not yet accomplished all that seems necessary for the due investigation and appreciation of so momentous a subject.

Would that many, by seeking out the authors of the Catholic interpretation of Scripture and diligently studying their works and drawing thence the almost inexhaustible riches therein stored up, might contribute largely to this end, so that it might be daily more apparent to what extent those authors understood and made known the divine teaching of the Sacred Books, and that the interpreters of today might thence take example and seek suitable arguments. ([Divino Afflante Spiritu 29](#))

Finally, in the dogmatic constitution of the Second Vatican Council, [Dei Verbum 23](#), the bishops of the Catholic Church carried on this legacy by encouraging exegetes to study the holy fathers of both East and West.

Sad to say, it seems that these papal exhortations have fallen upon deaf ears within the guild of Catholic Scripture scholarship that arose in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. R. E. Brown, for instance, declared: “I think we must recognize that the exegetical method of the Fathers is irrelevant to the study of the Bible today.”<sup>2249</sup> In [The Jerome Biblical Commentary](#), edited by Brown, the exegetical works of St. Jerome are systematically neglected. I have found no engagement with St. Jerome in Catholic Scripture commentaries written after the Second Vatican Council.<sup>2250</sup> And yet, as F. X. Murphy has correctly observed, for the Catholic Church at least, St. Jerome is “an indispensable witness to the mind of the church in dealing with the Word of God.”<sup>2251</sup>

On the other hand, a handful of theologically conservative Protestant scholars have expressed sincere admiration for St. Jerome’s Old Testament scholarship. Gleason Archer was one of the pioneers of this group, who translated Jerome’s *Commentary on Daniel* into English, being chiefly motivated by the desire to make Jerome’s Old Testament scholarship more widely known, especially Jerome’s defense of the authenticity of Daniel’s prophecies.<sup>2252</sup> E. J. Young engages Jerome’s exegesis some three dozen times in his 1700-page commentary on Isaiah, and openly expresses his esteem for this Latin church father: “Some of his historical and geographical allusions and comments are quite valuable. At times his exposition is historical and at times typological. I have found Jerome of considerable help and have used him frequently.”<sup>2253</sup> To my knowledge, E. J. Young stands completely alone among modern exegetes of Isaiah in the way he accords to St. Jerome the courtesy of engaging him at the scholarly level. Even the founder of Young’s Calvinist theological tradition, John Calvin of Geneva, cites Jerome’s

<sup>2249</sup> “The Problems of the Sensus Plenior,” *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 43 (1967): 463.

<sup>2250</sup> See Alex Wolf, “[Trends in Modern Catholic Biblical Exegesis: A Comparison of the Study Notes in the Jerusalem Bible \(1966\) and the New Jerusalem Bible \(1983\)](#),” *Angelicum* 89 (2012): 7–7.

<sup>2251</sup> Murphy, “Ain’t Jerome,” 759.

<sup>2252</sup> Cf. Archer, *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel*.

<sup>2253</sup> Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, [1:488](#).

*Commentary on Isaiah* only three times in his own two-thousand-page commentary on Isaiah.<sup>2254</sup> Another Protestant, B. Childs, in his own *Commentary on Isaiah*, does not cite Jerome or even mention his name in his catalogue of “great Christian interpreters” whose voices “remain an enduring guide for truthfully hearing the evangelical witness of Isaiah in a manner seldom encountered since the Enlightenment.”<sup>2255</sup> The roster includes Chrysostom, Augustine, Thomas, Luther, and Calvin, but not Jerome! But in a later monograph, Childs devotes an appreciative chapter to Jerome’s *Commentary on Isaiah*.<sup>2256</sup> It seems that Childs discovered Jerome at a very late date in his own scholarly career.

### *Text and Translation*

I take some comfort in Jerome’s opinion that eloquence has no place in a commentary, that, on the contrary, it should be written in “simple speech.”<sup>2257</sup> Still, I think he deserves a more learned and eloquent translator, one with greater literary ability in the English language. But I have done my best. The following translation is based on the Latin text found in the new critical edition: [\*Commentaires de Jérôme sur le prophète Isaïe\*](#), 5 volumes, introduction by Roger Gryson, edited by R. Gryson and P.-A. Deproost, AGLB 23, 27, 30, 35, 36 (Freiburg: Herder, 1993–99). This new edition supplants the previous critical edition by M. Adriaen, [\*S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Commentariorum in Esaiam, libri 1–11\*](#).. CCSL 73 (Turnholt: Brepols, 1963); libri 12–18. CCSL 73A (Turnholt: Brepols, 1963). Since Gryson’s text, unlike Adriaen’s, does not provide accent and breathing marks for Greek words, I have not supplied them. Jerome cites very many Greek terms that are drawn from grammar and rhetoric, such as allegory, hyperbole, apostrophe, metaphor, anagogy, tropology, metonymy, type, paraphrase, and so on. I have usually simply transliterated these into English, even when the Greek term is found in the original.

For the commentary’s lemmata (the passage from Isaiah cited in the cue heading of each numbered section) and for Jerome’s biblical citations that seem to reflect his own Vulgate edition of the Old and New Testament, I have used the Douay-Rheims English translation of the Latin Vulgate as my starting point and base translation. When Jerome cites at length from the Septuagint, either in the lemmata or in the body of his commentary, I have used Sir Lancelot Brenton’s nineteenth-century English translation as the base translation for my own. But I have not used either of these modern versions in a slavish manner or mindlessly. I have always updated the archaic English and endeavored to follow Jerome’s wording as literally and carefully as possible. For most of the names of persons and places, I have used

<sup>2254</sup> Cf. John Calvin, [\*Commentary on the Prophet Isaiah\*](#), translated from the original Latin by William Pringle, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948–8). Clearly, Calvin is not impressed by the “apist”affirmation of free will in the interpretation of [Isa 1:19–0](#) and [63:17](#); but he does not name Jerome in his polemic in either passage. Calvin says that God is truly the author of the blinding and hardening of sinners; cf. [4:356](#).

<sup>2255</sup> B. Childs, [\*Isaiah\*](#) (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), [5](#).

<sup>2256</sup> Childs, [\*The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture\*](#). In my judgment, Childs’ remarks about Jerome’s exegetical principles leave a great deal to be desired. A far more reliable source would be H. de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*.

<sup>2257</sup> PL 26:401B.

.CCSL Corpus Christianorum Series latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–

CCSL Corpus Christianorum Series latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–

FRSV Revised Standard Version

those of the RSV Catholic edition. If Jerome's rendering of names is significantly different from these, I sometimes inform the reader by placing his Latin in parentheses. In order to reduce the number of footnotes and thereby significantly shorten the page length of this work, Scripture citations have been placed in square brackets in the body of the translation. They are cited solely according to their locations in the RSV,, even in cases when the LXX and the Hebrew have a different versification from the RSV.

Another important convention I have tried to employ consistently pertains to the use of italics and quotation marks. Jerome's translation of the Hebrew lemma is given in italics. When he also provides the Septuagint (Old Latin) lemma, it is presented in regular font between quotation marks. When Jerome's comments below the lemma seem to reflect the wording of his own translation of the Hebrew, I have indicated this by placing the words in italics. When he seems to be reflecting the wording of the Septuagint (Old Latin) version, I have used quotation marks to indicate this. All other citations from Scripture beyond the lemma are indicated by using quotation marks. This convention will hopefully assist the reader in seeing the extent of Jerome's reliance upon the Septuagint (Old Latin) as his default version of Scripture. It was easier for me to employ this convention when Jerome supplied complete Hebrew and Septuagint lemma, but since he does not always do this, especially in the first half of the commentary, I have surely missed many echoes of the LXX in his commentary and accidentally left these without quotation marks.

## [THE FIRST BOOK OF THE COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH BY ST. JEROME, PRIEST]

1. In a relatively short time I have finished a twenty-book commentary on the Twelve Prophets<sup>11</sup> and a commentary on Daniel.<sup>22</sup> Now you are compelling me, Eustochium,<sup>33</sup> virgin of Christ, to move on to Isaiah and to give you what I promised to your saintly mother Paula<sup>44</sup> while she was alive. In fact I recall that I had also promised this to that very learned man, your brother<sup>55</sup> Pammachius.<sup>66</sup> And although in affection you are equal, still, because you are present, you carry off the prize. And so, both to you, and through you to him, I am paying what I owe, complying with the commands of Christ, who says, “Search the Scriptures” [[John 5:39](#)] and “Seek and you will find” [[Matt 7:7](#)] lest I should hear with the Jews, “You are in error knowing neither the Scriptures nor the power of God” [[Matt 22:29](#)]. For if, according to the Apostle Paul, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)], and the one who does not know the Scriptures does not know the power of God and his wisdom, [then] ignorance of the

1 Jerome, *Comm in prophetas minores*.

2 Jerome, *Comm in Danielelem*.

3 St. Eustochium (370?–18) was the third daughter of Paula, who accompanied her mother to Palestine and presided over the hospice and convent in Bethlehem after Paula’s death. She had taken a vow of perpetual virginity, and Jerome wrote his famous [Ep. 22](#) to confirm her in this resolution.

4 St. Paula (347–04) was a noble and wealthy Roman lady, the mother of four daughters and one son. In 382, during the synod held at Rome that followed on the council of Constantinople, she hosted in her house the bishops Epiphanius of Salamis and Paulinus of Antioch. Through them Jerome became intimately acquainted with her. After her husband’s death in 384, she accompanied Jerome to Palestine in 385 and lived the rest of her life in Bethlehem. The chief facts of her life were given by Jerome in [Ep. 108](#) to Eustochium.

5 He means brother-in-law.

6 St. Pammachius was a senator of the family of Furi, fellow student and friend of Jerome. Jerome dedicated some works to him and wrote him many letters ([Epp. 48, 49, 57, 66, 83, 84, 97](#)). He married Paulina, daughter of the Roman matron Paula and, widowed in 397, entered monastic life. When Jerome wrote his books against Jovinian in 392, Pammachius rebuked Jerome for his excessively violent language. He intrigued on Jerome’s side during the Origenist controversies. Jerome dedicated to him his commentaries on the Minor Prophets and Daniel. Pammachius spent his fortune to assist the poor and built a hospice for pilgrims at Porto. He died in 410 during the invasion of the Goths.

Scriptures is ignorance of Christ. Therefore, propped up by the help of your prayers [cf. [Exod 17:12](#)]<sup>7</sup>—you who day and night meditate on the law of God [cf. [Ps 1:2](#)] and are a temple of the Holy Spirit [cf. [1 Cor 6:19](#)], I shall imitate the householder who brings forth from his treasury new things and old [cf. [Matt 13:52](#)], and the bride who says in the Song of Songs, “I have saved new and old things for you, my kinsman” [[Song 7:13](#)]. I shall expound Isaiah in such a way that I will show him not only as a prophet, but as an evangelist and apostle.<sup>77</sup> For he himself says of himself and of other evangelists, “How beautiful are the feet of those who evangelize, [announcing] good things, who preach peace” [[Isa 52:7](#); cf. [Rom 10:15](#)], and God speaks to him as if to an apostle: “Whom shall I send<sup>88</sup> and who will go to this people,” and he replied, “Here I am, send me” [[Isa 6:8](#)].

And let no one think that I desire to summarize the subject<sup>99</sup> of this book in a few words, when the Scripture at hand contains all the Lord’s mysteries and proclaims Emmanuel, the one who was both born of a virgin and performed illustrious works and signs, was dead and buried, and by rising from the lower world is the Savior of all nations. What should I say of natural science, ethics, and theological studies?<sup>110</sup> Within this volume is contained all the Holy Scriptures, everything human language can bring forth and the understanding of mortals can receive. Of his mysteries he himself testifies who wrote,

And the vision of all things will be for you, as the words of a sealed book, of which, when they give to one who is literate,<sup>111</sup> they will say: Read this, and he will answer: “I cannot, for it is sealed”; and the book will be given to one who is not literate, and it will be said to him: “Read,” and he will reply: “I am not literate.” [[Isa 29:11–12](#)]

Therefore, if you give this book to the nonliterate people of the nations, they will respond, “I cannot read this, for I have not learned the literature of the Scriptures”; if you give it to the scribes and Pharisees, who boast that they are literate, they will respond, “We cannot read it; for the book is sealed.” Why, then, was it sealed to them? Because they have not received him [cf. [John 1:11](#)] whom the Father sealed [cf. [John 6:27](#)], who “holds the key of David, who opens and no one shuts, who shuts and no one opens” [[Rev 3:7](#)].

But it is not as Montanus<sup>112</sup> dreams up with his crazy females, that the prophets spoke while in a state of ecstasy, so that they did not know what they were speaking; and when they

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2 (3.26–.4).

<sup>8</sup> The Greek word *apostello* means “send.”

<sup>9</sup> *Argumentum*.

<sup>110</sup> *Theologica*. A textual variant reads *logica*.

<sup>111</sup> Lit., “nows letters.”

<sup>112</sup> Montanus, a native of Ardabau, a village in Phrygia, in the late second century (155–60) originated a schism that took its name from him (Montanism) and spread far and wide. It even won Tertullian for an adherent in 207. Montanus claimed to be a prophet and a mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit. Prisca and Maximilla were two of his female disciples who outdid him in prophesying. Both had been previously married and left their husbands. Cf. [Eusebius, HE 5.14; Jerome Vir III 26, 40; Bas Is 5 \(125BC\).](#)

instructed others, they themselves did not know what they were saying—of whom the Apostle says, “Not knowing what they are uttering, and the things about which they are making claims” [[1 Tim 1:7](#)];—but according to Solomon, who says in the Proverbs, “A wise man understands what comes forth from his mouth and he will carry knowledge on his lips” [[Prov 16:23](#)], likewise [the prophets] indeed knew what they were saying. For if the prophets were wise, which we cannot deny, and Moses, who was instructed in all wisdom [cf. [Acts 7:22](#)], spoke to the Lord and the Lord replied to him [cf. [Exod 19:19](#)], and it is said to the prince of Tyre concerning Daniel, “Are you wiser than Daniel?” [[Ezek 28:3](#)] and David was wise, who boasted in the psalm, “You have revealed to me the uncertain and hidden things of your wisdom” [[Ps 51:6](#)]; [then] how were these wise prophets ignorant of what they were saying, in the manner of brute beasts?

We also read in another passage of the Apostle, “The spirits of prophets are subject to prophets” [[1 Cor 14:32](#)], so that when to speak, [and] when to be silent is in their power. But if anyone finds this inconclusive, let him hear the words of the same Apostle: “Let two or three prophets speak and let the others discern; but if it is revealed to another who is sitting there, let the first be silent” [[1 Cor 14:29–30](#)]. How can they refrain from speaking when either to be silent or to speak is in the power of the Spirit, who speaks through the prophets? If, then, they understood what they were saying, all things are filled with wisdom and reason. It was not air struck by the voice that reached their ears, but God was speaking in the mind of the prophets according to the words of another prophet, “The angel who was speaking in me” [[Zech 1:9](#)]; and “Crying out in our hearts: ‘Abba, Father’ ” [[Gal 4:6](#)]. And “Let me hear what the Lord God speaks in me” [[Ps 85:8](#)].

This is why, after the truth of history, everything should be understood spiritually; and thus should Judea and Jerusalem [cf. [Isa 1:1](#); [2:1](#)] be interpreted, Babylon [cf. [Isa 13:1](#)] and Philistia [cf. [Isa 14:29](#)], Moab [cf. [Isa 15:1](#)] and Damascus [cf. [Isa 17:1](#)], Egypt [cf. [Isa 19:1](#)] and the uninhabited sea [cf. [Isa 21:1](#)], Idumea [cf. [Isa 21:11](#)], Arabia [cf. [Isa 21:13](#)], and the valley of Zion [cf. [Isa 22:1](#)], and finally Tyre [cf. [Isa 23:1](#)] and the vision of the four-footed beasts [cf. [Isa 30:6](#)]. Let us seek everything with understanding, and in all these things, [let us act] as if the Apostle Paul, the wise builder, is laying the foundation, which is no other foundation than Christ Jesus [cf. [1 Cor 3:10–11](#)].

It is a matter of great labor and effort to intend to discuss the entire Book of Isaiah, to which our forefathers (I mean the Greeks) have applied their talents with exhausting labors. Among the Latins, however, there is a profound silence apart from Victorinus,<sup>113</sup> the martyr of sacred memory who was able to say with the Apostle, “Even if I am unskilled in speech, I am not in

<sup>113</sup> We owe mainly to St. Jerome what little we know of St. Victorinus bishop of Petau ([Vir III 74](#)). He lived in the second half of the third century and was a martyr in the first years of Diocletian’ persecution, probably in 304. He was a forerunner of Latin biblical exegesis. Jerome attributes to him interpretations of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and the sole surviving work, the Apocalypse, in which he offers a literal interpretation of [Rev 20](#)— and manifests millennialist views. While recognizing his countryman’ good will and erudition, Jerome reproaches him repeatedly with not having full command of Latin, or at least not knowing it as well as Greek.



knowledge” [2 Cor 11:6]. For Origen wrote thirty books on this prophet<sup>114</sup> in accordance with the four versions,<sup>115</sup> up to the vision of the four-footed creature in the desert [cf. [Isa 30:6](#)], of which the twenty-sixth book is lost. Two other books to Grata concerning the vision of the τετραπόδων [four-footed beasts] are published under his name; these are considered pseudepigraphs. There are, in addition, twenty-five homilies<sup>116</sup> and Σημειώσεις, which we can call *Excerpts*.<sup>117</sup> Also Pamphilus’s Eusebius<sup>118</sup> published fifteen books that keep to historical explanation; and Didymus,<sup>119</sup> whose intimate friendship we recently enjoyed, published eighteen books, beginning from the place where it is written, “Comfort, comfort my people, you priests; speak to the heart of Jerusalem” [[Isa 40:1](#)], and continuing to the end of the book. Now Apollinaris<sup>220</sup> expounds everything in his own manner by a system of intervals bounded by short stopping points—or rather, abridgments, and flies across the distances of a long road. In consequence, we believe that we are reading not so much a commentary as a table of contents. You notice from this how difficult it will be for our Latin people to forgive me if I speak at some length. For their ears are fastidious and become squeamish when the Holy Scriptures are to be understood, and they delight only in the applause that accompanies eloquence. For in terms of

<sup>114</sup> Cf. [Eusebius, HE 6.32.1](#).

<sup>115</sup> The four versions would be those found in Origen’s *Hexapla*: Aquila (3rd column), Symmachus (4th column), the Septuagint (5th column), Theodotion (6th column). Cf. [Jerome, Vir III 53](#).

<sup>116</sup> This is our only source for the knowledge that Origen delivered twenty-five homilies on Isaiah. (The number thirty-two reported by Jerome in [Ep. 33.4](#) is not reliable.) Nine of them are preserved in Jerome’s own Latin translation without a preface. Cf. W. A. Baehrens, *Origenes Werke* 8 (GCS 33). I have appended a translation of them in an appendix to the present volume.

<sup>117</sup> The *Excerpts* or *Scholia* are Origen’s more detailed commentary notes.

<sup>118</sup> This is the church historian and bishop of Caesarea, who adopted the name Pamphilus’ Eusebius after the martyrdom of his close friend and colleague, Pamphilus. Pamphilus of Caesarea was a disciple of Pierius, called “the younger Origen,” who moved to Palestine to reanimate the school founded by Origen. He was ordained by Agapius. Arrested in 307, he spent two years in prison and was beheaded on 16 Feb. 310 under Maximinus Daia. In prison he wrote his sole surviving work, the *Apology for Origen*, with the assistance of Eusebius. See my new translation in the FOTC series, St. Pamphilus, [Apology for Origen, With the Letter of Rufinus on the Falsification of the Books of Origen](#), trans. Thomas P. Scheck, FOTC 120 (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2010).

<sup>119</sup> Didymus the Blind (313–98) was a celebrated exegete who taught in Alexandria and depended closely on Origen, both in exegesis and in doctrine. Jerome studied with him briefly in 386. Rufinus of Aquileia spent about eight years with him. Jerome translated Didymus’ work *On the Holy Spirit* and attributes to him commentaries on the Psalms, Gospels of Matthew and John, Isaiah, Hosea, Zechariah, Job, and works on the Arians. See [Jerome, Vir III 109](#).

<sup>220</sup> Apollinaris (d. 390), bishop of Laodicea, had been one of Jerome’s teachers during his sojourn in Antioch in 378. See [Ep. 84.3](#); [Vir III 104](#). His faulty understanding of the incarnation, according to which Christ’s human and divine natures were integrated into one, was later condemned by the Council of Ephesus (431) and the Council of Chalcedon (451). The work in question here does not survive.



the number of lines, Isaiah is either equal to or longer than the Twelve Prophets. Because the readings of the Septuagint and the Hebrew are either the same or similar, along with anything else the languages entail, and since my purpose was to publish an edition with the text of the languages cited, I did not want to extend the books of the commentary, which with an exposition even of language exceeds the limits of brevity. But let us now pursue our aims.

2. (1:1) *The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz (Amos), which he saw concerning (super) Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Joatham Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.* Instead of *Judah*, which signifies two tribes, the Septuagint and Theodotion have recorded *Judea*, which points to the entire land of the twelve tribes. And in place of what we have translated from the Hebrew as *concerning Judah and Jerusalem*, they translated as “against Judea and Jerusalem.” Symmachus in his customary manner is clearer: “Concerning Judah and Jerusalem.” Thus the heading indicates neither prosperous nor adverse things, but things that the prophetic discourse has predicted in both respects *about* Judah and Jerusalem.

Therefore, Isaiah is speaking chiefly about two tribes, Judah and Benjamin; the ten, who were in Samaria and were called Ephraim and Israel, have been left out. These tribes Pul, the king of the Assyrians, had already begun to destroy when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jerusalem [[2 Kgs 15:18–19](#), [27](#)]. Finally, in the fifty-second year of his [i.e. Uzziah’s] command, while Pekah the son of Remaliah was ruling in Samaria, “Tiglath-Pileser king of the Assyrians came and captured Ijon and Abel, the house of Maacah, and Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali. And he transferred them to the Assyrians” [[2 Kgs 15:29](#)]. From this it is evident that, with the overthrow of neighboring Samaria, the entire narrative here is directed to the two tribes as an earnest warning. Now Uzziah is the same person as Azariah. He had two names [cf. [2 Kgs 15:1](#)].<sup>221</sup> And we know from the kings named in the heading that Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, and Amos prophesied simultaneously; but the beginning of the word of the Lord was with Hosea, son of Beeri [cf. [Hos 1:2](#)]. Now Amoz, father of Isaiah, is not, as the majority assert, the third of the twelve prophets, but another man, and the names are written with different letters in Hebrew. Amoz has *aleph* and *sade* as its first and last letters; Amos has *ain* and *samech*. The former is interpreted by some as “courage” or “strength”; the latter as “hardened” or “burdensome people.” We have spoken more fully about this in [our commentary on] Amos.<sup>222</sup>

But even when the heading runs, “The vision that Isaiah—or Obadiah—saw,” not only this prophet, but others also do not relate what they *saw*, for instance, “I *saw* the Lord Sabaoth sitting on a throne high and lifted up, and there were two seraphim around him” [[Isa 6:1–2](#)].<sup>223</sup> Rather, they narrate the things that are *said*, that is, “*Hear*, O heaven and give ear, O earth” [[Isa 1:2](#)]; and, “Thus *says* the Lord God to Idumea: ‘I have *heard* a report from the Lord and he has sent an ambassador to the nations’ ” [[Obad 1:1](#)]. For prophets were first called seers [cf. [1 Sam 9:9](#); [Isa 30:10](#); [32:3](#); [33:7](#)],<sup>224</sup> who were able to say, “Our eyes are always to the Lord” [[Ps 123:2](#); cf. [Ps 25:15](#)] and, “To you who dwell in heaven, I have lifted up my eyes” [[Ps 123:1](#)]. This is also

<sup>221</sup> Cf. [Jerome, Com in Mt 1.8–](#); *Bas Is* 10 (136BC).

<sup>222</sup> Jerome, *Am*.

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 9 (132C–33B).

<sup>224</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 8 (132AB).

why the Savior bids the apostles, “Lift up your eyes and see the fields (*regiones*), that they are already white for harvesting” [John 4:35]. Also the bride in the Song of Songs had these eyes of the heart [cf. Eph 1:18]; the bridegroom says to her, “You have wounded my heart, my sister-bride, with one of your eyes” [Song 4:9]. Also, in the Gospel we read, “Your eye is the lamp of your body” [Matt 6:22]. In the Old Testament (*instrumento*)<sup>225</sup> also it is said that the people “saw” the voice of God [cf. Exod 20:18].<sup>226</sup> Therefore, let the delusions of Montanus be silent. He thinks that the prophets spoke of things to come in a state of ecstasy and insanity of heart, for they were not able to see what they did not know.

I am aware that some interpret Judah and Jerusalem of heavenly things and Isaiah as speaking under the persona of the Lord and Savior, because he predicts the captivity of that province into our land, and the subsequent return and ascent to the holy mountain in the last days. Such interpretations we judge to be opposed to the Christian faith.<sup>227</sup> We reject them all, and, following the truth of history, we interpret spiritually in such a way that whatever they dream up about the heavenly Jerusalem, we refer to the church of Christ and to those who either depart [from Jerusalem] on account of sins or return to their former position through penance. We also think that it is to this that the words of the same prophet apply: “Shine, shine, O Jerusalem: for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you” [Isa 60:1–2]; and,

In you the Lord will appear and his glory will be shown over you, and kings will walk in your light, and nations in your splendor, when all his sons will come from afar, and his daughters will be carried on [men’s] shoulders, and the camels of Midian and Gephah will cover her, bearing gold and frankincense; and the flocks of Cedar will be gathered in Jerusalem and the rams of Nabaioth will hasten and there will be pleasing sacrifices on the altar of the Lord. [Isa 60:4, 6, 7]

And what is recorded in the heading, that he prophesied under Uzziah, Joatham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, must not be understood jumbled together, as in the case of other prophets, so that we do not know what was said in particular under each king. But until the end of the book, he reports and writes down what the Lord revealed to him separately under Uzziah, Joatham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. We should know too that Hezekiah began to reign in Jerusalem in the twelfth year of Romulus, who founded the city in Italy that bears his name.<sup>228</sup> Hence it is shown clearly how much older our histories are than those of the other nations.

Now *Isaiah* means “saved of the Lord”; *Judea* means “confession”; *Jerusalem* means “vision”<sup>225</sup> *Instrumentum*, as opposed to *testamentum*, seems to be Jerome’s preferred word to describe the Old and New “estaments.” *Instrumentum* is found frequently in the Latin Origen and in Tertullian. The basic meaning of the term is instrument, implement, or tool; but in legal language it can mean document, deed, record, and instrument. The term so impressed Erasmus of Rotterdam that under Jerome’s influence, he entitled his first published edition of the Greek New Testament *Novum Instrumentum* (Basel, 1516).

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 9 (132C).

<sup>227</sup> This passage is directed against chiliasm or millennialism.

<sup>228</sup> I.e., Rome in 753 BC.

of peace”; *Uzziah* means “courage of the Lord”; *Joatham* means “perfection of the Lord”; *Ahaz* means “the one who holds fast,” or “robust”; *Hezekiah* means “command of the Lord.” Therefore, the one who is “saved” (Isaiah) under the “Lord’s command” (Hezekiah) and is a son of Amoz, that is, “strong” and “robust” (Ahaz), perceives the “vision” of “confession” (Judea) spiritually, while he mourns over his sins of old, and [he perceives the vision] of “peace” (Jerusalem), when after repentance he moves toward the light, and rests in eternal peace (Jerusalem). His time passes entirely under the “courage of the Lord” (Uzziah) and under his “perfection” (Joatham) and “strength” (Ahaz). And when he has done all things, he will speak those words recorded in the Gospel:<sup>229</sup> “We are useless slaves; for we have done what we were obligated to do” [[Luke 17:10](#)].

3. (1:2a) *Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken.*

Above in the heading it was shown who the prophet is, whose son he is, what he saw and when *against* Judah and Jerusalem, or *concerning* Judah and Jerusalem. Now he summons *heaven* and *earth* to hear. By *heaven* he is signifying the higher and angelic powers; by *earth* the race of mortals.<sup>330</sup> He does this by means of metonymy,<sup>331</sup> that is, from the things that contain [are understood] the things that are contained. Or, since through Moses the Lord had called heaven and earth as witnesses,<sup>332</sup> when he gave his law to the people of Israel and had said, “Attend, O heaven, and I will speak; let the earth hear the words of my mouth” [[Deut 32:1](#)]; therefore, after the people transgressed, he once again calls those very same things to testify, in order that all the elements would recognize that God has been justly incited to wrath in taking vengeance for his own commandments.

For *heaven*, the Hebrew word *samaim* expresses “heavens” in the plural number; especially since the verb *hear*, that is, *semu*, is plural, not singular. But some want heavens to be said in the plural, but understood in the singular in accordance with the way we call individual cities Thebes and Athens.<sup>333</sup> And it is a characteristic of Hebrew idiom that all words that end in the syllable *-im* are masculine plural, such as *cherubim* and *seraphim*, and those that end in *-oth* are feminine plural, such as *Sabaoth*.

And this should be noted, that to the *heavens* it is said: *Hear*; to the *earth*, *Give ear*. For the things that are on high have a greater understanding; those that are lower are entangled in earthly meanings. This is also why the Savior says in the Gospel, “He who has ears to *hear*, let him *hear*” [[Matt 11:15](#)]. Therefore, if someone is *heaven* and has citizenship in the heavens [cf. [Phil 3:20](#)], let him *hear* the things that are said mystically. If someone is earthly, let him follow the simple history.

The following too should be noticed,<sup>334</sup> that he did not say, *Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O*

<sup>229</sup> *Evangelicum*. Cf. Tertullian, *Adv Marc* 39; [Prudentius, Apoth 495](#).

<sup>330</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 5 (4, 32–3); *Bas Is* 12 (137C).

<sup>331</sup> Metonymy is a figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another of which it is an attribute, or with which it is associated (as in “ands belonging to the crown”).

<sup>332</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 11 (137A).

<sup>333</sup> These two city names are plural in form.

<sup>334</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 5 (4, 38–0).

*earth*, to what the Lord *will say to you*, but to what he *has said to me*. Consequently, what I have heard in the Spirit, I will relate to you, who do not deserve to hear the very one who speaks.

Certain ones<sup>335</sup> think that the *heaven* and *earth* are being summoned to *hear* as if they are animate beings (*animantia*), in accordance with what is said in another passage about the earth: “He who looks upon the earth and makes it tremble” [[Ps 104:32](#)]. Though this may be within God’s power, it does not belong to earthly understanding.

4. ([1:2b](#)) *I have begotten and raised up sons, but they have despised me*. In place of this Symmachus and Theodotion rendered it thus: “I have nourished and raised up sons.”

Beginning with this passage, the prophet describes what the Lord has said, because he turned the people of Israel into sons, whom he had created as slaves by common law, and he said, “Israel is my firstborn son” [[Exod 4:22](#)]. After all, even the Lord in the Gospel promises to the apostles that if they do his will, he will no longer call them slaves, but friends [cf. [John 15:14–15](#)]. But if Israel becomes haughty upon hearing that they are the firstborn, they should understand that the reason they are called *first* born is because the *second* [born] sons are signified by the Gentiles. For Israel is not called an “only begotten” [son], which would exclude other brothers, but a firstborn to show that others will follow.

And yet, according to the mysteries of the Scriptures, the firstborn do not receive the inheritance, but the second. Cain was a firstborn [cf. [Gen 4:1](#)], but Abel’s gifts pleased God [cf. [Gen 4:4](#)]. Ishmael was a firstborn [cf. [Gen 16:15](#)], but Isaac received the inheritance [cf. [Gen 17:21](#); [21:10–12](#)]. Esau was a firstborn, but Jacob the supplanter snatched the father’s blessing [cf. [Gen 27](#)].<sup>336</sup> Reuben was a firstborn [cf. [Gen 29:32](#)], and yet the blessing of Christ’s seed is transferred to Judah [cf. [Gen 49:10](#)]. And so, they were first according to the rank of their calling and were called the head; but we, the second, who were called the tail [cf. [Deut 28:44](#)], were turned into the head and are called sons of God [cf. [Deut 28:13](#)]. For “as many as received him, he gave them the power to become sons of God” [[John 1:12](#)]. We have not received “a spirit of slavery unto fear, but the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry, ‘Abba, Father’ ” [[Rom 8:15](#)]; for “perfect love casts out fear” [[1 John 4:18](#)].

But it is better to read with the Hebrew, “I have *nourished* sons” rather than “I have *begotten*.” Otherwise it may appear to be contrary to that statement that we read in the Epistle of John: “Everyone who is born of God does not sin” [[1 John 3:9](#)]. How, then, if they have been born of God, were they able to sin, when no one who has been born of God can sin?

5. ([1:3](#)) *The ox knows his owner and the donkey his master’s stall. Israel does not know, my people have not understood*. In place of this, the Septuagint alone has translated, “But Israel does not know *me* and the people have not understood *me*.” Thus according to the other [versions] and the Hebrew, *Israel does not know its owner* and the *people have not understood its master’s stall*.

And the meaning is clear: I adopted them as sons and made them a peculiar *people* [cf. [Deut 7:6](#); [Exod 19:5–6](#)] and my portion and the line of my inheritance [cf. [Deut 32:8–9](#)], and I called them firstborn [cf. [Exod 4:22](#)]. But they have not even done what wild animals do when they are

<sup>335</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 5 (4, 33–5).

<sup>336</sup> Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 69.6](#).

tamed by the favors of their masters and *understand* the one who shepherds and feeds them. He did not compare them to dogs, which are a most clever kind of animal and for a little food defend their masters' dwelling; but to an *ox* and *donkey* of duller understanding. The former drags a wagon and turns very hard clumps of earth with a plow; the latter carries loads and lightens the labor of men by walking. Hence they are called beasts of burden, because they help men.

This passage can be understood of God the Father, but it refers more to the Son, because the people of Israel neither recognized nor received him [cf. [John 1:11](#)] whose day Abraham saw and rejoiced over [cf. [John 8:56](#)]; and on whose advent the prayers of all the prophets depended [cf. [Matt 13:17](#)]. And in the Gospel he says to Jerusalem, "How often have I wanted to gather your sons, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling!" [[Matt 23:37](#)].

We ask: Where have we read of both *ox* (*bovem*) and *donkey* together?<sup>337</sup> It is written in Deuteronomy, "You will not plow with an ox (*vitulo*)<sup>338</sup> and a *donkey* together" [[Deut 22:10](#)]; and in this same Book of Isaiah, "Blessed is the one who sows upon all the water where the *ox* and *donkey* tread" [[Isa 32:20](#)]. Ebion<sup>339</sup> plows with an *ox* and *donkey* together, which in view of the lowliness of his understanding is worthy of the poverty of his name. He receives the gospel in such a way that he does not leave behind the ceremonies of Jewish superstitions, which came before as a shadow and image [cf. [Heb 8:5](#); [10:1](#); [Col 2:17](#)]. But blessed is the one who sows with the utterances of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament (*instrumenti*), and treads upon the water of the letter that kills [cf. [2 Cor 3:6](#)], that he may reap the fruit of the Spirit who gives life [cf. [Gal 6:8](#); [Ps 126:5–6](#)].

According to anagogy the *ox* refers to Israel, who bore the yoke of the law and is a clean animal. The *donkey*, weighed down with the burden of sins, is understood as the people of the Gentiles to whom the Lord said, "Come to me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you" [[Matt 11:28](#)].<sup>440</sup> Therefore, although the Pharisees and scribes were not believers, who had the key of the law and knowledge [cf. [Luke 11:52](#)] and were truly called Israel [cf. [Rom 9:4](#)], that is, "mind seeing God," a part of the Jewish people did believe. Thus in one day three thousand believed at once [cf. [Acts 2:41](#)] and on another day five thousand [cf. [Acts 4:4](#)]. While the wise men of the age also did not accept the cross of Christ [cf. [1 Cor 1:18–20](#)], an ignorant

<sup>337</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 14 (141BC).

<sup>338</sup> Calf, young bull.

<sup>339</sup> Jerome appears to be following the mistaken late tradition of a historical Ebion. According to [Irenaeus, Adv Haer 1.26.2](#), the *Ebionites* were a Judaizing heresy that used only Matthew's Gospel, repudiated Paul as an apostate from the Law, rejected the virgin birth of Christ, and insisted that the Law of Moses (including circumcision) had to be kept in order to achieve salvation. See also [Eusebius, HE 3.27](#). They probably were named from the Hebrew word for "poor" (*ebion*), because of their physical poverty or their attachment to the Beatitude, "blessed are the poor" (though Eusebius says that their name arose "because of the poor and mean opinions they held about Christ" cf. [HE 3.27.6](#)). Later heresiologists ([Tertullian, De praescriptione 33](#); Epiphanius, *Haer.* 30.17; Rufinus' [Origen, ComRom 3.11.2](#); *Princ* 4.3.8) adopted the apparently mistaken view that the sect was founded by a heretic named Ebion.

<sup>440</sup> Cf. [Origen, Hom 13.7 on Luke](#).

throng of nations received it. This is why the Apostle said, “Consider your calling, brethren; that not many [were] wise according to the flesh, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to confound the wise; and God chose what is weak in the world to confound the strong” [[1 Cor 1:26–27](#)]. But this is a forced interpretation; the interpretation given higher up is true.

6. ([1:4](#)) *Woe to the sinful nation, a people weighed down with iniquity, bad seed, sons of wickedness; they have forsaken the Lord, they have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel, they have been estranged backward.* The Septuagint translators do not have what I have recorded at the end: *They have been estranged backward*; and in place of, *They have blasphemed*, it is written in the Septuagint, “They have provoked to anger”; and for *bad seed* it has “wicked seed.” The others followed the Hebrew word *merhim* and translated “of the wicked,” so that it would not so much be the fault of the seed as the fault of the evil of those who of their own will have forsaken the Lord. Otherwise it might be thought that the nature of good and evil is diverse.

At the beginning of the book there is a heading that mentions the person, occasion, and time [cf. [Isa 1:1](#)]. In the second place he makes the hearers attentive [cf. [Isa 1:2–3](#)]; third, he explains what the Lord said; fourth, it is as if he is rebuking the sinful nation for going astray and the people who are “full of,” or weighed down with, iniquity. It is not that there is one “nation” and another “people,” as some think,<sup>441</sup> but Israel itself is called both nation and people, and *sons of wickedness*, or “iniquitous,” as those who were first called sons of the Lord through kindness, but afterward, through their own fault, were called sons of iniquity. Or, as the rest [of the translators] said with one voice, “corrupt sons,” that is διαφθειροντες, who by their own fault ruined the good of nature.

And what is added, *They have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel*, is said properly concerning the Jews who shout out, “We have no king but Caesar” [[John 19:15](#)]; and, “Is this not the son of the carpenter?” [[Matt 13:55](#)] and, “He has a demon and is a Samaritan” [[John 8:48](#)]. Since then they forsook Christ and blasphemed the Holy One of Israel, therefore they have been *estranged backward*, so that those who were called the portion [cf. [Deut 32:9](#)] and sons of God [cf. [Exod 4:22](#)] were later told, “*Estranged sons have deceived me*” [[Ps 18:45](#)]. The Savior gave the command that when we have taken hold of the plow, we should not look *behind* our backs, lest we become like the wife of Lot [cf. [Gen 19:26](#); [Luke 9:62](#); [17:32](#)]. This is why the Apostle stretches himself forth to what is *ahead*, forgetting the things *behind* [cf. [Phil 3:13](#)].

Now what the Septuagint has said, “A people full of sins,” shows that there was no form of sins that did not exist in the people of Israel. But if we read it according to the Hebrew, *A people weighed down by iniquity*, we should recall the following testimony, that *iniquity* sits upon a talent of lead [cf. [Zech 5:7–8](#)], and under the persona of a sinner it is said in the psalm, “My *iniquities* have risen above my head. Like a heavy burden they have *weighed down* upon me” [[Ps 38:4](#)]. We pass over what is clear in order to spend time in the more obscure things and in those things that require an explanation.

7. ([1:5a](#)) *For what shall I strike you anymore, you who increase transgression?*

<sup>441</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 16 (141CD).



From this testimony we learn that the reason the Lord *strikes* those who transgress<sup>442</sup> is in order to chastise those who have been struck, and it is not so much a punishment as a correction. And the meaning is, I am not finding the medicine that I can apply to your blows; all your members are full of wounds; I detect no part of the body that has not been struck before. Or possibly, as follows: I find no blows by which I will break your hardness. For however great are your pains, so much the more does your impiety and injustice grow; or, as Theodotion has rendered it, “turning away,” so that you withdraw and turn away from the Lord. This is the sort of thing Jeremiah speaks of: “Without reason have I *struck* your sons; you did not receive discipline” [[Jer 2:30](#)]. This is why he speaks in anger through Hosea: “And I will not visit upon your daughters when they commit fornication; nor upon your young women when they commit adultery” [[Hos 4:14](#)]. And through Ezekiel: “My jealousy will withdraw from you; and I will be angry with you no more” [[Ezek 16:42](#)]. We also read of this in the Psalms: “And there is no firmness in their affliction; and they are not in the troubles of men, nor will they be scourged with men” [[Ps 73:5](#)].

8. ([1:5b](#)) *The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is sad.* Sometimes joy of spirit mitigates physical suffering; but if sickness of spirit is added to sickness of body, the infirmity is doubled. And among the senses and among all the members of the body, the *head* takes precedence, in which are sight, smell, hearing, and taste.<sup>443</sup> When the *head* is in pain, then all the members are sick. And metaphorically he shows that from the leaders down to the last common person,<sup>444</sup> from the teachers down to the ignorant crowd, there is soundness in no one, but all consent to impiety with equal passion.

9. ([1:6a–b](#)) *From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein: wound and bruise and swelling sore.*

He preserves the metaphor he had begun: from the *feet to the top of the head*, that is, from top to bottom, inside and out, they are pierced throughout their whole body. He says, *wound and bruise and swelling sore*. For either the bodies are black and blue from welts, or they are swollen from blows, or they have gaping *wounds*.

We ask: To what period of time should these things be applied?<sup>445</sup> After the Babylonian captivity under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, Israel returned to Judea and received back its ancient condition. And under different rulers and kings the temple was constructed quite splendidly to such an extent that Israel earned the friendship even of foreign nations, of the Spartans [cf. [1 Macc 12–15](#); [2 Macc 5:9](#)], Athenians [cf. [2 Macc 9:15](#)], and Romans [cf. [1 Macc 8:1](#); [14:24](#)]. Therefore, what he says, *There is no soundness therein*, refers to the last captivity when there is no remedy up to the present time, after Titus,<sup>446</sup> Vespasian,<sup>447</sup> and the final

<sup>442</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 18 (145BC)

<sup>443</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 11 (6, 19).

<sup>444</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (6, 20).

<sup>445</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (6, 11–8).

<sup>446</sup> Titus (Roman emperor, 79–1) was the eldest son of Emperor Vespasian, who was active in the military before his accession. His service culminated in the capture of Jerusalem in 70. This is commemorated in the Arch of Titus in the forum at Rome.



overthrow of Jerusalem under Aelius Hadrian.<sup>448</sup> And what is written is fulfilled: “All have turned aside; together they have become worthless. There is no one who does good, not even one” [[Ps 53:3](#); [Rom 3:12](#)]. And concerning what is added, *There is no soundness therein*, understand either “in the people,” or “in the body,” or “in the head.”

10. ([1:6c](#)) *They are not bound up, nor treated with medicine, nor soothed with oil*. The Septuagint translated this as, “It is not possible to apply a plaster, nor oil nor bandages.”

Until the present day the “wound and bruise and swelling sore” of the people of Israel is *not bound up* with small bandages, *nor treated with medicine*. Aquila has translated this  $\mu\omicron\tau\omega\sigma\iota\nu$ , that is, “linen strips,” which are applied to wounds in order to dry the blood and extract the pus. *Nor soothed with oil*, to soften their hardness with the tears of repentance. For “bandages,” by which wounds were never bound in Israel, the Septuagint translated “plaster.”

Therefore Israel lies there pierced through and cut to pieces,<sup>449</sup> because they killed the physician who had come to treat the house of Israel. This is also why in Jeremiah, angels say tropologically under the persona of Babylon, “We have *treated* Babylon and she was not healed” [[Jer 51:9](#)], namely, the city of confusion and vices. And in the Gospel, we read of one going down from Jerusalem to Jericho who was wounded by thieves and *treated* by a Samaritan, and after the severity that was poured into his wounds in the wine, there came the soothing *oil* [cf. [Luke 10:30–34](#)]. From that passage, then, where he had said above, “For what shall I strike you”; and “the whole head is sick” [[Isa 1:5](#)] up to what is added, “They are not treated with medicine, nor soothed with oil”; the metaphorical comparison is preserved whereby the description of incurable wounds expresses the eternal captivity of the Jews.

11. ([1:7](#)) *Your land is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire, strangers devour your country before your face, and it will be desolate as when wasted by enemies*.

These things were partially fulfilled under the Babylonians,<sup>550</sup> when the temple was burned, Jerusalem was overthrown, the Samaritans possessed the area of the ten tribes, and the promised land was so reduced to desolation that it was laid waste by lions [cf. [2 Kgs 17:26](#)]. But it describes more fully and perfectly what would happen during the Roman captivity, when the Roman army devastated all of Judea, the *cities were burned* and *strangers* now *devour* their region, and the devastation of the Jews will continue until the end of the world.<sup>551</sup>

But we can also understand these things tropologically about sinners who have fallen away from their former sanctity, after they are handed over to the opposing powers, because all their

<sup>447</sup> Vespasian (Roman emperor, 69–9) was the first of the Flavian emperors. He had been sent by Nero to put down the Jewish revolt, but left his son Titus to carry on in Judea. After Nero’s murder, he was hailed as emperor by the armies he commanded.

<sup>448</sup> Publius Aelius Hadrianus (Roman emperor 117–8) came from a distinguished Roman family in Spain. Under his rule, the Bar Kochba revolt (132–36) was suppressed, resulting in the destruction of the city of Jerusalem.

<sup>449</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 11 (6, 21–5).

<sup>550</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 19 (149A–).

<sup>551</sup> It is worth noting that Jerome’s anti-Israel prophecy is contradicted not only by St. Paul (cf. [Rom 11:26](#)) but by history itself, now that Israel, since 1948, has been officially reinstated in the land of Palestine.

goods go to the desert, and the Lord does not remember their former justice [cf. [Ezek 3:20](#)], and everything is *burned* by the *fire* of the devil, and they become food for wild beasts. It is also written of this in another passage, “Do not hand over to wild beasts the soul that gives praise to you” [[Ps 74:19](#)].

12. (1:8) *The daughter of Zion will be left as a shade-giving shelter in a vineyard, and as a hut in a cucumber patch.*

That all Israel is called a *vineyard*,<sup>552</sup> the prophet attests in what follows when he says, “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel; and the man of Judah, his new and beloved plant” [[Isa 5:7](#)]. And in the psalm, “You have transferred the *vineyard* from Egypt; you have expelled the nations and planted it” [[Ps 80:8](#)]. As long as this *vineyard* produced a very abundant harvest, it had God as its guardian, of whom it is written, “He who guards Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” [[Ps 121:4](#)]. But after all those passing along the way gathered its grapes, and a wild boar from the forest devastated it [cf. [Ps 80:12–13](#)], the Lord abandoned his own temple and, rising up in anger, says, “Arise, let us go from here” [[John 14:31](#)]; and, “Your house will be left to you desolate” [[Matt 23:38](#)]; and through Jeremiah, “I have left my house; I have sent away my inheritance. My inheritance has become to me like a lion in the forest. It has uttered its voice concerning me, therefore I hated it” [[Jer 12:7–8](#)]. Now the comparison of the devastation of the temple and of Jerusalem has been taken from farmers who, as long as the *vineyard* is full of grapes, station guards at the *shade-giving shelters*. In the *cucumber patch* too, which the Septuagint calls a “guard of fruit trees,” small huts are made on account of the sun’s heat in order to deflect the rays. And from there they drive away from the growing crop the men or little beasts that are accustomed to lie in wait for it. But when crops of that sort have been removed, since the guardian has departed, because he has nothing more to guard, the dry *shade-giving shelters* of shrubs and the huts remain. Therefore, the omnipotent God has also abandoned the temple and caused the city to be deserted. There is no need to prove this with words, especially for us who see *Zion* deserted and Jerusalem overthrown, and the temple torn down to the ground.

But the fact that he calls *Zion* a *daughter* displays the tender feeling of a most compassionate parent. It is not surprising if *Zion* is called a *daughter*, since even Babylon is very frequently called *daughter* [cf. [Isa 47:1, 5](#)]. For we are all sons of God by nature [cf. [Eph 2:3](#)], though we become foreigners by our vice.

Anagogically, our soul can be called God’s vineyard and a paradise of fruits. If the mind, that is, the  $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ , is in charge, it has God as the guardian of the mind; but if vices prey upon us like certain wild beasts, we will be forsaken by God our guardian and our whole being will be reduced to desolation.

13 (1:9) *Unless the Lord of hosts had left us seed, we would have become as Sodom, and we would have been like Gomorrah.*

The Apostle Paul discusses this passage quite fully in Romans, writing, “I say then: Has God rejected his own people? By no means; for even I am an Israelite, from the seed of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people whom he foreknew” [[Rom 11:1–2](#)]. And after a little bit, “So then, even at this time a remnant has been saved according to the

<sup>552</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 12 (6, 35–7), 13 (7, 5–); *Bas Is* 20–1 (152C–53C).

election of grace” [Rom 11:5]. From this it is shown that the things higher up that the prophetic word threatened against Jerusalem and Judah are not to be referred to the time of the captivity of Babylon, but to the final [captivity] of the Romans, when a remnant of the Jewish people were saved in the apostles, and in one day three thousand [cf. Acts 2:41] and five thousand [cf. Acts 4:4] believed, and the gospel was sown throughout the entire world.

For *the Lord of hosts*, which is our Latin translation, following Aquila, the Hebrew reads, “Lord Sabaoth,” which the Septuagint translators render in two ways, depending on the nature of the passages: either “the Lord of powers,”<sup>553</sup> or “the Lord omnipotent.” And one should ask whether it is being said about the Father or the Son. There is no doubt that in the twenty-third Psalm it reads, “Lift up your gates, O rulers, and you are lifted up, O eternal gates, and the king of glory will enter! Who is this king of glory? The Lord Sabaoth,” that is, the Lord of powers, “he is the king of glory” [Ps 24:7–8, 10]. This should be referred to Christ, who ascended to heaven as a victor after the triumph of the passion. And in another place it says about the Lord that he is the king of glory: “For if they had known, they never would have crucified the Lord of glory” [1 Cor 2:8]. Therefore, not only according to the Apocalypse of John [cf. Rev 1:8; 4:8] and the Apostle Paul, but also in the Old Testament Christ is named as Lord Sabaoth, that is, omnipotent. For if all things of the Father are the Son’s, and he himself says in the Gospel, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” [Matt 28:18] and “All that is yours is mine, and I am glorified in them” [John 17:10]; why should the title of omnipotence not also belong to Christ, so that just as he is God of God and Lord of Lords [cf. Rev 17:14; 19:16], he would also be the omnipotent Son of the omnipotent One?

14. (1:10) *Hear the word of the Lord, rulers of Sodom; give ear to the law of our God, people of Gomorrah.*

Since a remnant of the people of Israel has been saved through the apostles [cf. Rom 11:5], the prophetic discourse turns to the scribes and Pharisees and to the people who cry out in response, “Crucify him, crucify him” [John 19:6].<sup>554</sup> And it calls them *rulers of Sodom* and *people of Gomorrah* in accordance with what we read in what follows: “They have proclaimed and shown their iniquity like Sodom. Woe to their souls, for they have devised an evil counsel against themselves, saying: ‘Let us tie up the just man, since he is useless to us’ ” [Isa 3:9–10].<sup>555</sup> For this reason, then, they are called *rulers of Sodom* and *people of Gomorrah*, because they have devised an evil counsel and tied up the just man and said, “We have no king but Caesar” [John 19:15]. And again, “We know that God spoke to Moses; but this man, we do not know who he is” [John 9:29]. And likewise they boast in the Gospel, “We are Abraham’s seed; and we have never been enslaved to anyone” [John 8:33].<sup>556</sup> They hear from the Lord and Savior, “If you were sons of Abraham, surely you would do the works of Abraham” [John 8:39]; and again, “You were born of your father the devil, and you want to do the works of your father” [John 8:44]. Ezekiel too says something like this to Jerusalem: “Your father was an Amorite and your mother was a Hittite” [Ezek 16:3, 45].

<sup>553</sup> Or “irtues.”

<sup>554</sup> *Bas Is* 23 (161C).

<sup>555</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 15 (8, 2–).

<sup>556</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (8, 6–).

The Hebrews say<sup>557</sup> that Isaiah was killed for two reasons, because he called them *rulers of Sodom* and *people of Gomorrah*, and because he dared to say, “I saw the Lord Sabaoth sitting on a throne, high and lifted up” [[Isa 6:1](#)], though the Lord had said to Moses, “You cannot see my face” [[Exod 33:20](#)]. They fail to consider that the seraphim covered the face and feet of God [cf. [Isa 6:2](#)], or his own [feet], since the Hebrew is ambiguous, and Isaiah writes that he saw only the middle part of him. Therefore, a human being is not able to see God’s face. Angels, however, even those of the least ones in the church, always see the face of God [cf. [Matt 18:10](#)]. And, “Now we see in a mirror enigmatically, but then face to face” [[1 Cor 13:12](#)]. This refers to the time when we will have advanced from [being] human to angels and are able to say with the Apostle, “But we all with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as if by the Spirit of the Lord” [[2 Cor 3:18](#)]. I grant that no creature may see God’s face according to the unique quality of its own nature, and at that time it will be perceived with the mind, when the invisible is believed.<sup>558</sup>

15. ([1:11](#)) *To what purpose [do you offer] me the multitude of your victims? says the Lord. I am full. I have not willed burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fatlings and blood of calves and lambs and goats.* In place of *I have not willed*, the Septuagint translated, “I do not will”: the present tense instead of the past. Moreover, according to the Hebrew, God shows that he never *willed* the sacrifices of the Jews, for we read in the forty-ninth Psalm as well,

I will not take calves out of your house, nor goats out of your flocks, for all the beasts of the forests are mine: the cattle on the mountains, and the oxen. I know all the fowls of the sky and with me is the beauty of the field. If I should be hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is mine, and its fullness. Shall I eat the flesh of bulls, or shall I drink the blood of goats? [[Ps 50:9–13](#)]

And when he had repudiated the ceremonies of the old law, he passes over to the purity of the gospel, and he shows what he desires in place of those things: “Offer to God a sacrifice of praise and pay your vows to the Most High. And call upon me on the day of affliction; and I will rescue you and you will honor me” [[Ps 50:14–15](#)]. Therefore, the entire content of this chapter, up to that place where he says, “Judge for the fatherless, defend the widow, and come and let us dispute, says the Lord” [[Isa 1:17–18](#)] repudiates the sacrifices of victims [cf. [1 Sam 15:22](#)] and

<sup>557</sup> The allusion is to *Martyrium Esaiæ* (*Ascensio Esaiæ*, 5), which Jerome has probably derived from Origen (*CommMt* 13:57 [GCS 40, 24]; *EpAfr* 9 [PL 11:65]). See [The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah](#), in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983–5), 2:143–6 (149). Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 18.13](#), and Jerome’s translation of Origen, *Hom 1.5 in Esaiam* (English translation appended to this volume).

<sup>558</sup> Apparently, Augustine interpreted this passage in Jerome to mean that Jerome opposes the view that the vision of God is a matter of the bodily eyes. Cf. [Augustine, Ep. 148.2.7–](#) (PL 33:625). J. P. O’onnell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, *Dissertationes ad Lauream* 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 105–, counters that Jerome is not speaking of the heavenly vision in this context. His words, “hen the invisible is believed,” do not apply to the vision of God in heaven, since there is no “elieving” when we are in heaven.

teaches that the obedience of the gospel [cf. [Rom 1:5](#)] is beyond sacrifice [cf. [Rom 12:1](#)].

And what he added, *I am full*, should be understood in this sense: I am in need of nothing; “The earth is the Lord’s and its fullness” [[Ps 24:1](#)]. This is also why “we have all received from his fullness” [[John 1:16](#)].<sup>559</sup> This can also be understood about those who do not practice God’s commands and believe that they can buy God off by means of gifts and services [cf. [Exod 28:38](#)], or who offer on the altar and to the poor things that have been acquired through theft and avarice [cf. [Mal 1:13](#)].

16. (1:12) *For who sought these things from your hands?* Let the Ebionites listen, who think that after the passion of Christ the abolished law needs to be kept. Let the colleagues of the Ebionites listen, who decree that these things must be retained by the Jews only and [by those] from the stock of the Israelite race.<sup>660</sup> Sacrifices, therefore, and the immolation of victims have not been requested by God as a matter of principle, but in order that they not be made to idols, and in order for us to make a transition from fleshly victims to spiritual sacrifices [cf. [Rom 12:1–2](#); [1 Pet 2:5](#)], as it were through a type and image. Now by saying that he did not ask for sacrifices, he shows that “the law is spiritual” [[Rom 7:14](#)], and everything that the Jews do carnally is fulfilled by us spiritually.

17. (1:12–13a) *You shall not appoint to trample my court.*

Observe that after the Babylonian devastation, the temple would be rebuilt by Zerubbabel [cf. [Ezra 5:2](#)], and sacrifices would be offered in the temple over a long series of years. Therefore he is pointing to the final destruction of the temple under Vespasian and Titus, which will continue until the consummation of the world.<sup>661</sup>

18. (1:13c) *I will not endure your new moons and the Sabbaths and other festivals; your assemblies are wicked.*

Every meeting is an abomination to God that does not offer spiritual sacrifices [cf. [1 Pet 2:5](#)] and that does not listen to what is sung in the fiftieth Psalm: “A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humbled heart, God does not despise” [[Ps 51:17](#)]. And this is why he goes on to say, “*your calends*”<sup>662</sup> and “*your solemnities*” [cf. [Isa 1:13b](#)], so that he would not name them *his own* festivals, but *theirs* who use them badly. And because the Septuagint translators have rendered, “fasting and rest,” we can say that that fasting is received by God that does not rest from good works. “My soul hates” [cf. [Isa 1:14a](#)]. This is said *ανθρωποπαθως* (anthropopathically).<sup>663</sup> It is not that God has a soul, but he is speaking with our passions.

19. (1:14b) *You have become loathsome (in satietatem) to me; by no means will I forgive your sins.* In place of what Aquila has translated as: “I have labored to endure,” Symmachus has *εκοπωθην ιλασκομενος*, which is, “I have failed to show mercy,” so as to show that he shows mercy no longer, since it is one thing to kill the servants sent to them, something else to kill the Son [cf. [Matt 21:34–39](#)]. We also read this meaning in the prophet Hosea: “Destruction is

<sup>559</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 25 (168AB, 165C).

<sup>660</sup> Cf. [Eusebius, HE 3.27.2](#).

<sup>661</sup> Jerome also denies that the Temple of Jerusalem will ever be rebuilt at [9.9 \(Isa 29:1\)](#) and *In Ezek* 7.8.

<sup>662</sup> Calends are the first day of the month in the Roman calendar.

<sup>663</sup> The term refers to the ascription of human feelings to something not human.

your own, O Israel; your help is only in me” [[Hos 13:9](#)]. This is understood as follows: you may perish, O Israel, because it is not by your merit, but only by my help that you are saved.

20. ([1:15c](#)) *Your hands are full of blood.*

He shows the reason why God turns away his eyes from them and does not listen to their lengthy prayers [cf. [Isa 1:15a–b](#)]: because they shed the *blood* of the just one, and wicked tenants have killed the heir sent to them [cf. [Matt 21:38](#)]. This is why the Savior says to them, “And you, *fill up* the measure of your fathers” [[Matt 23:32](#)]. For they killed the prophets who had been sent to them; you slaughter the son of the householder. One should use this testimony also against those who, though they have hands *full of blood* in their daily works, come together day and night to pray.

21. ([1:16a](#)) *Wash yourselves; be clean.*

Instead of the sacrifices named above [cf. [Isa 1:11](#), [13](#), [14](#)] and burnt offerings and the fat of fatlings and the blood of bulls and goats [cf. [Heb 10:4](#)]; instead of incense and new moons, the Sabbath, the feast day and fasts, calends and other solemnities, the religion of the gospel pleases me: that you should be baptized in my blood through the bath of regeneration [cf. [Titus 3:5](#)], which alone is able to forgive sins. For unless someone is reborn from water and the spirit, he will not enter into the kingdom of heaven [cf. [John 3:5](#)].<sup>664</sup> The Lord himself too, when ascending to the Father, says, “Go and teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” [[Matt 28:19](#)].

22. ([1:16a](#)) *Take away the evil of your plans from my eyes.*

This is what John the Baptist was also saying: “Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit therefore worthy of repentance” [[Matt 3:7–8](#); [Luke 3:7–8](#)]. Consequently, let the one who has attained to the baptism of Christ remove the evil from his own heart and take a rest from perverse behavior [cf. [Isa 1:16b](#)], and afterward let him learn to do good [cf. [Isa 1:17](#)] in accordance with what is commanded elsewhere: “Turn aside from evil and do good” [[Ps 37:27](#); [1 Pet 3:11](#)].

23. ([1:17](#)) *Learn to do good.*

Virtue, therefore, must be *learned*; the *good* of nature alone does not suffice for justice, unless someone is educated in the corresponding disciplines. Jesus son of Sirach also says something like this: “You have desired wisdom; keep the commandments and the Lord will give it to you” [[Sir 1:26](#)]. And in what follows Isaiah records the same thing: “No one who fails to *learn* justice on the earth will do the truth” [[Isa 26:10](#)]. Justice, therefore, must be *learned*, and the thresholds of teachers of wisdom must be worn down [cf. [Sir 6:36](#)].

24. ([1:17–18a](#)) *Seek judgment. Come to the aid of the oppressed. Judge for the fatherless. Defend the widow.* (18) *And come and accuse me, says the Lord.*

The commands of the gospel succeed the sacrifices of the Jews, and therefore provision is made for orphans and *widows*. Thus when they are free from care for spouses and their own children, martyrs proceed to war. But when you have done this, he says, *accuse me*, if I do not pay back the rewards that I have promised. But when he says, *Seek judgment*, he shows that it is not for everyone to judge correctly, but for those who are prudent. After all, even Solomon in a vision during a dream asked this of the Lord, that he might receive wisdom and *judge* the

<sup>664</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 17 (9, 8–).



people justly [[1 Kgs 3:5–9](#)].

25. ([1:18b–c](#)) *If your sins be as scarlet, they will be made as white as snow. And if they be red as crimson, they will be like white wool.*

The progression is excellent; for it does not suffice to have said, “Wash yourselves” [[Isa 1:16a](#)], without adding, “Be clean” [cf. [Isa 1:16a](#)], so that after the bath in water, they have purity of heart. For “blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God” [[Matt 5:8](#)]. And when they have purity of heart, they ought to remove evil from their minds [cf. [Isa 1:16a](#)], not in the sight of men, but in the sight of God, which nothing can cover. And what he adds, *Cease acting perversely* [[Isa 1:16b](#)], harmonizes with the words of the Gospel: “Behold you have been healed; sin no more, lest something worse happen to you” [[John 5:14](#)]. Therefore, by withdrawing from vices, let him learn good, and let him seek judgment, let him come to the aid of the oppressed, let him sustain the orphan and the widow [cf. [Isa 1:17](#)]. And if he does this, then *sins* that at first had been blood-red like *scarlet* will be forgiven, and the works of gore and blood will be changed in the garment of the Lord, which has been made from the *wool* of a lamb, which in the Apocalypse those follow who are resplendent with the brightness of virginity [[Rev 14:4](#)].

26. ([1:19–20a–b](#)) *If you be willing and will listen, you will eat the good things of the land. (20) But if you will not be willing and listen, or as the Hebrew has, And will provoke me to wrath, the sword will devour you.*

He preserves free choice, so that in both directions there is either punishment or reward, not by the predetermined judgment of God, but by the merits of individuals. Now I think that those things are called the *good things of the land* concerning which we read in the Psalter, “I believe I will see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living” [[Ps 27:13](#)]; and, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land” [[Matt 5:4](#)].<sup>665</sup> Or, at any rate, because it was spoken to the Jews, who were not yet capable of receiving spiritual things [cf. [1 Cor 2:14](#)],<sup>666</sup> he promises them the *good things* of the present world, so that at least when summoned by things of the present, they may do what they have been commanded. And since they were unwilling to listen,<sup>667</sup> but on the contrary they provoked the Holy One of Israel to wrath, therefore a *sword devoured* them, that is, the Roman army destroyed them. And all these things will happen, he says, *because the mouth of the Lord has spoken* [[Isa 1:20c](#)]. Since the sins of men continue, his verdict cannot be altered.

27. ([1:21](#)) *How has the faithful city that was full of judgment become a harlot? Justice rested in it, but now murderers.* The Hebrew word *ialin*, which the Septuagint translated “slept,” means both “rested” and “will rest”; that is, it signifies both the past and the future tense. This is why both Aquila and Theodotion speak as if concerning the future.

But it is astonishing to say by means of the prophetic spirit that the city that was once *faithful*, or a place of refuge for the faithful, has suddenly become a harlot. This can indeed be understood even of the times of Isaiah; but it refers more fully to the suffering of Christ, when “all have turned aside, together they have become useless” [cf. [Ps 14:3](#); [Rom 3:12](#)]. And

<sup>665</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 18 (10, 8–); *Bas Is* 45 (205A).

<sup>666</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 18 (9, 35–0, 1).

<sup>667</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 18 (10, 15–8).



although the Hebrew does not have “Zion,” nevertheless the Septuagint added it in order to make the meaning clearer.

Now “Zion” is the mountain on which the city of Jerusalem was founded; after it was captured by David, it was named “city of David” [cf. [2 Sam 5:7, 9](#)].<sup>668</sup> I do not doubt that holy men were in it when it had the tabernacle of God and after the temple was built, when Nathan and Gad prophesied; and over the choirs that are described more fully in the Book of Days [cf. [1 Chr 25:1; 26:1](#)], Asaph and Idithun and Eman and the sons of Korah were appointed, in order that religion might gradually make a transition from the sacrifices of victims to the praises of the Lord.

Therefore, the city of the *faithful*, which was formerly *full of judgment*, and *justice rested in it*, now is full of *murderers* [cf. [Acts 7:52](#)], who killed the prophets and the Lord and Savior himself [cf. [1 Thess 2:15](#)]. Now Ezekiel describes fornicating Jerusalem in detail under the name of Oholibah, how she spread her legs to every passerby [cf. [Ezek 16:25; 23:11–12](#)]. Oholibah is translated, “My tabernacle [is] in it,” which is now being expressed in different words: *justice rested in it*. In Hebrew *justice* is written as *sedec*, which expresses “just one” more than “justice.” Thus we may understand first the Lord who dwelled in it, of whom it is said elsewhere, “But what has the *just one* done? The Lord is in his holy temple. The Lord, his throne, is in heaven” [[Ps 11:3–4](#)]. Anagogically we can refer all of this to the soul of any holy man in which God’s *justice* first dwelled, if he later commits sin, and instead of having God as the guest in his soul, homicidal demons have taken up residence in it.

28. ([1:22a](#)) *Your silver has been turned to dross.*

He says to the city of Zion, in which justice first rested [cf. [Isa 1:21](#)], that her *silver*, namely, the teaching of the Scriptures, of which we read in the Psalms, “The oracles of the Lord, pure oracles, silver examined by fire, tested on earth, purified seven times” [[Ps 12:6](#)], *has been turned to dross*.<sup>669</sup> In Hebrew this is called *sigim*, that is, the rust of metals, or the offscouring and filth that is boiled off by fire. Thus, because he had named *silver*, he preserves the metaphor. But this can also be said: that the just and holy men who first lived in the city later turned to the filth of sins.

29. ([1:22b](#)) *Your merchants mix wine with water.* Symmachus translated this as, “Your wine is mixed with water.”

And the meaning is that the law of God, pure and sincere, and, so to speak, supported by undiluted truth, has been violated by the traditions of the Pharisees [cf. [Matt 15:3–9](#)]. The Lord teaches this quite fully in the gospel, that they had neglected the law of God and are following the commands of men. And every teacher who turns the strictness of the Scriptures into agreeableness (*gratiam*),<sup>770</sup> the strictness through which he is able to chastise his audience, and who speaks in such a way that he does not correct the hearers but delights them, he violates and corrupts the *wine* of the holy Scriptures by his own meaning. The heretics too corrupt the truth of the gospel by a perverse interpretation, and they are wicked *merchants*, making *water* from *wine*; whereas our Lord in contrary fashion turned *water* into *wine*, and a *wine* of such

<sup>668</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 19 (10, 26–0).

<sup>669</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 47 (208C).

<sup>770</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 19 (11, 10–3); *Bas Is* 48 (209B).

quality that the headwaiter is amazed at it [cf. [John 2:1–11](#)]. In this fashion also does the queen of Sheba marvel at Solomon’s banquet, praising with her own voice his cupbearers and ministers of *wine* [cf. [1 Kgs 10:4–8](#); [2 Chr 9:1–8](#)].<sup>771</sup> Moreover, Ecclesiastes describes the services of *wine* and of his own banquet with mystical words [cf. [Eccl 2:8](#)]. This is why for *wine* Aquila translated συμποσιον, that is, “banquet.” Among the Greeks this term is named ΑΠΟ ΤΟΥ ΠΟΤΟΥ [from drinking]; among us, more correctly, from socializing.

30. ([1:23a](#)) *Your rulers are disobedient, companions of thieves.* For *disobedient*, Aquila translated “withdrawing”; Symmachus, “turning aside.”

Now he calls the scribes and Pharisees *rulers* who, by withdrawing from the Lord, or rather, by leaving the path of truth, have walked by a twisted road and have become *companions* of the betrayer and *thief*, Judas [cf. [John 12:6](#)].<sup>772</sup> Indeed we too ought to beware of this, lest by receiving bribes (*munera*) from men of the world, who collect wealth by means of robbery and by the tears of wretched people, we should be called not so much *thieves* as *companions of thieves*; and it would be said to us, “You saw the thief and you ran with him, and you put your portion with adulterers” [[Ps 50:18](#)].

31. ([1:23b](#)) *They all love bribes (munera), they pursue rewards.*

In the καταλογω (catalogue) of vices are listed even those who *love bribes*. He did not say, “Who receive,” for this often happens by necessity,<sup>773</sup> but who do not regard people as friends unless they have gotten hold of gifts from them. They do not consider the mouth of friends, but the hands; and they judge them as holy whose wallet they empty out. Ecclesiastes speaks of them, “He who loves money will not be filled by money” [[Eccl 5:10](#)].<sup>774</sup>

*They pursue rewards* of that sort, in order to praise those from whom they receive something; or at least so as not to give anything to anyone except to the one from whom they think they will receive back.

Symmachus translated *rewards* as “exchanges” or “acts of vengeance.” Accordingly, they too are at fault who requite evil for evil [cf. [Rom 12:17](#)], tooth for tooth, eye for eye [cf. [Exod 21:24](#)]; and they do not imitate the words of David: “If I have requited with evil those who reward me” [[Ps 7:4](#)],<sup>775</sup> and the words of Jeremiah who says of the just man: “He will offer his cheek to the one who strikes him; he will be filled with reproaches” [[Lam 3:30](#)].<sup>776</sup> Thus he would fulfill the words of the gospel regarding the man to whom it is said, “Whoever strikes you on the cheek, offer him the other as well” [[Matt 5:39](#); [Luke 6:29](#)].<sup>777</sup>

<sup>771</sup> H. de Lubac, [Medieval Exegesis](#), trans. M. Sebanc and E. M. Macierowski, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998–009), 3:75 comments on this passage: “ere Saint Jerome applies to the situation created by the preaching of the Gospel what Saint Irenaeus [[Adv Haer 1.1.22](#)] had said of the ancient situation, when the Jews mixed the water of their human traditions with the wine of the divine law.”

<sup>772</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 20 (11, 15).

<sup>773</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 51 (212BC).

<sup>774</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (213A).

<sup>775</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 52 (213B).

<sup>776</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>777</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

32. (1:24a) *Therefore says the Lord of hosts, the mighty one of Israel.* In place of *mighty one of Israel*, which all have translated in the same way, the Septuagint alone, intending something or other, has recorded, “Woe to the mighty ones of Israel.”

We can explain this as follows and say that each of the rulers are chastised, as are the strong, of whom it is written, “The powerful will suffer powerful torments” [[Wis 6:6](#)];<sup>778</sup> and, “To one to whom more is given, they demand more from him” [[Luke 12:48](#)].<sup>779</sup> And whenever there is need, let us make use of this testimony against the rulers of the church, who destroy the office by their works.<sup>880</sup>

33. (1:24b) *Alas, I will be consoled over my enemies and I will be revenged of my adversaries.* Again in this passage as well, which is not found in the Hebrew, the Septuagint records: “For my fury will not cease against my adversaries.”

Now he chastises the scribes and Pharisees, of whom he also says in the Gospel, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees” [cf. [Matt 23:13–29](#)].<sup>881</sup> And in another passage, “An adulterous and perverse generation seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah” [[Matt 12:39](#)]. But the most clement Father bewails the transgressing rulers and he summons his own *enemies* and addresses his *adversaries*, that they are perishing because they are unwilling to do penance, because they will not receive the one coming [to] them. For when he was approaching Jerusalem, he wept and said, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who have been sent to you, how often I have wanted to gather your sons like a hen gathers her chicks, and you were unwilling!” [[Matt 23:37](#)]. Thus God’s consolation is *over* his enemies and *adversaries*, in order that those who have not perceived his benefits may be corrected by his punishments.

34. (1:25) *And I will turn my hand to you and I will boil you until you are pure dross, and I will remove all your alloy.* For *dross*, which was Symmachus’s translation, Aquila translated as *στεμφυλα*, that is “grape skins” (*vinacia*); Theodotion translated it *γίγαρτωδες*, that is, “berry of a grape.” The Septuagint alone translated it “unbelieving,” or “disobedient,” rendering the sense rather than the words.

For since he had said above, “Your silver has been turned to dross” [[Isa 1:22](#)], he now preserves the metaphor, that he might turn it upon her, that is, extend his own *hand* to punish and purge and *boil* away all the filth and vices of sins, so that, when the alloy has been removed, the pure silver might remain, which cannot happen without fire. In this way he indicates that they will suffer torments.

We also read in Malachi about the Lord, “He will come forth like a refiner’s fire and like a fullers’ plant, and he will sit refining and cleansing, as silver and gold; and he will cleanse the sons of Levi” [[Mal 3:2–3](#)].<sup>882</sup> And after they are cleansed, it may be said of them, “And they will offer victims to the Lord in justice” [[Mal 3:3](#)]. Ezekiel too says that the whole house of Israel was mingled with bronze, iron, lead, and alloy, and afterward it had to be purified, so that after it

<sup>778</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 54 (216C).

<sup>779</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>880</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (217A).

<sup>881</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 21 (11, 28–9).

<sup>882</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 55 (217D).

was purged, it would know that he is the Lord [cf. [Ezek 22:18–22](#)]. Moreover, in the Gospel the same thought is shown by means of a different metaphor: “Whose winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will *purge* his threshing floor and *cleanse* the wheat and will gather the harvest into barns; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire” [[Matt 3:12](#)].<sup>883</sup>

35. ([1:26a–b](#)) *And I will restore your judges as they were before and your counselors as of old.* [He means] in the faithful city of Zion, which later became a harlot [cf. [Isa 1:21](#)], and in place of the just one, or justice, murderers dwelled within her [cf. [Isa 1:21](#)]. The Lord, therefore, turns his hand and purges her unto purity and removes all her alloy [cf. [Isa 1:25](#)] and *restores her judges*, just as they were from the beginning, and her *counselors, as of old*. The former *judges* were Moses and Jesus [Joshua] the son of Nun, and the others from whom even a book of Sacred Scripture received its name. Later, there was David and other just kings. He will *restore*, therefore, the likeness of judges, either after the Babylonian captivity, as the Jews think it means, Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah and the other rulers, who presided over the people until Hyrcanus, whom Herod succeeded in the kingdom;<sup>884</sup> or, at any rate, it refers more truly and correctly to the apostles and those who believed through the apostles. They were established as rulers of the churches, just as we said at the beginning of this vision, namely that both the threat and the promise pertain to the time of the Lord’s passion and to the faith that founded the church after his passion.

36. ([1:26c](#)) *After these things you will be called the city of the just [one], a faithful city.*

The prophetic discourse associates these things clearly with the church that would believe in the Lord, comprised both of Jews and Gentiles. Now the *city of the just [one]*, that is, of the Lord and Savior, itself will be called *just*. It was said of it, “A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden” [[Matt 5:14](#)]. By calling it *faithful* too, or the “mother city” according to the Septuagint, it shows that those who would believe in the Lord must also be called by these terms.

37. ([1:27](#)) *Zion will be redeemed in judgment and they will lead her back in justice.*

Not all will be *redeemed*, nor will all be saved, but a remnant of which it was spoken above [cf. [Isa 1:9](#)].<sup>885</sup> But it will be *led back in justice* when the wicked and the sinners have been obliterated, and those who have abandoned the Lord have been consumed [cf. [Isa 1:28](#)]. And when they are saved, those who formerly sacrificed to idols will be confounded, and they will be ashamed in the gardens that they had chosen [cf. [Isa 1:29](#)]. But he is indicating places of luxury, sacred groves and clusters of trees.

38. ([1:30](#)) *For they will be like the terebinth with its leaves falling off; and as a garden, or paradise, without water.*

Up to the present day the Jews are a *terebinth*, or “oak,” as Symmachus translated it, when they read the Holy Scriptures. And according to the Gospel, the Lord cursed with eternal withering the fig tree that was parched, on which he sought fruit, when he did not find any [cf. [Matt 21:19](#)]. Moreover, the very *leaves* and pomp of words have now ceased to exist among them; the well-watered *garden* too, that is, the knowledge of the Scriptures, or the *paradise* of various trees, since it is without spiritual grace, does not even produce the vegetables of which

<sup>883</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (220A).

<sup>884</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 21 (12, 25–8).

<sup>885</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 22 (12, 29–3, 1).

the Apostle speaks: “Let the one who is weak eat vegetables” [[Rom 14:2](#)]. And with dried up roots, the entire greenness has been turned to dryness and squalor.

39. ([1:31a](#)) *And your strength will be as the ashes of tow.* Symmachus translated *ashes* as  $\alpha\pi\omicron\tau\iota\nu\alpha\gamma\mu\alpha$ . When tow is combed and has anything dirty, it is cast out. Therefore all the *strength* and haughtiness of sinners and of the wicked of Israel, who abandoned the Lord and on that account were destroyed, and who sacrificed to idols, and will be ashamed in the gardens which they have chosen [cf. [Isa 1:28–29](#)], they will be reduced to the sweepings of *tow*, which are consumed by an insignificant fire. For it follows, *and its work* [[Isa 1:31b](#)], that is, a little spark will consume [the work] of your *strength*, or idolatry, in which you went astray.

40. ([1:31b](#)) *And both will be burned together*, that is, *both* the knowledge of the Jews and all the works that they do; or, *both* the idol and Jerusalem, where the idol was; and when the Lord burns, *no one will be able to extinguish it* [cf. [Isa 1:31c](#)]. We can understand all these things concerning contrary doctrines too, that both teachers and disciples equally perish and all their works become food for the fire.

41. ([2:1](#)) *The word which Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.*

Both in the first vision, which we have just explained, where the Septuagint translated, “that he saw *against* Judea and against Jerusalem” [[Isa 1:1](#)], it was written in the Hebrew, *al Judah Uhirusalem*; and in this [vision], which is the second, it is contained in the Hebrew similarly. I wonder why the Septuagint translators said in the former passage, “*Against* Judea and Jerusalem,” and in this passage, “*Concerning* Judea and concerning Jerusalem.” Perhaps they translated the sense rather than the word, because there a sinful nation is named [cf. [Isa 1:4](#)], a people full of sins, a wicked seed, sons of iniquity and rulers of Sodom and people of Gomorrah [cf. [Isa 1:10](#)], and a harlot city [cf. [Isa 1:21](#)] and other things of that sort; but here, because favorable things are promised immediately, “And in the last days the mountain of the Lord will be manifest and the house of God on the top of the mountains” [[Isa 2:2](#)], perhaps they understood the prophecy not as “*against* Judea and Jerusalem” but “*concerning* Judea and Jerusalem.” Yet even in that place, after the threat we read of favorable things: “I will restore your judges as they were before and your counselors as of old; after these things you will be called city of the just [one], the faithful city” [[Isa 1:26](#)]. And here, after the favorable things, a fierce threat comes. “Behold the sovereign, the Lord of hosts is taking away from Jerusalem and from Judah the valiant and the strong, the whole strength of bread and the whole strength of water” [[Isa 3:1](#)], and so on. Therefore according to the Hebrew word, both in that vision [cf. [Isa 1:1](#)] and in these words that *Isaiah son of Amoz saw*, one should understand them “*concerning* Judah and Jerusalem”; not “*against* Judea and Jerusalem,” or “*on behalf of* Judah and Jerusalem,” as Symmachus translated, but simply “*concerning* Judah and Jerusalem,” a word that can cover both joyful and sad things.

And this ought to be considered, that in the former passage he sees a “vision”; here [he sees] the *Word*, which “was in the beginning with God” [cf. [John 1:1–2](#)].<sup>886</sup> There, while threatening the Jews, he arrives at the salvation of the Gentiles; here, beginning with the salvation of the Gentiles, with Israel having been punished, by inviting both he gathers those who believe into the church of Christ.

<sup>886</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 26 (15, 14–0).

42. (2:2a) *And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord will be prepared on the top of the mountains.*

We also read about *the last days* in Genesis, when Jacob calls his sons and says: “Come, that I may declare to you what will be *in the last days*” [Gen 49:1]. Later he will say to Judah, from whose seed Christ was born [cf. Heb 7:14], “A ruler will not fail from Judah, nor a leader from his loins<sup>887</sup> until there comes what is stored up for him; and he will be the expectation of the nations” [Gen 49:10]. In these *last days* there will be a last hour of which the Apostle John speaks: “My little children, it is the last hour” [1 John 2:18], in which the stone cut from the mountain without hands increased into a great mountain and filled the whole earth [cf. Dan 2:35].<sup>888</sup> And in Ezekiel, the ruler of Tyre is said to have been wounded by it [cf. Ezek 28:16]. This is the *mountain in the house of the Lord* for which the prophet sighs when he says, “One thing I asked from the Lord, this I will seek, that I might dwell in the *house* of the Lord all the days of my life” [Ps 27:4]. Moreover, Paul writes to Timothy about this [*house*]: “But if I am delayed, that you may know how you ought to behave in the *house* of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” [1 Tim 3:15].<sup>889</sup> This *house* was built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets [cf. Eph 2:20],<sup>990</sup> who are themselves *mountains*, being imitators of Christ [cf. 1 Cor 11:1]. About this *house* of Jerusalem the psalmist cries out, saying, “Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, he who dwells in Jerusalem will not be moved forever. The *mountains* surround her and the Lord surrounds his people” [Ps 125:1]. This is also why Christ founds his church on one of the *mountains* and says to him, “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld will not prevail against her” [Matt 16:18].<sup>991</sup> The saint says something similar to his own soul that impatiently longs to see the *house* of God: “Why are you sad, O my soul, and why do you trouble me?” [Ps 42:5]. And again: “I remembered these things and I poured out my soul in me, for I will go to the place of the wondrous tabernacle, up to the *house* of God with the voice of exultation and the sound of praise of those keeping festival” [Ps 42:4].

The Septuagint translated this as “Conspicuous mountain of the Lord and house of God upon the heads of the mountains.” This testimony was recorded also by Micah the prophet in the same words that I have explained in its own passage [cf. Mic 4:1].<sup>992</sup>

43. (2:2b) *And he will be lifted up above the hills.*

He who was pointed out and prepared on the heads of the mountains will be *lifted up above the hills*. The bride speaks of these mountains and *hills* also in the Song of Songs: “The voice of my kinsman,<sup>993</sup> behold here he comes leaping over mountains, bounding over *hills*; my kinsman is like a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of Bethel” [Song 2:8–9].

44. (2:2b–3a) *And all nations will flow to him, (3) and many people will go.*

<sup>887</sup> Lit. “highs.”

<sup>888</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 26 (16, 5–).

<sup>889</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 66 (233B).

<sup>990</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>991</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>992</sup> Cf. Jerome, *In Michaeam ad locum*.

<sup>993</sup> *Fratruelis*. Lit. “ather’ brother’ son.”



For *all the nations* will serve him, to whom it is said, “Ask of me and I will give you the *nations* as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession” [[Ps 2:8](#); [72:10–11](#)], that they might “serve him under one yoke,” according to Zephaniah, of whom the same prophet testifies, “From the boundaries of the rivers of Ethiopia they will bring sacrifices to you” [[Zeph 3:9–10](#)].<sup>994</sup> And in the seventy-first Psalm we read, “The Ethiopians will fall down in his presence” [[Ps 72:9](#)]. For “at the name of Jesus every knee will bend, of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth” [[Phil 2:10](#)].

45. ([2:3a–c](#)) *And they will say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways and we will walk on his paths.”*

Nations and peoples, by no means satisfied with their own salvation, will encourage one another and say, *Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord and the house of the God of Jacob*. We have spoken of these things above, what is the prepared mountain of the Lord, and what is the house of the God of Jacob upon the top of the mountains [cf. [Isa 2:2](#)]. But the house of the Lord is called the *house of the God of Jacob*, so that we might receive the Old Testament (*instrumentum*), and not, like Manicheus,<sup>995</sup> look for another *house* apart from the *house of the God of Jacob*. But when we come into the *house of the God of Jacob*, then *he will teach us his ways*, by means of which *we may go* to him and *we will walk on his paths*, which others also have worn down. After all, even Jesus *went up on a mountain* and taught his disciples eight beatitudes [cf. [Matt 5:1–12](#)] and the other things that the words of the gospel embrace. First then, the *ways* of the Lord must be learned, and afterward one must *walk on his paths*.

46. ([2:3d](#)) *For a law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

On that account all nations and many people will mutually encourage one another and say, *Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord*, and the other things that follow: *For from Zion a law will go forth and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*. By no means [will it go forth] from Sinai and from the solitude, and from Mount Horeb, but *from Mount Zion*, on which Jerusalem is built, and *from Jerusalem*, in which is the temple and the religion of God. We read that the Lord often taught in the temple [cf. [Matt 26:55](#)], and that it was not fitting for a prophet to die outside of *Jerusalem* [cf. [Luke 13:33](#)]; and above, the *word* and the *law* are named together. The rulers are commanded to hear the “word,” the people to give ear to the “law” [cf. [Isa 1:10](#)]. For whoever first does the *law*, afterward comes to the *word* of God. Moreover, the church was

<sup>994</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 68 (237A)

<sup>995</sup> Manicheus, or Mani/Manes (215–76) is the founder of the Manichaean heresy. He came from Persia and is reported to have died of torture in prison while chained up by the wrists. The sect he founded threatened the church for many centuries and even claimed the young Augustine as one of its adherents. The founder desired to blend Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and elements of Buddhism together. He preached an extreme dualism of two independent and absolutely opposed eternal principles, that of good and evil. Like Marcion, he denied that Jesus was prophesied in the OT, and said that the good God was characterized by light, while the material world was inherently dark and corrupt. Manicheus believed that Jesus and other teachers came to release souls of light from prison in material bodies. The Old Testament was the product of the forces of darkness. Manicheus also denied the free choice of the will in salvation.



founded first in *Jerusalem*, and then churches were planted in the whole world [cf. [Acts 8:4](#)].

And the following should be said, that both the *law* and the *word of the Lord* are established [cf. [Rom 3:31](#)] in the one who has been in the watchtower and in the vision of peace.<sup>996</sup> And it is nice that he did not say that the *word* and *law of the Lord* “will be” and “will remain” in *Zion* and in *Jerusalem*, but *will go forth*. Consequently he indicates that from that source all nations have been watered by the teaching of God.

47. (2:4a) *And he will judge the nations and will rebuke many peoples.*

Therefore judgment is to be exacted even between *nations* and *peoples*; not all unbelievers are to be condemned by the same verdict, but in view of the diversity of merits, diverse things will be experienced. But after he will have *judged the nations*, then he will *rebuke many peoples*, or, as the Septuagint has translated, “many people.” And note the sequence: the *nations* are judged, because they will become believers. “For he who does not believe has already been judged” [[John 3:18](#)]. But “many people,” who are understood as Israel, will by no means be *judged*, but *rebuked*, because they did not receive the Son of God who was sent to them [cf. [John 1:11](#)].

48. (2:4b) *And they will melt down their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.*

The whole pursuit of war will be turned to peace, and in place of discord there will be concord throughout the whole world. *Swords* will be changed into *plowshares* and lances into *pruning hooks*. Thus when their fury for waging war has been set aside, they may serve farming and cut very abundant harvests with *pruning hooks*. And indeed this can be understood even spiritually, when all the hardness of our heart is broken up by the *plowshare* of Christ and the thorns of the vices are eradicated, so that the sowing of the word of God may increase into a crop [cf. [Matt 13:23](#)]. And afterward we may eat the labors of our hands [cf. [Ps 128:2](#)] when “those who come will come in exultation carrying their own sheaves” [[Ps 126:6](#)].

49. (2:4c–d) *Nation will not raise a sword against nation, neither will they be exercised any more to war.*

Let us turn the pages of the ancient histories<sup>997</sup> and we will find that up to the twenty-eighth year of Caesar Augustus, in whose forty-first year Christ was born in Judea, there was discord in all the lands of the world. Every single nation burned with a zeal for waging war against neighboring nations, so that they killed and were killed. But when the Lord and Savior was born, the first enrollment (*descriptio*) was conducted in the lands of the world under the governorship of Quirinius in Syria [cf. [Luke 2:1–2](#)], and the peace of the Roman Empire was prepared for the teaching of the gospel. Then all wars ceased, and scarcely in towns and villages was there training for battles, but for the cultivation of fields. The zeal for waging war was delegated only to soldiers and Roman legions against foreign nations. This was when that harmonious music of angels was fulfilled: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will” [[Luke 2:14](#)] and in his days justice arose and a multitude of peace [cf. [Ps 72:7](#)].

50. (2:5–6a) *House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord; (6) for you have*

<sup>996</sup> These are popular etymologies of Jerusalem. Cf. [Origen, CRm 3.5.2](#); [Clement, Strom 1.5.29.4](#); [Philo, On Dreams 2.38.250](#).

<sup>997</sup> Cf. [Eusebius, PE 1, 4, 3–](#).

*cast off your people, the house of Jacob.*

After the calling of the nations and manifestation of the mountain of the Lord upon the top of the mountains [cf. [Isa 2:2](#)], the prophet turns to his own people, in other words, the Jewish people, which is called the *house of Jacob*, and he exhorts them, that those who live in the darkness of error should receive the light of truth and *walk in the light of the Lord*. And in a way the word of David sings this: “Come to him and be enlightened; and let not your faces be ashamed” [[Ps 34:5](#)].<sup>998</sup> For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light lest his works be exposed [cf. [John 3:20](#)].<sup>999</sup> But you, O *house of Jacob*, the house of my people, *come* with me and *let us walk together in the light of the Lord*. Let us receive the gospel of Christ; let us be illuminated by him who says, “I am the light of the world” [[John 8:12](#)]. And when this had been spoken to the Jewish people, perceiving their impenitent heart [cf. [Rom 2:5](#)] and their soul very hardened by unbelief, he makes an apostrophe<sup>1100</sup> to the Lord and says, “The reason I exhort them to come to you and to enjoy your light with me is because, on account of the merit of their sins, you have abandoned your people, the former *house of Jacob*.”

51. ([2:6b–c](#)) *For they are filled as in times past, and have had soothsayers as the Philistines.*

For *Philistines* the Septuagint always translated “foreigners,” a general term in place of a proper name, which today is the nation of the Palestinians, of the Philistines as it were, because the Hebrew language does not have the letter *p* but uses in its place the Greek *phi*. This also explains the significance of what is said in the Psalms, with the listing of other nations, “Foreigners have been subjected to me” [[Ps 60:8](#)]. It refers not to all outer nations but properly to the Palestinians. And he offers reasons why God cast out his own people, the house of Jacob: because they were filled, he says, as they were in the beginning, with *soothsayers* and omens and with all the filthy defilements of idolatry. We know that dreams are not to be heeded, nor soothsaying, since Moses writes this [cf. [Deut 18:10, 14](#)].<sup>1101</sup> The nations of the Canaanites, Amorites, and Hittites, which the Lord expelled from the presence of Israel, had these things.

Those in the church who have treated this passage have explained this in different ways. For some think that it means that the Jewish people were cast forth when the Roman army entered what was once the promised land, and when the Jews were expelled, *foreigners* lived in Judea, who became near neighbors out of the entire world of different nations. They were brought there by Titus, Vespasian, Hadrian, and other rulers. But others think that this does not pertain to Roman times but to earlier times, before they were laid waste by the Babylonians, because the narrative says that they did this under impious kings and were abandoned by the Lord.

52. ([2:6d](#)) *And they cleaved to foreign boys.* The Septuagint translated this, “and many foreign sons were born to them.” Symmachus has, “and they clapped with foreign sons.” The Hebrew word for this is *iesphicu*, which the Hebrews translate as εσφηνωθησαν,<sup>1102</sup> and we

<sup>998</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 76 (245B).

<sup>999</sup> Cf. *ibid*.

<sup>1100</sup> An apostrophe is a rhetorical figure, when the speaker turns from the judges or his hearers, and addresses some other person or thing. Cf. [Quintilian, 9.2.38; 9.3.24](#).

<sup>1101</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 77 (248B).

<sup>1102</sup> “they were plugged” from σφηνόω, to plug up, close up (as with a wedge). Presumably the word refers to male homosexual acts.

rendered it *they cleaved*, in order to show the moral turpitude of the victors in the nation of Judea.

Now the Greeks and Romans were once afflicted with this vice to such an extent that even the most famous philosophers of Greece kept male concubines publicly. Even Hadrian, who was educated in the philosophical disciplines, consecrated Antinous<sup>1103</sup> as a god and founded a temple to him and sacrifices and priests, and a city and region of Egypt was named after him. Among the prostitutes too in the brothels of the public shows, boys stood exposed to public lust until, under emperor Constantine, as the gospel of Christ flashed forth, both the unbelief and moral turpitude of all the nations were blotted out.<sup>1104</sup> Furthermore, the Septuagint indicates that their spouses were violated while they were bearing sons foreign to the Jews. Symmachus has pointed to the very same moral turpitude with boys in a certain roundabout way and by the respectable speech of those “clapping.”

53. (2:7) *And the land is filled with silver and gold, and there is no end of its treasures.*

Among the other vices of the land of the house of Jacob, an abundance of *gold* and *silver* is likewise listed. Along with the omens and soothsayers, horses and chariots,<sup>1105</sup> the multiplication of which God forbade to the kings of Israel [cf. [Deut 17:16](#)]; along with the idols, which are the works of men’s hands [cf. [Ps 115:4](#); [135:15](#)], avarice is condemned. This is why the Lord has commanded in the Gospel that we should not treasure up for ourselves treasures on earth [cf. [Matt 6:19](#)],<sup>1106</sup> and we should not make *treasures* from which a thief is able to steal, adding at the end: “You cannot serve God and mammon” [[Matt 6:24](#)]. Now with different words the prophet has nicely sealed that κομμά<sup>1107</sup> of the brief verse, “The greedy man is always in need,”<sup>1108</sup> when he says, *And there is no end of its treasures*. It is not that the treasures do not have an end, but that the soul of those who possess them is not filled. But by means of these words, each nation, both that of the Jews and of the Romans, is confronted for their avarice, which both Greek and Latin histories narrate too, that nothing is greedier than the nation of the Jews and Romans. This is also why the law against extortion was established and why daily we see that word of the apostle being fulfilled: “You who teach not to steal, steal” [[Rom 2:21](#)]. He is listening to a judge who is a thief, and a more thievish judge condemns in another while issuing a verdict about himself.

54. (2:8a) *And its land is filled with horses and its chariots are innumerable.*

For it does not deserve a number, because it possesses them contrary to the command of

<sup>1103</sup> Antinous was the young favorite of the Roman emperor Hadrian, born in Bithynia c. AD 110 and drowned in the Nile in 130. He was deified by Hadrian, and the site of his death was marked by the founding of the city Antinoöpolis. His head was stamped on coins of Mantinea, where he had a temple, and many busts or statues of this beautiful soft-looking boy survive.

<sup>1104</sup> Cf. [Soz HE 1, 8](#).

<sup>1105</sup> Lit., “reams of four.”

<sup>1106</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 80 (252B).

<sup>1107</sup> The Greek word means both “stamp or impression of a coin” and “short clause of a sentence.”

<sup>1108</sup> [Horace, Ep. 1.2.56](#).

God [cf. [Deut 17:16](#)].<sup>1109</sup> This is also why it is said in the Psalms, “A *horse* is deceptive in respect to safety” [[Ps 33:17](#)].<sup>1110</sup> And in Exodus, “*Horse and rider* he cast into the sea” [[Exod 15:1](#)]. And in another psalm, “Some [call upon] chariots and some [call upon] *horses*, but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God” [[Ps 20:7](#)]. Both can be understood because both the Jewish people multiplied for themselves *horses* and *chariots* contrary to the command of God [cf. [Deut 17:16](#)], and the land of Judea was filled with the *horses* and *chariots* of the victors.

55. ([2:8b–9a](#)) *And its land was filled with idols; they worshiped the work of their own hands, which their fingers have made. (9) And man has bowed himself down and man has been abased.* In the place where once there was the temple and religion of God, there was set up a statue of Hadrian and an *idol* of Jupiter.<sup>1111</sup> Many interpret this by referring to that testimony that we read in the Gospel: “But when you see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place” [[Matt 24:15](#); [Mark 13:14](#)]. And they have bent down *to the work of their own hands*, and man, the rational animal, has worshiped bronze and stone. But there are those who interpret these things of the Jews, because before they were captured by the Babylonians, they did all these things, and for that reason they were dismissed<sup>1112</sup> by God. This is also why at the end of the section it is recorded, *Therefore, do not forgive*<sup>1113</sup> *them* [[Isa 2:9b](#)].

We can also say the following as an anagogical interpretation: that every doctrine contrary to the truth *worships the works of their own hands* and *sets up idols* in their own land [*terra*], and *man is bowed down*, and *man is abased*. He cannot straighten himself up because he has been bound by the devil, unless the Lord sets him up straight as he did that woman whom Satan had bound for eighteen years. She had never seen heaven, but was always looking at the ground (*terram*) [cf. [Luke 13:11–13](#), [16](#)].

56. ([2:9b](#)) *Therefore do not forgive them.* The Septuagint translated this, “And I will not forgive them.”

If God is the speaker, it should be understood thus: since they have committed such enormities, I will not spare them nor will I *forgive* such innumerable sins. If the prophet is the speaker, it should be understood as follows: *Therefore do not forgive them*, those who have perpetrated such enormous crimes. But the interpretation is truer when we understand it of the Romans. Having demolished the temple of God, they did not worship him who gave them the victory, but idols made by their own hands. But if we understand it of the Jews, the judgment of the prophet is grim, so that he seems to be praying against his own people to whom he had said above, “House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord” [[Isa 2:5](#)].

57. ([2:10](#)) *Enter into the rock; hide in the trench in the ground from the face of the fear of the Lord and from the glory of his majesty.*

I have indeed exhorted the people, saying, “House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of the Lord” [[Isa 2:5](#)]. But because the Lord cast forth the people of Jacob—now he cast them forth because he either caused or allowed what we have explained above—therefore, I

<sup>1109</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 81 (252C).

<sup>1110</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 82 (253A).

<sup>1111</sup> Cf. [1.9](#).

<sup>1112</sup> Or “orgiven.”

<sup>1113</sup> Or “ismiss.”

am announcing in advance what evils will come upon you, and I am exhorting you to *enter rocks* and be *hidden* in caves *from the face* of the Babylonian, or Roman, army, when all things will be laid waste in accordance with what we read in the Gospel: “Then they will say to the mountains: fall upon us, and to the rocks: hide us” [[Luke 23:30](#)].

In fact anagogically we are being instructed to acquire the strength of the *rock from the face of the Lord’s majesty*, of which it is said, “The *rock* is a refuge for badgers” [[Ps 104:18](#); [61:2](#)].<sup>1114</sup> And, “You have lifted me up on the *rock*” [[Ps 27:5](#)]. Moses too is set in the opening of a *rock* that he may see the back parts of God [cf. [Exod 33:22–23](#)]. And the people were drinking “from the spiritual *rock* that was following them” [[1 Cor 10:4](#)]. And he is hidden in the *rock* who enters his room, closes the door, and worships the Father [cf. [Isa 26:20](#); [Matt 6:6](#)]. Thus while existing in an earthly body, he does not sense the passing storm of the world.

58. ([2:11](#)) *The lofty eyes of man are humbled and the height of men will be made to stoop; but the Lord alone will be exalted on that day.*

When the enemies came and the Babylonian or Roman sword laid waste the province, and columns of warriors encircled Jerusalem, then neither wealth nor nobility of descent nor power of offices was able to defend anyone. But there will be a single captivity for all and God alone *will be exalted*, whose wrath no one can turn back. Many understand these things about the day of judgment<sup>1115</sup> because every creature will be *humbled* in comparison with the divine glory, and will be *made to stoop* and will perceive itself as nothing.

59. ([2:12](#)) *For the day of the Lord of hosts [will be] upon all the proud and lofty and upon everyone that is arrogant, and so on.*

And these things are linked to what precedes. On that *day*, he says, on which the Lord alone will be exalted [cf. [Isa 2:11](#)], that is, on the day of the Lord’s vengeance, all who are lofty, *arrogant*, and *proud* will submit to captivity and sword. Metaphorically, however, the words are about the great ones and the rulers.<sup>1116</sup> For to the extent that they are more *proud*, so much the more will they be put down. For “the Lord resists the *proud* and gives grace to the humble” [[1 Pet 5:5](#); [Jas 4:6](#)]. Those who understand this about the day of judgment think that the devil is being called the *proud, lofty*, lifted up, and *arrogant* one, who arrogantly says, “Upon the stars of heaven I will put my throne; I will sit on a lofty mountain, upon all the lofty mountains toward the North; I will ascend above the clouds, I will be like the Most High” [[Isa 14:13–14](#)]. This will happen when out of the mouth of babes and infants praise will be perfected [cf. [Ps 8:2](#); [Matt 19:16](#)], so that the last enemy and avenger may be destroyed [cf. [1 Cor 15:26](#)].

60. ([2:13](#)) *And over all the straight and lofty cedars of Libanus and over all the oaks of Bashan.*

Both in the twenty-eighth Psalm it is sung, “The voice of the Lord who breaks cedars; the Lord will break the cedars of *Libanus* and will crush them as a calf of *Libanus*” [[Ps 29:5–6](#)];<sup>1117</sup> and in the thirty-sixth, “I have seen the wicked exalted and lifted up like the cedars of *Libanus*, and I passed by and he was not, and I looked for him and his place was not found” [[Ps 37:35–](#)

<sup>1114</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 85 (257BC).

<sup>1115</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 28 (19, 22–5); *Bas Is* 87 (260B)

<sup>1116</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 88 (261BC).

<sup>1117</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 90 (265C).

[36](#)]. We know that the *oaks of Bashan* too are acorn bearing.<sup>1118</sup> Aquila translated this δρυαξ, Symmachus and Theodotion βαλανους. Even if they produce fruit, they are the nourishment of pigs, not of men. *Bashan* is a region in Arabia that Og commanded, who was called king of Bashan [cf. [Num 21:33](#)],<sup>1119</sup> and means αισχυνη, that is, “shame.” If we want to translate it as “confusion,” it signifies συγχυσις, that is, Babylon, rather than *Bashan*. Therefore over all who are raised up in arrogance and do works of shame and wallow in the mire of lust, the Lord’s vengeance will rise.

But suppose the intelligent reader asks, Why was *cedar* wood placed in the temple [cf. [1 Kgs 6:10](#)]?<sup>1120</sup> And why do we read in the [103rd Psalm](#), according to the Hebrew truth, “The trees of the Lord and the *cedars of Libanus* that you planted will be saturated; there sparrows will build nests” [[Ps 104:16–17](#)]? And why, among the other trees, are even *cedars* summoned to praise the Lord [cf. [Ps 148:9](#)]? And at the coming of the Savior, when all trees and the woods of the field applaud with their branches [cf. [Isa 55:12](#)], why is it written, “I will put in the dry land the *cedar* and box, the cypress and the pine” [[Isa 41:19](#)]? Yet now the prophetic word threatens the day of the Lord [cf. [Isa 2:12](#)] over the *cedars of Libanus*? One should say the following: from the same race of men, some are lifted up to the kingdom, others are dragged off to punishment; also the *cedars of Libanus*, which will be shattered because of arrogance, may be chosen, when they obtain a good fragrance and say with the Apostle, “We are the good fragrance of Christ” [[2 Cor 2:15](#)].

61. ([2:14](#)) *And over all the lofty mountains and over all elevated hills.*

Just as in view of the variety of virtues they are called *mountains* and *hills* in a good sense, so among the wicked, in view of the diversity of vices, and of arrogance above all, some are *mountains*, others are *hills*. The day of the Lord will be *over* them. In Ezekiel it is written of them, “Thus says the Lord Adonai to the *mountains* and *hills*: Behold, I will bring a sword *over* you and your high places will be demolished and your altars will be broken,” and so on [[Ezek 6:3–4](#)].

62. ([2:15](#)) *And over every high tower and over every fortified wall.*

Those who refer these things to the times of Vespasian and Hadrian say that the things that were written were fulfilled physically, because no high *tower*, no very strong *wall* [cf. [Isa 2:16](#)], no multitude of ships and carefulness of effort, was able to prevail against the force of the Roman army. But the inhabitants of Judea were gripped by such great fear that even they themselves, together with their wives and children, gold and silver (which they were counting on to help them), were plunged into the pits of the land and sought the deepest caverns. For if the belly is the God of the gluttons and of the luxurious [cf. [Phil 3:19](#)], why should not gold and silver be called the God of the avaricious? Others refer these things to the Babylonian period. I will run through all the details according to the laws of tropology.

A *tower* is built either for the protection of the city or as a lookout, in order to see the enemy coming from afar.<sup>1121</sup> Each of us, then, ought to build a *tower*, first counting the cost, lest

<sup>1118</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 91 (268B–69A)

<sup>1119</sup> Cf. Jerome, *Am* 2.

<sup>1120</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 90 (268AB).

<sup>1121</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 92 (269BC).



in accordance with the parable of the Gospel, when he is unable to complete the task, he may be ridiculed [cf. [Luke 14:28–29](#)]. This well-constructed *tower* abides. But if it has been erected in arrogance and does not have solid foundations, it will fall upon the one who built it, like that tower in Siloam that killed eighteen people [cf. [Luke 13:4](#)]. This is also why the Lord says to those who are listening, “And you, if you do not do penance, you will likewise perish” [[Luke 13:5](#)]. In what follows too, we will read that God built a *tower* in his vineyard and made a winepress and surrounded it with a wall, but all these things were destroyed and laid waste, because they were puffed up by the vain arrogance of pride [cf. [Isa 5:1–7](#)].

High *walls* are also built to keep a city from being destroyed quickly, to keep it from being exposed to the enemies.<sup>1122</sup> These *walls* of the church are surrounded by very wise men and they are strengthened in every way, lest some perverted doctrine should prevail against the truth. God speaks to Jerusalem concerning *walls* like this: “Behold I have painted your walls on my hands and they are always before me” [[Isa 49:16](#)]. But if those who had previously attacked the church recognize the truth and make a transition to the faith, and if they fight for that which they had previously attacked, then the following will be fulfilled: “You will be quickly built up by those by whom you had been destroyed” [[Isa 49:17](#)]. In Leviticus too, we read that the house that is in *walled* cities, if it is not redeemed within a year, is confirmed to the buyer as an eternal possession; but if it is in the country and villages that do not have *walls*, it can always be redeemed and the buyer’s price can fluctuate [cf. [Lev 25:29–31](#)].

63. ([2:16](#)) *And over all the ships of Tarshish and over everything that is fair to behold.* They all translated this in the same way, as *Tarshish*; the Septuagint alone has rendered it “sea.” The Hebrews think that in their own language Tarshish is the name of a sea, but when it is said now, it is not being named in Hebrew speech, but in Syriac.

Even Jehoshaphat had *ships* that he sent to *Tarshish*, but they were wrecked at Ezion-geber [cf. [1 Kgs 22:48–49](#)]. Solomon also had *ships* that went to *Tarshish* and returned after three years and brought to the king “silver and gold, ivory and apes” [cf. [1 Kgs 10:22](#)]. But because both kings had sinned, the one having surrendered to pleasure, being a lover of women from foreign nations [cf. [1 Kgs 11:1–2](#)], the other, by uniting himself with the king of Samaria [cf. [1 Kgs 22:44–45](#)]<sup>1123</sup>—both of which refer to pagans and heretics, among whom there is nothing but the gleam<sup>1123</sup> of eloquence, and a meaning constructed by diabolical skill, and the dead word that is translated in the teeth,<sup>1124</sup> and the likeness of human reason that is perceived in apes—this is why we read in the Psalms, “With a violent spirit you will shatter the ships of Tarshish” [[Ps 48:7](#)]; and likewise Isaiah speaks of these ships, “Woe to the wings of ships that are beyond Ethiopia” [[Isa 18:1](#)].

But, on the other hand, there are also good *ships* of which it is said in the same Psalms: “Those who go down on the sea in *ships* and do work on the many waters, they have seen the works of the Lord and his marvels in the deep” [[Ps 107:23–24](#)].<sup>1125</sup> For those who are not relaxing in the waves of this age, but are working and carrying the Lord’s merchandise and

<sup>1122</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (269CD).

<sup>1123</sup> Referring allegorically to the silver and gold.

<sup>1124</sup> Referring allegorically to the ivory.

<sup>1125</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 93 (272BC).



hastening to come to a port of rest, they see the works of the Lord and his marvels in the deep, when they attain deep knowledge and examine everything [cf. [1 Cor 2:10](#)], that is, when they gaze upon even the depths of God and his marvels.

Josephus thinks *Tarshish* is the city in Cilicia, Tarsus.<sup>1126</sup> Others think it is a region in India, and by this name likewise a stone of twelve jewels is named, which among us is called χρυσολιθος (chrysolite) on account of its resemblance to the color of the sea. But it is better to take Tarshish simply as the sea or the open sea. For when Jonah was sailing from Joppa [cf. [Jonah 1:3](#)],<sup>1127</sup> he could not have reached India, to which he was not able to sail by that sea; but he was able simply to go out on the open sea and to travel to some islands.

As for what follows: *And over everything that is fair to behold*; or as the Septuagint has translated it, “And over every display of the beauty of ships”; this should be understood in the same sense. For anything that seems beautiful in words and constructed by human reason is destroyed on the day of the Lord, if it sets itself up against the knowledge of God [cf. [2 Cor 10:4–5](#)].

64. ([2:17–18](#)) *And the loftiness of men will be bowed down and the strength of men will be humbled and the Lord alone will be exalted on that day; (18) and idols will be suddenly destroyed.*

Human speech seems reasonable so long as it is not compared with divine knowledge. But when falsehood draws near to truth, as stubble to fire, it is quickly devoured and perishes and all the doctrines of falsity, which are now named *idols*, will be suddenly *destroyed*, because they are feigned and fabricated.

65. ([2:20–21](#)) *On that day a man will cast away the idols of his own silver and the images of his own gold, which he had made for himself, to adore moles and bats. (21) And he will go into the clefts of rocks and into the caverns of stones from the face of the fear of the Lord and from the glory of his majesty, when he rises up to strike the earth.*

We have often said that *silver* and *gold* are understood for speech and understanding. Although God gave these to men that they might speak and understand God and praise his Creator, they abused this gift for the pretense of idols, according to what is written: “I gave them silver and gold; but they worked for Baal from my silver and gold” [[Hos 2:8](#)]. Therefore, although someone who has been terrified by the fear of the Lord [cf. [Isa 2:18, 19](#)] has at first set up *idols* in the caves of his heart, and has hidden in the abysses of the earth, not daring to bring forth what he had fashioned badly, second, he has made progress to the point that he casts forth the previously concealed things, and he does not allow [them] to exist in himself.

The word that we have translated *moles* is recorded in the Septuagint as “vanities.” Aquila rendered it ορυκτας, Symmachus “unfruitful things.” Theodotion put down the Hebrew word itself, *pharpharoth*. But it is an animal without eyes, which constantly digs in the ground, and removes soil, and because it eats the roots underneath, it is harmful to crops. The Greeks call it ασφαλακα. Now the *bat* is a nocturnal bird that has received a fitting name from the Greeks, νυκτερις, from the fact that it flies at night. It is a small animal and similar to mice, giving off not so much a voice and song as a screech. Though it may be seen flying, it avoids light and does

<sup>1126</sup> Cf. [Josephus, Ant 1.6.1.127](#).

<sup>1127</sup> Cf. Jerome, *Jon* 1, 3.

not endure the sight of the sun.

*Idols* and all doctrines that are contrary to truth are compared with living creatures of this sort, which being blind and darkened are worshiped by the blind. When these things are abandoned on the day of the Lord, those who have *cast them forth* into *fissures of rocks* and *caverns of stones* will enter, so as not to linger in the dust of the earth and in slimy mud, but in solid reason. And they discover for themselves different openings of the virtues, through which they may be able to reach the truth. With a few words I have touched upon these things anagogically to the best of my ability.<sup>1128</sup> The Hebrews refer these things to the Babylonian period and the overthrow of Jerusalem, when the Lord rose up to strike the land of the Jews.

66. (2:22) *Take rest therefore from the man whose breath is in his nostrils, for he himself is reputed high.* The Septuagint omitted this and in the Greek copies from Origen it was marked by asterisks, having been added from the edition of Aquila. It reads as follows in Hebrew: *Hedalu lachem men aadam aser nesama baaphpho chi bama nesab hu.* Where we have said, *He himself is reputed high*, Aquila translated, “In whom is he himself reputed?”

The Hebrew word is expressed as *bama*, or  $\upsilon\psi\omega\mu\alpha$ , that is “high thing,” which we read both in the Books of Kingdoms and in Ezekiel [cf. [1 Sam 9:12](#); [Ezek 6:6](#); [20:29](#)]; or at least “in whom” is written even in the same letters, *beth*, *mem*, *he*, and in view of the nature of the passages, if we want to read, “in whom,” we say *bamma*; but if we want to read “high thing,” or “high one,” we read *bama*. The Jews, therefore, understanding that it is a prophecy about Christ, translated the ambiguous word in a detrimental sense, so that they would not seem to be praising Christ, but valuing him as nothing. For what coherence in the words is there and what order of reason and understanding is there for us to say the following: Since these things are so, and the day of the Lord is coming, on which the whole state of Judea must be overthrown and everything must be destroyed, I warn you and I instruct you to *take rest* from the man who *breathes* in such a way and lives as we men; for he must be *reckoned* as nothing? Would anyone praise someone in such a way as to say: Beware lest you offend the one who is absolutely nothing?

Therefore it should be understood instead in the following way: Though all these things will come upon you and are predicted by the prophetic spirit, I warn and instruct you to *take rest* from him who is indeed a man according to the flesh and has a soul and thus *breathes* and draws breath through his nostrils, as we men breath and live, but according to the divine majesty he is lifted up and is *reputed* and is believed in. Though I have privately examined this in detail with a quiet mind, I am not able to discover the reason why the Septuagint was unwilling to translate into Greek so clear a prophecy of Christ. As for the other translators, who translated to be sure, but who twisted the ambiguous words into an impious meaning, it is no wonder they translated badly, since they did not want to say anything glorious about Christ in whom they did not believe. That is to say, they translated it like Jews, or like half-Jews, that is, the Ebionites.<sup>1129</sup>

But we read in the eighty-sixth Psalm that Christ is exalted, or the Most High, who is called by another term among the Hebrews, *helion*: “Will a man of Zion not say that a man was born

<sup>1128</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 28 (21, 5–4).

<sup>1129</sup> Jerome believed that Theodotion, one of the rival translators of the Hebrew Old Testament, was an Ebionite. Cf. [Vir III 54](#).

in her; and the Most High himself established her?” [Ps 87:5]. And in the Gospel: “And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High” [Luke 1:76]. And to keep from pulling the rope too tight—for in the exposition of the Holy Scriptures we ought to follow truth, not contention—in this passage the Hebrew does not use *bama*, “high one,” but “high thing,” that is, the very height and loftiness, as if we were to say about someone, he is not divine but divinity; he is not a brook but a spring; he is not a man but humanity itself.

Origen interpreted this passage as possibly referring to the Lord and Savior, since it is expressed properly of one man; for the prophet commands that they *take rest* from him who was reckoned as someone great, although at present it does seem that the man also has a passage for breath in his nostrils in the same way that other men breathe.

## [THE SECOND BOOK]

1. I have finished the first book on Isaiah, as I was able, not as I wanted, dictating it rapidly and searching carefully for the meaning of the Scriptures rather than for the words of an elegantly composed oration. Now I will move on to the second book, and whatever lies within my abilities and the Lord’s favorable will, I will offer to him who said through the prophet, “I have multiplied visions; and I have been represented in the hands of the prophets” [Hos 12:10]. This is why I beg you, virgin of Christ, Eustochium, that you, with Moses, lift up your hands to the Lord on my behalf as I struggle to explain the Scriptures, so that those who have come out of Egypt and passed through the Red Sea may conquer Amalek [cf. Exod 17:8–13], which means, “one who devours and licks up,” and we could say with you, “Blessed is the Lord my God, who trains my hands for battle and my fingers for war” [Ps 144:1].

2. (3:1) *For behold, the sovereign God will take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the mighty and the strong, the whole strength of bread and the whole strength of water.*

They think that up to this point he is speaking about judgment,<sup>11</sup> and what follows concerns the coming captivity that some refer to the Babylonians, others to the Romans. But it is preferable, as we have said above, to refer all these things to the Lord’s passion.<sup>22</sup> For after he was killed, all favors and gifts were taken away from the Jews according to what is written in the Gospel: “The law and the prophets [were] until John the Baptist” [Matt 11:13]. And there is a progression: Since you were unwilling to take rest from the man whose breath is in his nostrils, who was reputed as high [cf. Isa 2:22]; but instead you shed the blood of the just one and you planned a wicked counsel, saying, “Let us tie up the just one because he is useless to us” [Wis 2:12]; therefore, you will eat the fruit of your devices [cf. Isa 3:8]. After the Lord’s passion, there is nothing *strong* among the Jews, nothing *mighty*, but everything is weak and feeble, and no

1 Cf. *Eus Is* 29 (21, 19–8).

2 Cf. 1.35.

one among them can say, “I can do all things in him who strengthens me” [[Phil 4:13](#)], in Christ Jesus our Lord.<sup>33</sup>

And since according to the Septuagint we read, “Mighty man and mighty woman,” we can apply the following to the “mighty man”: “Until we all attain to the perfect man, in the measure of age” [[Eph 4:13](#)]. Furthermore, he says to the “mighty woman,” “I want all of you to present yourselves as a chaste virgin to Christ” [[2 Cor 11:2](#)]. Now *strength of bread* and *strength of water* are understood for all food and drink. We read that Moses was on Mount Sinai and for forty days did not eat *bread* or drink *water* [cf. [Exod 34:28](#)]. That too that is said to Adam should be received in a similar fashion: “By the sweat of your face you will eat your *bread*, until you return to the earth from which you were taken” [[Gen 3:19](#)]. And besides, there are the Savior’s words: “Not by *bread* alone does man live, but by every word that proceeds through the mouth of God” [[Matt 4:4](#)]. Therefore, the *strength of bread* will be taken away from them—that one who says, “I am the living bread, I who came down from heaven” [[John 6:51](#)]<sup>44</sup>—and the *strength of water* of which the same Lord was speaking: “Everyone who drinks from this water will thirst again; but he who drinks from the water which I will give him will not thirst forever, but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water welling up to eternal life” [[John 4:13–14](#)].<sup>44</sup> We read about this kind of *bread* in Proverbs as well: “Open your eyes and fill with *bread*” [[Prov 20:13](#)].

The Jews have *bread*, but without *strength*; they have *water*, but without power. For they read the Scriptures, but they do not understand them; they hold on to the parchments, but they have lost Christ, who was written into the parchments. For like infants they feed on milk, not solid food [cf. [1 Cor 3:2](#); [Heb 5:12–14](#)]. And because they have lost [their] *strength* and are weak, therefore they eat vegetables [cf. [Rom 14:1–2](#)]. But solid food is for athletes. It both sustains human life and supplies *strength* to the living. Another prophet testifies as well concerning *bread* and *water* of this sort, which is taken away from the Jews, saying, “Behold days are coming, says the Lord, and I will send out a famine on the earth; not a famine for *bread* or a thirst for *water*, but a famine for hearing the words of the Lord” [[Amos 8:11](#)].<sup>55</sup>

3. ([3:2](#)) *The strong [man] and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the soothsayer and the old man.* For *strong*, which is found by itself in the Hebrew, the Septuagint translated with two words linked together: the “giant and the strong [man],” meaning that the giant is the same [man] as the strong.

We have spoken above about the *strong* [cf. [Isa 3:1](#)]. Now in the eighteenth Psalm we read of *giant* in a good sense, that is, in connection with the Lord and Savior: “He rejoiced like a giant running down a road; his going forth is from the top of heaven, and his circuit is unto the end of it” [[Ps 19:5–6](#)].<sup>66</sup> But if, on the other hand, we read of Nimrod (*Nebroth*) the *giant*, who was a hunter before the Lord [cf. [Gen 10:8–9](#)], and of the giants on whose account the flood came on the earth [cf. [Gen 6:4–7](#)], these should be understood in the opposite sense.

Thus too do we understand *man of war* in accordance with history, because they were

3 Cf. *Bas Is* 99 (280AB).

4 Cf. *ibid.*, 100 (281A–).

5 Cf. *Eus Is* 29 (22, 1–).

6 Cf. *Bas Is* 101 (281C).

captured and until the present day they are slaves, and they have not laid down the yoke of their slavery. But to prevent them even from having their own judges, they are subject to Roman judges, so much so that Roman rulers judge concerning their rulers, who seem to exist among the people. Moreover, the following should be said: there is no *warrior* among them in the law, who has the knowledge to judge; but all things are vain and fallen and full of folly.

Now concerning *prophet*, no one doubts that he ceased to exist among them. We ask how we should translate *soothsayer* according to the Hebrew word, which everyone translated “diviner,” except for the Septuagint, which translated it “counselor” (*conjector*). And one should say that often the future is told even by foreigners, just as we read in the case of the diviner Balaam [cf. [Num 22–24](#)], and among the diviners of the five cities of the Palestinians, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, Ekron, and Ashdod, which give *counsel* how the ark of the Lord may be sent back [cf. [1 Sam 6:2–9, 17](#)].<sup>77</sup> And the meaning is that both true and false things will equally be taken away from the Jews.

He who knows that priests (*presbyteros*) in the holy Scriptures are chosen according to merit and wisdom, not age, understands that the *old man* too,<sup>88</sup> which the Septuagint translated “elder” (*presbyterum*), has been taken away from the Jews. For old men have not ceased to exist among the Jews, whom we see often reaching decrepit old age. And we read at the beginning of Daniel, according to Theodotion, of two inveterate “elders” of wicked days [cf. [Dan 13:28, 52](#)]. For it is even commanded to Moses that he should choose “elders” whom he knows are elders [cf. [Exod 18:13–26](#); [Num 11:16](#)]. And the Apostle Paul writes in great detail to Timothy what sort of “elder” ought to be chosen [cf. [1 Tim 3:2–7](#); [5:17–20](#); [Titus 1:5–9](#)]. This is also why it is said in the Proverbs, “Grey hair is the glory of old men” [cf. [Prov 20:29](#)]. What is this grey hair? There is hardly any doubt that it refers to wisdom, of which it is written, “Prudence is the grey hair of men” [[Wis 4:9 \(8\)](#)]. And since we have read that from Adam till Abraham men lived nine hundred years and more than that [cf. [Gen 5](#)], no other was previously called “elder,” that is, *old man*, except for Abraham, who is clearly shown to have lived for fewer years by far [cf. [Gen 18:11–12](#); [24:1](#)]. This is why even John, after speaking to the boys and young men, speaks also to the *old men*, saying, “I have written to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning” [[1 John 2:13](#)]. And the reason Rehoboam, son of Solomon, lost the kingdom was because he was unwilling to listen to the elders [cf. [1 Kgs 12:1–16](#)].

#### 4. ([3:3a](#)) *The leader over fifty.*

This is synecdoche, the whole from a part.<sup>99</sup> For just as those who are in charge of a hundred soldiers are called centurions, and they are called chiliarchs who are in charge of a thousand, whom we call tribunes from the fact they are in charge of a tribe, so in the Israelite army, they were called captains over fifty who were at the head of fifty soldiers [cf. [Exod 18:21, 25](#)]. This is also why we speak of *decems* who preside over ten men. It is not surprising if every office of warriors was lost among the Jews, since they do not have the authority to serve as sword-bearing soldiers and to carry weapons.

7 Cf. [Origen, Homily 16.7 on Numbers](#).

8 Cf. *Bas Is* 103–04 (285A–88B).

9 Cf. *ibid.*, 105 (288C).

In fact, because the number *fifty* always refers to penitence, and because the leader of penitence and the head of those who are being saved by penitence is Christ, let us briefly unfold the mysteries of this number. In Genesis we read that when Abraham was speaking to the Lord, he said that the city deserved to be saved, first, if up to *fifty* just men should be found in the city [cf. [Gen 18:22–26](#)]. And there are seven sevens in Numbers, that is, Pentecost is a very famous festival [cf. [Num 28:26–31](#); [Lev 23:15–16](#)]. The Jubilee too, that is, the year of remission, which is woven in every seven sevens of years, that is, every forty-nine years, in which the trumpets sound [cf. [Lev 25:8–10](#)] and ancient possessions are returned to all [cf. [Lev 25:10–13](#)]. This contains a mystery. For this reason as well David writes a psalm of penitence at the *fiftieth* number [cf. [Ps 51](#)]. We read too in the same Book of Numbers that the priests should receive the *fiftieth* head from the booty and the spoils, both of men and beasts, and the Levites should receive a *fiftieth*, who guard the doors of the tabernacle [cf. [Num 31:28–30](#)]. Also that parable of the Gospel refers to this meaning, in which two debtors are spoken of, one who owed five hundred denarii and the other *fifty* [cf. [Luke 7:41](#)]. This is also why the Apostle wants to remain among the Ephesians until Pentecost. He had solved certain mystical things for them [cf. [Eph 5:32](#)], until they are perfectly converted to the Lord [cf. [1 Cor 16:8](#)]. He says, “For a door has been opened for me, great and evident, but there are many adversaries” [[1 Cor 16:9](#)].

However, even the devil imitates the Israelite army, concerning whom Jethro had given counsel to Moses, his son-in-law, to appoint over the people tribunes and centurions<sup>110</sup> and *captains of fifty* [cf. [Exod 18:21](#)]. This is why an impious king sends two *captains of fifty* with soldiers who are subject to him to show Elijah, who were consumed by divine fire [cf. [2 Kgs 1:9–12](#)]. But the third of them is saved, who turned to prayer and recognized the mysteries of penitence [cf. [2 Kgs 1:13–15](#)]. This is also why the Jews, being unwilling that the Lord be the perfect and chief *captain of fifty*, say to him, “You are not yet *fifty* years old, and you have seen Abraham?” [[John 8:57](#)]. And he, knowing that he is not only the chief of the penitent ones, but also of the just, responded, “Before Abraham was, I am” [[John 8:58](#)]. Now we can understand that the Lord is the chief *captain of fifty* from a single festival, of which he says, “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” [[Matt 12:8](#)]; but if of the Sabbath, also of the calends;<sup>111</sup> if of the calends, also of the Passover, that is, unleavened bread [cf. [Exod 12:11, 17](#)]; if of the Passover, also of the Jubilee [cf. [Lev 25:10–54](#)]; if of the Jubilee, also of Tabernacles [cf. [2 Chr 8:13](#); [John 7:2](#)]; if of Tabernacles, also of Pentecost, which is related to the *fiftieth* number [cf. [Exod 34:22](#); [Tob 2:1](#); [2 Macc 12:32](#); [Acts 2:1](#); [20:16](#)].

5. (3:3a) *And the honorable in countenance and the counselor.* Instead of two men, that is, the *honorable in countenance and the counselor*, the Septuagint has translated this as one: “The admirable counselor.”

Among the other favors the Lord will remove from Judea, there is this one too, that they would have no *counselor* but would do everything without counsel. And there is also that admirable sentence of the worthy Greek poet: “First, he is fortunate who reasons for himself; second, he who listens to a reasonable man.”<sup>112</sup> Now the one who lacks both is useless both to himself and to everyone else. And this is why we read the following in our literature: “Let your

<sup>110</sup> Notice the use of anachronistic terms from Roman times.

<sup>111</sup> I.e., the first day of the month; cf. [Lev 23:24](#).



friends be many, but counselors one in a thousand” [[Sir 6:6](#)].<sup>113</sup> And again: “Do everything with counsel” [[Prov 13:10](#)]. And wisdom will give you an “admirable counselor.” Also the decrees of the senate are spoken of with this term, and the Roman rulers were once called *consuls*, either from *counseling* the citizens or from conducting everything by *counsel*. And we ourselves have our senate in the church, the assembly of priests (*presbyterorum*). So then, when among other things Judea lost the old men as well, how could it have counsel, since that belongs uniquely to elders?

6. (3:3b) *And the wise architect*. Aquila translated this “wisest craftsman,” to show that they once had many craftsmen. Such was that man Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, from the tribe of Judah, whom the Lord filled with the spirit of wisdom, understanding, and skill, so that he was a most perfect craftsman in every work, not only in gold and silver, but also in bronze and other things that Moses lists. He built the tabernacle of God [cf. [Exod 31:1–11](#)].<sup>114</sup>

Since they lost their *architects*, then, the whole grace of building was transferred to the church. This is why Paul says, “As a wise *architect*, I laid the foundation” [[1 Cor 3:10](#)].<sup>115</sup> And Jeremiah was an *architect*, who not only uprooted and undermined and destroyed [cf. [Jer 1:10](#)], but also built up [cf. [Jer 18:7–9](#)]. This is why the Apostle likewise says, “We are God’s field, God’s building” [[1 Cor 3:9](#)]. Our Lord too is called a builder of stone walls [cf. [Eph 2:14, 21](#)], and in the Gospel the one who created all things is affronted as “son of a carpenter” [cf. [Isa 58:12](#); [Matt 13:55](#)]. We also read in the first Book of Kings that King Solomon sent and brought Hiram of Tyre, the son of a widow who<sup>116</sup> was from the tribe of Naphtali, and he had a father from Tyre, a craftsman in bronze [cf. [1 Kgs 7:13–14](#)]. And he came before the king and made all the works for King Solomon; in him there is a type of building the church, which was generated not only from the tribe of Judah, but from Naphtali too and from a Tyrian father, who had a widow mother, because she had lost her first husband [cf. [Rom 7:2–3](#)]. And there are more sons by far of the desolate woman than of her who has the husband [cf. [Isa 54:1](#); [Gal 4:27](#)]. Moreover, in the Book of Chronicles, we read of a valley of craftsmen, “Now Seraiah was the father of Joab, the father of a valley of craftsmen; for craftsmen were there” [[1 Chr 4:14](#)]. They are said to live in the valley, because knowledge was not filling them with conceit [cf. [1 Cor 8:1](#)], but they followed the humble and meek Jesus [cf. [Matt 11:29](#)] and were able to say with the Apostle, “For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle” [[1 Cor 15:9](#)]. And elsewhere, “We know in part and we prophesy in part, and now we see through a mirror obscurely” [[1 Cor 13:9, 12](#)].

7. (3:3b) *And the wise in mystical speech*. The Septuagint translated this “wise hearer”; Theodotion, “wise enchanter”; Aquila, “wise whisperer”; Symmachus, “the wise in mystical

<sup>112</sup> [Hesiod, Works and Days 293–7](#). P. Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 61, thinks that Jerome may have borrowed this quotation from [Clement of Alexandria, Paedagogus 3.8](#) (PG 8:614 B; ANF [2.282](#)), who also applied it to the Scriptures.

<sup>113</sup> Notice how Jerome describes Sirach as being in “ur literature.”

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 107 (292A).

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (289D).

<sup>116</sup> I.e., the widow.



speech,” whom we too have followed in this passage.

One should say first in accordance with the Septuagint that among the other spiritual graces, even a “wise hearer” is necessary in the church. “For to one prophecy is given, to another discerning of spirits” [[1 Cor 12:10](#)]. This is also why priestly ranks had been appointed among the Jewish people, which distinguished prophets from false prophets; that is, they understood who spoke from the Spirit of God, who from an adverse spirit. Let us read Jeremiah [cf. [Jer 6:13](#); [14:14–16](#)].

Now the one who is *wise in mystical speech*, or a “whisperer” and, as Theodotion wanted to render it, “enchanter,” seems to me to be an educated man and one trained both in the law and the prophets as well as in the gospel and the apostles. He can heal individual disorders of the soul by his teaching and lead it back to a sound state of mind, as for example when a fornicator accepts chastity, a glutton temperance, as when a formerly greedy man gives alms. Winnow all the synagogues of the Jews and you would find no teacher who instructs holy things and teaches that wealth is to be despised and poverty to be pursued. In the psalm David was speaking about “enchanters” of this sort in opposition to serpents and asps, that is sinners, who have forsaken the justice of God: “Sinners are alienated from the womb; they have gone astray from birth, they have spoken what is false. Their fury is like that of the serpent; like that of a deaf asp and the one that stops its ears, which will not hear the voice of the enchanters and of the wisely curing poison” [[Ps 58:3–5](#)]. All the words of the apostle against serpents and asps are an incantation that sinners and heretics do not hear, because they close their ears so as not to hear the truth.

8. ([3:4](#)) *And I will give boys [to be] their rulers.*

If under the persona of the prophet it is said, “For behold, the sovereign God of hosts will take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the mighty man and mighty woman, the whole strength of bread and the whole strength of water,” and so on [cf. [Isa 3:1](#)]; how does the same prophet now say, *I will give boys [to be] their rulers and the effeminate will lord over them?* Since then the prophet is speaking according to prophetic usage, God suddenly speaks through the prophet under his own persona and says, *I will give boys [to be] their rulers.* For when those things that I had previously given have been removed, and when in my wrath I took away the good things, as it were, now instead I will give evils.<sup>117</sup> I removed the “old man and the captain of fifty and the admirable counselor and the wise architect and the prudent hearer,” and so on [cf. [Isa 3:2–3](#)]. In place of these, *I will give boys as rulers.*

For those ones rightly receive youth as rulers who have destroyed the kind of elder the words higher up have indicated, the kind of elder that Abraham was the first to be called [cf. [Gen 18:11–12](#); [24:1](#)]. We read about them in Ecclesiastes as well: “Woe to you, city, whose king is a youth and your rulers dine in the morning. Blessed is the land whose king is a son of freeborn men” [[Eccl 10:16–17](#)].<sup>118</sup> This is the kind of young king that Rehoboam the son of Solomon was. He followed the counsels of the youths [cf. [1 Kgs 12:6–16](#)]. This is not to say that he was a youth in his age, but in respect to wisdom. In any case the narrative relates that he received the kingdom at more than forty years of age [cf. [1 Kgs 14:21](#)]. And on the other hand,

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 108 (292C).

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (293A).

Solomon was twelve years old when he obtained power [cf. [1 Kgs 2:12](#)], and the reason he was not called a youth was because he had wisdom. For in him there was a breadth of heart and a depth of wisdom as great as the sand on the seashore [cf. [1 Kgs 4:29](#)].

This is also why the Apostle writes to Timothy, “Let no one despise your youth” [[1 Tim 4:12](#)]. For he who is a youth in age is an old man in maturity. And Daniel, according to Theodotion, before he acted as judge, is called a *boy* [cf. [Dan 13:45](#)]. But after God roused the spirit in him and he judged the old men, he received the office of elder [cf. [Dan 13:47–64](#)]. To Jeremiah too, who had said to the Lord who was sending him, “Sovereign Lord, you who are, behold I do not know how to speak, because I am a youth” [[Jer 1:6](#)], the Lord answered, “Do not say, ‘I am a youth’; for before you were formed in the womb, I knew you and before you came forth from your mother’s womb, I sanctified you [cf. [Jer 1:7](#)] and appointed you a prophet among the nations” [[Jer 1:5](#)].

And it is for this reason, I imagine, the Apostle commands young widows to take husbands and become mothers of households and to educate their children, because many had gone after Satan [cf. [1 Tim 5:15](#)]. And when they have grown luxuriant in Christ, they want to marry, bringing condemnation, because they have nullified their first pledge [cf. [1 Tim 5:14](#)]. A widow is not supported on church doles unless she is sixty years old and has maturity both of character and age [cf. [1 Tim 5:9](#)]. Someone may think that even the Apostle’s prohibition on a bishop being a neophyte pertains to this, because he is an infant in faith, lest having become puffed up in arrogance he may fall into the judgment of the devil [cf. [1 Tim 3:6](#)]. Now there is no other “judgment of the devil” except the judgment of pride, on account of which he fell from heaven [cf. [Isa 14:12–14](#)]. And this is why the Savior says, “I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven” [[Luke 10:18](#)].

9. (3:4) *And the effeminate will lord over them.* Here the Hebrew reads *thalulim*, which the Septuagint and Theodotion translated as “mockers,” Aquila as *εναλλακτας*, those who change themselves and mutually practice morally base acts. In the Book of Judges we read about this sort of thing in connection with the Levite’s concubine in Gibeah [cf. [Judg 19:14, 22–25](#)].

Let us consider the patriarchs of the Jews,<sup>119</sup> both young men, or boys, and those who are *effeminate* and abounding in luxury, and we will see that the prophecy has been fulfilled. We can also call the teachers of the people of Israel “mockers,” who devour the people of God like a dish of bread, and they interpret the Holy Scriptures perversely and they make a mockery of the foolishness of their disciples.

10. (3:5) *And the people will fall, man upon man, each upon his neighbor; a boy will make a tumult against an old man, and the ignoble against the noble.*

When the youth become rulers and mockers of the Lord of the kind the prophetic discourse is describing [cf. [Isa 3:4](#)], then no order of rank or age or knowledge will be preserved, but boys will rebel against old men and the ignoble against the nobles [cf. [2 Pet 2:13](#)], and they will mutually fall [cf. [Ps 14:3](#)]. And the apostolic words will be fulfilled: “Biting one another, you have been consumed by one another” [[Gal 5:15](#)]. Josephus writes that these things happened to the

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 29* (23, 15–8).

Jewish people under Titus, son of Vespasian,<sup>220</sup> and that when they were attacked by the Romans, there was in Jerusalem a sedition divided into three factions; some held the citadel and the temple, others the lower part of the city, and others the upper part.

11. (3:6) *For a man will take hold of his own brother, one of the house of his father. "You have clothing, be our ruler; but [let] this ruin [be] under your hand."* For ruin, Symmachus and Theodotion translated "infirmity"; the Septuagint, "food."

But it signifies the scarcity of men and especially the lack of all things, because the one who has "food" and *clothing* is believed to be powerful, rich and illustrious. Now what he says in accordance with the Hebrew word, *Let this ruin be under your hand*, has this meaning: Let our misery and calamity be supported and protected by your assistance. And this should be considered: that each one is choosing individual rulers for himself and in the selection of rulers there is sedition, since some think that others deserve to rule. They do not say to them, Your possessions and wealth and revenue can sustain us, but that "infirmity" will be healed, or my "food" will depend on your decision.

12. (3:7) *And he will answer on that day, saying, "I am not a doctor, and there is no bread or clothing in my house; do not appoint me ruler of the people."* For doctor, Symmachus and the Septuagint translated "ruler"; Theodotion, *ἐπιδεδουμένοντα*, one who bandages wounds and provides healing. *He will answer* is not found in the Hebrew, but it was added from the Septuagint. For the Hebrew adds to these things that were written above, *On that day*, he will say, *I am not a doctor*, and so on. But he will say, who was chosen ruler. And just as the people who desire to have him as ruler whom it understands to be wealthier by comparison with themselves, so he who is chosen, when he considers his own poverty and weakness, testifies that he is unworthy of the honor conferred; he is unable to heal their vices, that is, to cure the listless, to give food to the hungry, to clothe the naked, he who himself is scarcely strong enough to support himself.

Therefore let us not immediately give in to the judgment of the multitude, but when we are chosen to be put in charge, let us recognize our own measure, and let us be humble under the mighty hand of God [cf. [1 Pet 5:6](#)], because God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble [cf. [1 Pet 5:5](#)]. At what price do those who do not have bread and clothing promise both nourishment and clothes to others,<sup>221</sup> when they themselves are hungry and naked and do not have spiritual food and do not keep the tunic of Christ intact [cf. [John 19:23–24](#)]? And being full of wounds, they boast that they are doctors! They do not keep the word of Moses: "Provide another whom you may send" [[Exod 4:13](#)]; and another command: "Do not seek to become a judge, lest you be unable to remove iniquities" [[Sir 7:6](#)]. Jesus alone heals all illnesses and infirmities, of whom it is written, "He who heals the contrite of heart and binds their sorrows" [[Ps 147:3](#)].

13. (3:8–9a–b) *For Jerusalem is collapsing and Judah is falling, because their tongue and their devices are against the Lord, so that they have provoked the eyes of his majesty. (9) The knowledge of their face has answered for them, and they have proclaimed their sin like Sodom, they have not concealed it.*

<sup>220</sup> Cf. [Josephus, De Bello Iud. 5.1–0](#); *Bas Is* 110 (296B).

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 112 (300BC).

It is the prophet who says this, not, as the majority think, the one who had been chosen as ruler. And he says that the reason no one wants to preside over a sinful people is because both Judah and Jerusalem, both the city and the Judean province, or the tribe of Judah, have fallen together. And he reports the grounds of their impiety, that they have blasphemed against the Lord and said, “Take him away, take him away, crucify him; we have no ruler but Caesar” [[John 19:15–16](#)].<sup>222</sup> And by the raging of *their tongue they have provoked* to bitterness the most clement God, and *the knowledge of their face will respond for them*, that is, they have received back for their own sins, or as the Septuagint translated, “The confusion of their face has withstood them,” that is, before their own eyes they have always had unique transgressions.<sup>223</sup> And just as the Sodomites sinned with all freedom and were not even ashamed of their wickedness, saying to Lot, “Bring the men outside that we may lie with them” [[Gen 19:5](#)]; so also these people proclaim publicly and have *declared* their sin. They had no modesty in their blasphemy. For after a shipwreck there is a second plank;<sup>224</sup> there is a consolation of miseries: to hide one’s wickedness.<sup>225</sup> This is also why they are called “rulers of Sodom”: they had Sodom-like sins [cf. [Isa 1:10](#)].

14. ([3:9c–11](#)) *Woe to their soul, for the evils have been rendered to them. (10) Say to the just man, that it is well, since they have eaten the fruit of their own devices. (11) Woe to the one who is wicked in respect to evil, for the retribution of his hands will become his.*

According to the Hebrew word and the other translators, it has this meaning: woe to them because they have received back for their own crimes. Therefore, you who hear or who read the book of the prophet, praise the justice of God, because he has done good, because the wicked *have eaten* the works of their hands [cf. [Ps 128:2](#)]. And *woe* to the people who are *wicked in respect to evil*, for they have received back what they earned. And those who handed over their own ruler to the Roman authority [cf. [John 19:15–16](#)] are themselves subject to Roman servitude.

Now according to the Septuagint translators, it says, “Woe to their soul, because they have devised an evil counsel against themselves, saying, ‘Let us bind the just one, because he is useless to us; and so, they will eat the fruit of their works’ ” [[Isa 3:10](#); cf. [Wis 2:12](#)]. This is clearly spoken concerning the suffering of Christ, since they entered into a wicked counsel, not so much against the “Just One” as against themselves and against their own soul, and now they are “eating the fruit of their works.” “For what a man sows, that also shall he reap” [[Gal 6:8](#)], and “each one will carry his own load” [[Gal 6:5](#)].

15. ([3:12a](#)) *Their own exactors have despoiled my people, and women have lorded over them.* For *women*, which Symmachus alone has translated as it is expressed in Hebrew, as *nasim*, Aquila and the Septuagint translated  $\alpha\pi\alpha\iota\tau\omicron\upsilon\nu\tau\alpha\varsigma$ , which signifies “exactors”; Theodotion  $\delta\alpha\nu\epsilon\lambda\sigma\tau\alpha\varsigma$ , that is “money lenders” (*feneratores*).

Now the prophetic words are spoken against the scribes and Pharisees, who denied the Son of God for the sake of dishonest gain, that they might receive tithes and first-fruits [cf. [1 Pet](#)

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 29 (23, 6–0).

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 113 (301AB).

<sup>224</sup> Cf. [Jerome Ep. 117, 3, 2](#).

<sup>225</sup> Cf. [Tertullian, De Paenit 4.2; 7.10](#).

[5:2](#)].<sup>226</sup> And he does not call the scribes and doctors teachers, but *exactors*, who think that religion is profit [cf. [1 Tim 6:5](#)]; and according to the Apostle they devour not only the homes of widows, but the entire people [cf. [Mark 12:40](#); [Ps 14:4](#)]. And he accuses their luxury and dishonest way of life, calling them not merely *exactors*, so that they apparently exact money from the unwilling, but *women*, because everything they do is on account of lust, and they are devoted to pleasure. Let us too beware, then, and let us not be *exactors* among the people; let not our senate be comprised of matrons and *women*, in accordance with the irreligious Porphyry,<sup>227</sup> [women] who lord over the churches. And let not the favor of females make judgments concerning the priestly office.

16. ([3:12b](#)) *O my people, they who call you blessed, they themselves deceive and destroy, or disturb, the way of your steps.*

He had called the scribes and Pharisees “exactors,” not teachers [cf. [Isa 3:12a](#)], and above [he called them] “mockers” [cf. [Isa 3:4](#)], who for the sake of gifts that blind the eyes even of the wise [cf. [Deut 16:19](#)], not only were failing to rebuke the sinners among the people,<sup>228</sup> but for the sake of wealth and profits were extolling [them] with praises, calling [them] blessed and pillars of the house of God, and the other things that flatterers are accustomed to say.

He is a teacher of the church, then, who provokes tears, not laughter, who rebukes sinners, who calls no one happy, no one blessed. He does not anticipate the verdict of his judge, since Holy Scripture says, “Do not call any man blessed before death” [[Sir 11:30](#)].<sup>229</sup> Moreover, in another passage we read, “He who blesses his friend with a loud voice in the morning is no different from one who curses” [[Prov 27:14](#)].

This is why we should spurn the judgments of men and not be puffed up by their praises, nor made sorrowful by their detractions. Instead, let us walk down the right *way* and the paths trodden by the holy prophets. And let us listen to Jeremiah, who says, “Stand on the *ways* and see; and ask for the eternal paths of the Lord, which is the good way, and walk on it” [[Jer 6:16](#)]. But if, when we have gone astray and as human beings have continued down a crooked road, we should await the promises of the Lord through Ezekiel. The Lord says, “I will give them another *way* and another heart” [[Ezek 36:26](#)].

But the exactors have perverted and disturbed the Lord’s *way*, so that, though they have the key of knowledge, they have not entered themselves nor have they allowed the people to enter [cf. [Luke 11:52](#); [Matt 23:14](#)], but they have caused them to lose the *way* of truth, which says in the Gospel, “I am the *way* and the life and the truth” [[John 14:6](#)].

17. ([3:13–14a](#)) *The Lord stands to judge, and he stands to judge the people. (14) The Lord will come for judgment with the elders (senibus) of his people and with their rulers.*

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 30 (24, 15–8).

<sup>227</sup> Porphyry (232–05), a disciple of Plotinus, was a prestigious Neoplatonic philosopher and historical critic, who in 268 wrote in fifteen books a ferocious attack, entitled *Against the Christians*, in which he tried to point out the contradictions in the Christian Scriptures. He was refuted by Eusebius, Methodius, and Apollinaris, whose works were known to Jerome. Cf. Porph., *Chr.* 97.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 30 (24, 20–2).

<sup>229</sup> Notice how Jerome calls this “euterocanonical” book “oly Scripture.”

The people who were deceived because of simplicity and inexperience are still called the people of God, and the reason they are judged is in order that they may be saved. The Lord does not *sit* in the state of one judging, as we read in Daniel: “Thrones were set in place and the books were opened” [[Dan 7:9–10](#)]; but he *stands to judge*, and he *stands* in order *to judge the people*, wanting them to *stand*, whose way had been destroyed. Against the rulers, however, and the *elders* (*presbyteros*) of his people he *comes for judgment*, so that he does not judge but is equally judged. He gives them an opportunity for defense, in case they may have anything to say in response, in accordance with what is said in the fiftieth Psalm: “That you may be judged in your words and conquer when you are judged” [[Ps 51:4](#)]. In the prophet Micah too, we read something like this, which we have translated in its own passage [cf. [Mic 6:1–2](#)].<sup>330</sup> Therefore, the present passage is interpreted as being against the Pharisees and the δευτερωτας.<sup>331</sup> I think that the [difference] that now exists between the priests (*presbyteros*) and bishops existed between the elders (*senes*) and rulers in the ancient people.

18. ([3:14b–15](#)) *For you have devoured my vineyard; the plunder of the poor is in your house.* (15) *Why do you wear down my people and soften, or crush, the faces of the poor?* And as the Septuagint translated, “confound.”

He preserves prophetic usage in that he suddenly changes the personas; for above the Lord himself had said, “O my people, they who call you blessed, themselves deceive you” [[Isa 3:12](#)]; afterward the prophet had added, “The Lord stands to judge; the Lord will come for judgment” [[Isa 3:13–14](#)]. Therefore, after the prophet, the Lord himself, who had come for judgment with the elders of his people and with its rulers [cf. [Isa 3:13–14a](#)], speaks to them and rebukes the transgressors: *Why do you consume my vineyard*, of which it is written, “You have transferred the vineyard from Egypt” [[Ps 80:8](#)]? And in this same prophet, “The vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth is the house of Israel” [[Isa 5:7](#)]. And in the Gospel the Lord leased this *vineyard* to wicked farmers who killed the householder’s son who had been sent to them [cf. [Matt 21:33–39](#)].

*The plunder of the poor*, he says, *is in your houses*. Understand *poor* either literally, he who is in need of alms, or possibly the “*poor* in spirit” [cf. [Matt 5:3](#)], of whom it is written, “Blessed is he who thinks about the needy and the *poor*” [[Ps 41:1](#)]. And the Apostle Paul says, “Only that we should remember the *poor*” [[Gal 2:10](#)].

And what follows is clearly addressed to the rulers of the Jews: *Why do you wear down my people and soften, or “confound,” the faces of the poor?* But it can also refer to our rulers, if they *wear down* the people subject to them and publicly rebuke and “confound” the *poor* who

<sup>330</sup> Cf. Jerome, *In Michaeam* 2.

<sup>331</sup> The Greek word *deuterotes* means “epeater” (*deuterosis* = “epetition” and refers to scholars who memorized texts of the Mishna and recited them in the colleges before the Rabbis. Cf. Braverman, *Jerome’s Commentary on Daniel: A Study of Comparative Jewish and Christian Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1978), 7; Jerome, *Commentary on Habakkuk* 2:15–7; [Ep. 121](#); [Eusebius, PE 11.5](#) (513C; M21.825B); M. J. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea’s Commentary on Isaiah: Christian Exegesis in the Age of Constantine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 145–3.



transgress, but do not dare even to make a sound<sup>332</sup> against those who commit worse sins. And *the plunder of the poor is in their houses*, when they replenish their treasures and use<sup>333</sup> the wealth of the church for pleasures, and they either keep for themselves public donations, which were given to support the poor, or they distribute them to their neighbors and turn someone else's poverty into their own wealth and that of their family.

19. (3:16) *And the Lord said, Because the daughters of Zion have been lifted up and have walked with outstretched necks and were going along with wanton glances of their eyes and were clapping and walking and moving their feet with a composed gait.*

Above both the prophet and the Lord had chastised the people and the rulers [cf. [Isa 3:13–14a](#)]. Now the prophetic discourse turns to the women of whom he had previously said, “And women have lorded over them” [[Isa 3:12](#)]. This is to prevent them from thinking that they are free from fault, on account of whose pleasures and excess the exactors have devoured the Lord's vineyard; and the plunder of the poor is in their houses, and they have worn down his people and confounded the faces of the poor [cf. [Isa 3:14–15](#)].

Some think these truly are Jewish women, others think that it is said metaphorically about the cities of Judea, that is to say, smaller cities, towns, and villages, which are called *daughters of Zion*. This is also why in the Book of Joshua the names of cities are recorded according to individual tribes, and later on villas and strongholds are described, and they are named *daughters* [cf. [Josh 15:20–63](#)].

Others think that the women refer tropologically to souls, which, if they walk with an outstretched neck and raise themselves up in pride, and if they have not pursued masculine toughness, but the dissoluteness that is associated with females, they are chastised by the prophetic words and lose all the adornments of the virtues. These are described under the terms “little crescent moons, necklaces, chains and bracelets, headbands and head dresses” and other things of this sort [cf. [Isa 3:18–20](#)].

One should also make use of this testimony against women of the church who walk with an *outstretched neck*, who speak with *wanton glances* of the eyes, who *clap* both hands and *feet*, and who do not follow the lead of nature, but hire actors as their trainers in order to be able to walk with a *composed gait*.

20. (3:17) *The Lord will make bald the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion and he will expose their hair, and in place of adornment there will be shame.*

This will also happen to us whose sins are concealed, when what is written is fulfilled: “There is nothing hidden that will not be revealed” [[Luke 8:17](#)]. For as long as we are covered with the *hair* and garment of ignorance, and people think that we are whitewashed tombs, we who on the inside are full of the bones of dead men [cf. [Matt 23:27](#)], we seem to have some cleanness. But when what is hidden is laid bare, all long *hair* will be removed and a hideous baldness will be apparent to everyone.

<sup>332</sup> *Muttum*, var. *mu*. “e does not even dare say mu” (μηδὲ γρὺ φθέγγεται) is an ancient adage referring to those who are too frightened to utter a sound. According to Erasmus of Rotterdam, it originated because mutes can make no sound except *mu*. Cf. Desiderius Erasmus, *Adages* I, viii, 2.

<sup>333</sup> *Abutuntur*, which also means “isuse.”



21. (3:18a) *On that day the Lord will take away the apparel of shoes.*

On which day? The Jews think of the Babylonian captivity. We are convinced that it more truly refers to the time when they were captured by the Romans and they lost all the adornments of clothing and jewels, gold and necklaces, and various outfits; or using the metaphor of “women,” he is narrating that all the *apparel* of the cities has been destroyed. Understand the *adornments* of the cities as referring to streets and colonnades, the forum and the gymnasia, and the city walls.

If we refer these things to the condition of souls, let us recall that we have read that the one who is about to consume the flesh of the lamb and celebrate the Passover has *shoes* on his feet [cf. [Exod 12:11](#)], and neither the clothing nor the *shoes* of those who passed through the desert wore out [cf. [Deut 29:5](#)].<sup>334</sup> Which *shoes* does this refer to? The same ones of which the Apostle writes to the Ephesians, “Have your feet shod in the readiness of the gospel of peace” [[Eph 6:15](#)]. These *shoes* of the soul will perish when they have walked with an outstretched neck [cf. [Isa 3:16](#)] and have dragged garments under their feet, so that in place of the cleanliness of a matron, they sweep the filth of the ground.

22. (3:18b–20) *And little crescent moons (19) and chains and necklaces and bracelets and headbands, (20) headdresses and anklets and little fish necklaces and little scent bottles and earrings and rings and jewels hanging on the forehead.*

He is describing women’s *necklaces*, and by this means the adornment of cities, or, anagogically, the jewelry of various virtues. Women have little round amulets hanging down that resemble the moon, which we transfer to the adornment of the church, which is illuminated by the sun of justice [cf. [Mal 4:2](#)]. They have *chains* that hang down to the chest. These point to the intelligence and principal part of the mind in the heart. The *necklaces* signify all the jewelry with a single word, and the good works of *bracelets* are those of the sort that Rebecca received at her betrothal [cf. [Gen 24:22, 30, 47](#)]. They have *headbands*, jewelry for the head, and *headdresses*, so that it might have the ability to make judgments about particular things. They have περισκελιδας (*anklets*) with which our gait is adorned, and we hear, “Your foot will not stumble” [cf. [Ps 17:5](#); [91:12](#); [116:8](#); [Prov 3:6, 23](#)]; and, “He will keep my feet from falling” [cf. [Ps 56:13](#)]; and the little *fish*-shaped ornaments that are woven from strands of gold and silver, that is to say, from the meaning and words of the Scriptures. They have *little scent bottles*, in order that we may be a good aroma of Christ [cf. [2 Cor 2:15](#); [Isa 33:15](#)]; and *earrings*, lest we should hear a judgment of blood, but the words of the Lord who says, “He who has ears to ear, let him hear” [cf. [Matt 11:15](#); [Luke 8:18](#)]; and the *rings* with which we are sealed for the Lord’s army, a ring that God the Father sealed [cf. [John 6:27](#)]. This is why it is said to the prince of Tyre, “You are a seal of resemblance” [cf. [Ezek 28:12](#)]. The prodigal son too received a *ring* along with a robe and shoes [cf. [Luke 15:22](#)]<sup>334</sup>—and *jewels* hanging on his forehead with which our countenance is adorned, concerning whose head’s adornment we also read in the psalm: “As oil on the head, which comes down on the beard, the beard of Aaron” [[Ps 133:2](#)].

Although the Septuagint translators, as well as Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion translated all these things in different ways, we have expressed them as we were able, either from the Hebrew or from their translations. We do not want to delay any longer in the details,

<sup>334</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 125 (321A).

lest it become a frivolous exposition and tedious for the intelligent reader.

23. (3:22) *And changes of apparel and short cloaks and linen cloths.* For *linen cloths* the Septuagint translated, “transparent Spartan dresses.” They wanted to signify the very thin clothes with which the bodies of Spartans were covered, who were always ready for war and were of a rather austere life, although neither the Hebrew nor any other of the translators has “Spartan.” But *changes of apparel* and *short cloaks*, which Symmachus translated quite meaningfully as ἀναζολλαια, are adornments on women’s clothing with which the shoulders and chest are covered.

Anagogically, *changes of apparel* are those things of which it is said, “They will go from strength to strength” [Ps 84:7]; and the *linen cloths*, so that when we have been washed we may enjoy delights in the Lord in accordance with what is written in the Psalms: “And you will give them to drink of the torrent of your pleasure” [Ps 36:8]. But the daughters of Zion lost all of these things, because they walked with an outstretched neck [cf. Isa 3:16] and harbored arrogance with wanton glances of their eyes, thinking that what they had was by their own power, and not by the Lord’s grace.

24. (3:22–23) *And hairpins (23) and mirrors and fine linen and headbands and summer garments.*

Women have *hairpins* with which the framework of their ornate hair is held together, lest it flow too loosely and one or two stray hairs might escape. They also have *mirrors* in which they stare at their faces and, if they see anything missing, they add it to their adornment. They have *fine linens*, which are called scarves; and *headbands* with which their hair is bound, which they call ταινιάς. And they have *summer garments*, which we can call skirts, in which even Rebekah was wrapped [cf. Gen 24:65],<sup>335</sup> and even today the women of Arabia and Mesopotamia are covered. In Hebrew these are called *ardidim*, in Greek θερίστρα, from the fact that in the θέρει, that is, in the summer and scorching heat, they cover the bodies of females.

The daughters of Zion, then, have lost their *hairpins* on account of pride, the pins with which the rule of all the precepts were being bound. They lost their *mirrors*, which in Exodus the women waiting at the door of the tabernacle offered for the construction of the Lord’s laver [cf. Exod 38:8]. Even the Apostle Paul spoke of these: “But we see now through a *mirror* obscurely” [1 Cor 13:12]. They lost their *fine linens* and *headbands* with which they were covering their shoulders and binding their mind from flowing here and there, and their *summer garments*, a very protective shade-giving piece of clothing with which they were covered in the summertime. We are saying these things in order that we should not seem to be entirely avoiding the tropology of this passage. However that may be, it is a matter of very great effort to linger in the details and to look for an expansive explanation.

25. (3:24a–b) *And instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench, and instead of a girdle, a cord.*

The one who says, “My sores have become putrid and corrupt because of my foolishness” [Ps 38:5], regrets the *stench* of his sins. The Apostle commanded the loins to be wrapped with a *girdle*, saying, “Stand firm, having girded your loins in the truth” [Eph 6:14]. And we read of the

<sup>335</sup> He may have meant Tamar; cf. Gen 38:14. Cf. Bas Is 129 (328C).

sinner, “Each one is bound in the ropes of his own sins” [[Prov 5:22](#)].<sup>336</sup> Therefore, instead of the good *smell* of the virtues, the daughters of Zion will have the stink of sins; and instead of the belt of truth, they will be bound with the cords of falsehood, which those had on their heads who were praying with sackcloth and filth for the life of the king of Syria [cf. [1 Kgs 20:31–32](#)].

26. ([3:24d](#)) *And in place of a chest wrap, haircloth.* For *chest wrap*, which is Symmachus’s translation, the Septuagint translated  $\mu\epsilon\sigma\sigma\omicron\pi\omicron\rho\phi\upsilon\rho\alpha\nu$  tunic, that is, a tunic furnished with a purple stripe, which Aquila expressed as “sash of exultation.” Theodotion recorded the very Hebrew word itself, *phthigil*, which is a kind of feminine adornment.

A *wrap* covers the chest and occupies that place in females that reason holds among chief priests [cf. [Exod 28:29](#)]. Jeremiah too spoke of this chest wrap in mystical words: “If a bride can forget her adornment or a virgin her *chest wrap*, I also will forget you, says the Lord” [[Jer 2:32](#)]. The Apostle desires that we present ourselves to Christ as a virgin of this sort [cf. [2 Cor 11:2](#)], as long as she is not corrupted in Egypt and her breasts are not touched [cf. [Ezek 23:3, 21](#)], which were fastened with the *chest wrap*; and she is joined to the bridegroom; and although she daily bears the sons of the virtues, by no means does she cease being a virgin. But if she ever spreads her legs to every passerby [cf. [Ezek 16:25](#)] and follows her own lovers [cf. [Hos 2:7](#)], and, according to the prophecy of Hosea, the Lord has fenced in her ways and closed off her paths [cf. [Hos 2:6](#)], she will return to her former husband and will hear, “Put off the garment of mourning and put on clothing of your glory” [[Bar 5:1](#)].

27. ([3:25](#)) *The fairest of your men also will fall by the sword, and your strong ones in battle.* For *fairest men*, the Septuagint translated, “And your fairest son, whom you love, will fall by the sword.”

But if we understand this concerning the condition of the soul that has committed sin after being virtuous, we may understand its “fairest son” as good works, which have fallen to an enemy’s sword, and that the *strong ones* too have perished in battle, because “the justice of the just man will not deliver him on whichever day he goes astray” [[Ezek 33:12](#)]. But if we follow the historical narrative, we will be taught from these words that the words of the prophet are not about women whose husbands have fallen in battle, but about cities of Judea that he has called daughters of Zion and whose warriors have fallen in combat. After all, the little verse that follows speaks about the same Zion.

28. ([3:26](#)) *And her gates will mourn and grieve and the city itself will sit desolate on the ground,* which we perceive with our eyes up to the present day.

A tropological interpretation is easy, that whoever gives room to the devil [cf. [Eph 4:27](#); [Prov 4:23](#)] and does not guard his heart with all watchfulness, his *gates mourn*, and while the bridegroom is absent, he is always in mourning [cf. [Matt 9:15](#); [Mark 2:20](#)], and falling from the heights he sits in the dust of the *ground*.

29. ([4:1](#)) *And on that day seven women will seize one man, saying, “We will eat our own bread, and be covered with our own clothes; only let us be called by your name. Take away our reproach.”*

Since the fairest [men] of the city of Jerusalem will have fallen by the sword [cf. [Isa 3:25–26](#)], and the strong will have perished in battle; and her gates will have mourned and fallen apart;

<sup>336</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 131 (329C).

and she will have become desolate on account of the extreme scarcity of men, with her warriors having been killed, *seven women will seize one man*, desiring to have offspring in Zion and family members in Jerusalem [cf. [Isa 31:9](#)]. They will claim to have their own clothing and food, only let them not seem to be without a husband and be subject to that curse which is written, “Cursed is the barren woman and she who does not produce offspring in Israel” [cf. [Exod 23:26](#); [Deut 7:14](#)]. Zechariah too agrees with this sense: “In those days ten men from all the languages of the nations will seize the hem of a Jewish man, saying: ‘We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you’ ” [[Zech 8:23](#)]. The numbers seven and ten are familiar to the Jews on account of the Sabbath and the ten commandments of the law, and therefore they use them frequently, although according to the ambiguity of Hebrew speech, which translates the word *saba* sometimes “seven,” sometimes “many,” sometimes “oath,” it is possible that in this passage it does not mean *seven* but “many.” This is [said] according to the letter.

However that may be, at the coming of the Lord and Savior, *seven women*, that is, seven holy spirits of grace,<sup>337</sup> will seize Jesus, whom they had desired for a very long time, because they were able to find no one else, in whom they could rest at an eternal stopping point. Of [these spirits], the same prophet will say in what follows, “There will come forth a shoot from the root of Jesse and a flower will rise up out of his root; and the Spirit of God will rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and fortitude, a spirit of knowledge and piety; and the spirit of the fear of God will fill him” [[Isa 11:1–3](#)]. This is also why John the Baptist relates in the Gospel, “And he who sent me himself said to me: ‘Upon whom you see the Holy Spirit descending and remaining in him, he is the one’ ” [[John 1:33](#)]. In Zechariah too we read that there were *seven eyes* upon one stone [cf. [Zech 3:9](#)] and in one golden candlestick there were *seven lamps* and *seven pouring vessels* [cf. [Zech 4:2](#)], and two olive trees founded with solid roots on each side of the lamp [cf. [Zech 4:3, 12](#)]. Now that the grace of the Holy Spirit possesses all things does not require an explanation. But because she always suffered reproach among men, since no one lived as the gifts of the Holy Spirit demanded, for this reason they desire that the *name* of Jesus *be invoked upon* them, so that what had been incomplete in the law might be fulfilled in the gospel.

30. ([4:2–3](#)) *On that day the sprout of the Lord will be in magnificence and in glory, and the fruit of the earth lofty, and there will be exultation for those who will be saved from Israel. (3) And it will be: all who will be left in Zion and remain in Jerusalem will be called holy, all who are written in life in Jerusalem.*

When the daughters of Zion will have destroyed every adornment on account of pride [cf. [Isa 3:16, 18](#)], and when her gates have mourned and wept [cf. [Isa 3:26](#)] and she herself has fallen desolate, and all her warriors have perished in battle [cf. [Isa 3:25](#)], to such an extent that a number of women will hardly be able to have one husband [cf. [Isa 4:1](#)]; at that time the *sprout* of the Christian name will arise, and the earth will give its *fruit*; and *there will be exultation for those who will be saved from Israel*. It was also spoken of them above, “If the Lord Sabaoth had not left us a seed, we would have been like Sodom and we would have become like Gomorrah” [[Isa 1:9](#)].<sup>338</sup> And note that not all Israel will be saved, but a remnant of the people of Zion and

<sup>337</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 31 (26, 7–1); *Bas Is* 134 (336B–); [Jerome Is Hom 3](#).

<sup>338</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 32 (26, 25–9; 27, 4–).

those who remain in Jerusalem, everyone who is written in life in Jerusalem, to whom the Lord said, “Rejoice because your names are written in heaven” [[Luke 10:20](#)].<sup>339</sup> Now this signifies the apostles and those who have believed through the apostles.

31. (4:4) *When the Lord will cleanse the filth of the daughters of Zion and wash the blood of Jerusalem from its midst by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning*, then a remnant from Israel will be saved, when their sins will be forgiven them in the baptism of the Savior,<sup>440</sup> and that blood is washed away that the erring people invoked upon themselves: “May his blood be upon us and upon our sons” [[Matt 27:25](#)]. Hence we read above, “When you stretch out your hands, I will not hear you, for your hands are covered with blood” [[Isa 1:15](#)]. And later, summoning them to repentance, he adds, “Be washed, be clean” [[Isa 1:16](#)].

Observe also that he will *wash the filth of the daughters of Zion* by a *spirit of judgment*, but the *blood of Jerusalem* by a *spirit of burning*. For what is light is washed, but what is heavier is burned off. John the Baptist spoke about this *spirit of judgment* and *spirit of burning* in the Gospel:<sup>441</sup> “I baptize you in water, but the one who comes after me will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and fire” [[Matt 3:11](#)]. From this we learn that man provides only the water, but God supplies the Holy Spirit, by means of whom both the *filth* is washed away and the sins of *blood* are purged.

32. (4:5a–b) *And the Lord will create upon every place of Mount Zion, and where he is called upon, a cloud by day and smoke and the brightness of a flaming fire at night.*

For in Christ there is a new creation, of which we read elsewhere, “Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” [[2 Cor 5:17](#)].<sup>442</sup> The Septuagint translated this, “And he will come, and there will be every place of Mount Zion, and by day a cloud will cover everything that is round about it, and the light of a flaming fire at night.” But who will come, if not him of whom it is written, “He who delivers will come from Zion” [[Isa 59:20](#); cf. [Rom 11:26](#)], and of whom another prophet records, “Still a little while, he who is coming will come and will not delay”? [cf. [Heb 10:37](#); [Isa 26:20](#); [Hab 2:3](#)].<sup>443</sup> When he comes, their former happiness that they once had in the desert will be restored to the people, when the Lord went ahead of them by day in the pillar of cloud and by night in the pillar of fire, so that at no time were they disturbed, either in prosperity or in adversity [cf. [Exod 13:21](#)].<sup>444</sup> For it is also said in the psalm, “The sun will not burn you by day, nor the moon by night” [[Ps 121:6](#)].

Now according to the opinion of some, *smoke* in this passage does not signify error and ignorance, but glory, in accordance with what we will read in this same prophet: “And the house was filled with *smoke*” [[Isa 6:4](#)]. And in Joel it is said concerning the grace of the Holy Spirit that came down upon the apostles, “I will pour out from my Spirit and they will prophesy, and I will give prodigies in the sky above and signs in the earth below, blood and fire and the fume of *smoke*” [[Joel 2:29–30](#); cf. [Acts 2:18–19](#)]. I think that the following words in the Psalms signify

<sup>339</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 136 (340B).

<sup>440</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 32 (27, 3–9, 26–2; 28, 1–).

<sup>441</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 137 (340D–41A)

<sup>442</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 32 (28, 9–1).

<sup>443</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (28, 5–).

<sup>444</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 32 (28, 15–5).

this same thing: “He who touches the mountains and they will *smoke*” [[Ps 104:32](#)].

33. ([4:5c–6](#)) *But [there will be] protection over all the glory. (6) And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat and for a security, and cover from the storm and from rain.*

The Jews refer this passage to the antichrist, whom they think is signified by *storm* and tempest, when the Lord will defend them from their most powerful adversary. But we should refer everything to the first coming of Christ, of which we read in the Psalms, “He covered me in the hidden part of the tabernacle; he lifted me to the rock” [[Ps 27:4–5](#)]. The church [is] founded upon this rock and is struck by no tempest; it is undermined by no *storm* and winds [cf. [Matt 7:24–27](#); [16:18](#)].<sup>445</sup> Most of the Jews interpret both these things and everything with which these things are associated with reference to the Babylonian captivity and the return to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

34. ([5:1a](#)) *I will sing to my beloved a song of my cousin, of his vineyard.*

The prophet *sings* a sorrowful *song* to the people of Israel, which that one composed of whom it is written in the Gospel, “But when he saw it,” doubtless referring to Jerusalem, “he wept over it and said, ‘If only you knew what things are for your peace; for they will come upon you and your enemies will put fortifications around you and will heap up an embankment about you, and they will level you and your sons’ ” [[Luke 19:41–44](#)]. And again, “How often have I desired to gather your sons like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling! Behold, your house will be left deserted” [[Matt 23:37–38](#)]. This is similar to what is now being said in this song: “I will leave my vineyard” [cf. [Isa 5:5–6](#)].

But the heading of the forty-fourth Psalm teaches us that Christ may be called *beloved* and most dear, which Aquila translated πατραδελφον, “father’s brother” or “cousin”: “A song for the *beloved*” [[Ps 45:1](#)]. Moreover there is the voice of God the Father in the Gospel: “This is my *beloved* Son, with whom I am well pleased” [[Matt 3:17](#)]. We also read in the sixty-seventh Psalm, “The Lord will give the word to those who preach the good news with great virtue. The king of the virtues of the *beloved*” [[Ps 68:11–12](#)]. This *beloved*, therefore, made a mournful *song* for his *vineyard*, one that *I will sing to my beloved* and to my miserable people. Or possibly it should be understood as follows: “I will sing to almighty God the Father a song of Christ, who is my cousin,” that is, begotten with me from the same race.

But that the people of Israel is called the *vineyard* of God,<sup>446</sup> we read even at the end of this song: “The *vineyard* of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the man of Judah his pleasant sprout” [[Isa 5:7](#)]. And in the seventy-ninth Psalm: “You have transferred a *vineyard* from Egypt, you have expelled nations and planted it” [[Ps 80:8](#)]. In the Gospel too, the Lord devises a parable in nearly the same words with which the prophet is now speaking: “There was a certain householder who planted a *vineyard* and put a wall around it and dug a wine press in it and built a tower and leased it to farmers” [[Matt 21:33](#)], and so on. And in Jeremiah we read, “I planted you as a fruitful *vineyard*, completely true; how did you turn to bitterness, a foreign *vineyard*?” [[Jer 2:21](#)].

And so, Jerusalem mourns, as we have said, and her collapse is being sung by the words of

<sup>445</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 32 (28, 11–3).

<sup>446</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 140 (345D–48A).



the prophet. On the other hand, for the church and for the former people of the nations, another song has been published, of which we read in the Psalms: “Sing to the Lord, all the earth, declare his salvation day by day. Announce his glory among the nations and his marvelous works among all peoples” [Ps 96:2–3]. And again: “Sing to the Lord a new song, because he has done marvelous works. The Lord has shown his salvation, in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice” [Ps 98:1–2].

35. (5:1b) *My beloved had a vineyard on a horn by a son of oil.* Theodotion and Aquila translated it this way in accordance with the Hebrew. Symmachus rendered it more clearly, however, as is his custom: “My beloved had a vineyard on a horn in the midst of olive trees.” Moreover, the Septuagint translated the sense rather than the word: “My beloved had a vineyard on a horn in a fertile,” or abundant, “place,” for  $\pi\iota\omega\nu$  signifies both.

And indeed there is nothing more fertile than the promised land, if you consider not each individual mountain and desert, but its entire breadth, from the stream of Egypt to the great river Euphrates toward the east, and to the northern region up to the Taurus mountain and the area west of Cilicia, which overlooks the sea. Now we read that *horn* often signifies kingdom and power, as for example the following passage in the Gospel: “He has raised up a *horn* of our salvation in the house of David his son” [Luke 1:69]. And: “In you we will agitate our enemies with a *horn*” [Ps 44:5]. And in Zechariah four horns point to four very powerful kingdoms [cf. Zech 1:18–21].<sup>447</sup>

The Hebrews explain this passage in the following way: the Messiah’s vineyard is planted on a *horn*, that is, in a strong and lofty location, which is called “son of oil,” either because he needs God’s mercy and is sustained by his aid, or because he will offer the clear light of the knowledge of God to all the nations.<sup>448</sup>

36. (5:2a–b) *And he fenced it in, and picked the stones out of it, and planted the vineyard of Sorec, and he built a tower in the middle of it and he constructed a winepress in it.*

As we have said previously, he is describing the Jewish people using the metaphor of a *vineyard*,<sup>449</sup> whom he *fenced in* with the help of angels [cf. Deut 32:8]. And he *picked the stones out of* them, either idols or anything that could have hindered the worship of God. And he *planted this vineyard of Sorec*, which Symmachus alone translated “chosen,” expressing it not word-for-word, as it seems to me, but the meaning that is contained in the word. For the Hebrews say that *sorec* is a kind of excellent vine, which produces an abundant and perpetual harvest. After all, *sorec* is translated by some  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\lambda\iota\kappa\alpha\rho\pi\omicron\varsigma$ , which we can render into “most lovely harvest.”<sup>550</sup> He also built a *tower* in its midst, namely the temple in the middle of the city, and he constructed a *winepress* in it, which some think signifies the altar. For just as all grapes are carried to a winepress and crushed, so that wine may be pressed out of them, so the altar receives the harvest of all the people and consumes the sacrifices that are offered. It is in accordance with this fact that we read about Benjamin, in whose tribe the temple and altar were located, “Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; he will devour in the morning and will give food

<sup>447</sup> Cf. Jerome, *In Zachariam* 1.

<sup>448</sup> Oil was used in lamps, making it a symbol of light.

<sup>449</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 33 (29, 18–9).

<sup>550</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 33 (29, 31–0, 2).



toward the evening” [[Gen 49:27](#)].

Everything that is said of the vineyard can be applied to the condition of the human soul, which though planted by God in the good has not brought forth grapes, but wild grapes, and afterward it is handed over to beasts to be trampled [cf. [Isa 5:4–6](#)]. It did not receive the divine rain of doctrines, because it despised the gifts that it silently neglected.

37. ([5:2c](#)) *And I waited for it to produce grapes and it produced wild grapes.* For *wild grapes*, as we have translated, *busim* is written in Hebrew, which Aquila translated σαπριας, that is, “rotten harvest.” Symmachus rendered it ατελη, that is, “not complete.” The Septuagint and Theodotion translated it “thorns,” with which the Jews crowned the Lord.<sup>551</sup> For while he was waiting to bring grapes to the winepress at the time of vintage, from which the eighth, eightieth and eighty-third Psalms receive their titles [cf. [Ps 9:1](#); [81:1](#); [84:1](#)], they immersed themselves in the cares and vices of the age, which are translated “thorns” in the Gospel [cf. [Matt 13:7](#), [22](#); [Mark 4:7](#)]. They offered him the pointy pricks of their blasphemies [cf. [Matt 27:39–41](#)]. Now I think that *busim* is better understood as “wild grapes” than “thorns,” so that the similarity of the comparison that was begun may be preserved. This is also why the Savior says in the Gospel, “Do they gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?” [[Matt 7:16](#)].<sup>552</sup>

38. ([5:3–4](#)) *Now, therefore, inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard; (4) what more should I have done for my vineyard that I have not done for it? Or what have I waited for, that it should produce grapes and it produced wild grapes?*

He says, I have done everything that I was obligated [to do], I planted the vineyard in a very fertile location, I surrounded it with a wall, I picked out the stones and I set up threshing flails for it by means of spears and rods [cf. [Isa 5:2](#)]. The very vine too was not one of many, but chosen and καλλικαρπος. I built a very strong tower in which I stored up the crop and from which I could observe beasts lying in ambush for the crops. I built a winepress chiefly so that in the same location grapes could be pressed and pour out their wine. Since, then, I did what I was obligated to do, let the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah answer me; nay rather, let them *judge between me and my vineyard*: What is there that I should have done that I did not do? And when they are silent, he will answer for himself, Perhaps I erred in this: I expected for my effort that it would *produce grapes*, not *wild grapes*, which an uncultivated vine of the desert was accustomed to produce.

Even Nathan the prophet who was sent to David says something like this when he questions him by means of a parable. This was done in order that while David is judging the case of another, he might pronounce his own verdict [cf. [2 Sam 12:1–6](#)].<sup>553</sup> So then, here too the people are questioned as though about a vineyard, in order that they may respond against themselves. The Savior pursues this passage in more detail in the Gospel, and what is here passed over in silence, he asks of the scribes and Pharisees. For in Isaiah nothing is said about farmers, nor is it indicated what they will suffer, but the words are only about a vineyard; but in the Gospel passage, he speaks in such a way about the people and teacher, as though they are another vineyard and other farmers, so that he may destroy the bad badly and lease the vineyard to

<sup>551</sup> Actually, it was the Roman soldiers who did this; cf. [Matt 27:29](#).

<sup>552</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 142 (352A).

<sup>553</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 143 (352A).

other farmers [cf. [Matt 21:33–41](#)]. The latter signifies the apostles and those who will succeed the apostles.

But in fact there is no tautology, as many think, in what he says: *Or what have I waited for, that it should produce grapes and it produced wild grapes?* For above he is speaking quietly to himself, but here he is asking others what he had thought.

39. ([5:5–6a–b](#)) *And now I will show you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be laid waste. I will break down its wall, and it will be trodden down. (6) And I will appoint it for desolation. It will not be drunk, and it will not be dug, and briers and thorns will come up over it.*

Above, he says, I have provoked you, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of the tribe of Judah [cf. [Isa 5:3–4](#)], to judge between me and my vineyard; and I asked that you say what I should have done that I did not do [cf. [Isa 5:4](#)]. And since, according to the parable in the Gospel [cf. [Mark 12:9](#); [Luke 20:15](#)], you are unwilling to respond to what I am asking, I will answer for you on my own behalf and reveal what I will do: Since I have done everything for my vineyard that I was obligated to do [cf. [Isa 5:4](#)], and instead of grapes it bore wild grapes, I will remove everything that I had given it. I will take away the help of angels, of which it is written in the Psalms, “The angel of the Lord surrounds those who fear him and will deliver them” [[Ps 34:7](#)],<sup>554</sup> and it will be laid waste by adversaries. I will destroy the walls, and it will be subject to hostile nations and will be deserted and *will not be drunk* for ever; *it will not be dug*, so that it is reduced to *briers, and thorns* will come up in it.

Now these things are being said using the metaphor of a vineyard about the abandonment of Jerusalem and Judea. Most Jews think this happened under the Babylonians, and even we cannot deny that it has been accomplished in part. But because it follows, “And I will command the clouds not to rain upon it” [[Isa 5:6c](#)], this cannot be understood in connection with that captivity.<sup>555</sup> For indeed, both Jeremiah prophesied among the people when the city was already captured, and Ezekiel and Daniel along with the three youths are said to have either prophesied or to have done marvelous signs even during the captivity. And later Haggai and Zechariah spoke of the future as a consolation to the enslaved people.

But God’s help is taken away from those who are unworthy in order that, since they had not perceived God through his benefits, they may perceive him through his punishments. Or, the reason he threatens certain terrible and bitter things is in order that, when they have converted to penitence, they may escape the impending torments.

Everyone univocally translated the Hebrew word *saith* as *thorns*. If, therefore, *saith* is expressed as *thorns* in the present passage, according to Aquila, Theodotion, and the Septuagint, let them tell us why they [the Septuagint] translated *busim* above not *wild grapes*, but “thorns.”

40. ([5:6c](#)) *And I will command the clouds not to rain upon it.*

These are the *clouds* that the Lord brought from the ends of the earth [cf. [Ps 135:7](#)], of which we also read in the Psalter, “Your truth extends to the *clouds*” [[Ps 36:5](#)]. These *clouds* did not rain upon the land of Israel for three years and six months, since all were idolaters during

<sup>554</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 145 (356A).

<sup>555</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 33 (30, 34–1, 1).

the time of Elijah [cf. [1 Kgs 17:7](#); [Luke 4:25](#); [Jas 5:17](#)]. We can indeed understand this not only about the prophets but about the apostles, because, after the passion of the Lord, the Jews had neither prophets nor apostles, lest they should have produced thorns for grapes [cf. [Isa 5:2, 4](#)]. But in view of their sterility and dryness they pleaded with him who is able to supply the rain of the virtues. This is even why in Leviticus he says to them, “I will make the sky iron for you and the earth bronze” [[Lev 26:19](#)]. And in Deuteronomy, “The sky over your head will be bronze and the earth below you iron” [[Deut 28:23](#)]. And again, “The Lord will give rain to your land” [[Deut 28:24](#)]. And, “Ash will come down from the sky upon you until it obliterates you and blots you out” [[Deut 28:24](#)].<sup>556</sup> For land that “frequently receives the rain coming upon it” and does not produce a crop, but thorns and thistles, “is rejected and near to being cursed; its end is to be burned” [[Heb 6:7–8](#)].

41. ([5:7a–b](#)) *Now the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are his delightful sprout*, that is, “God’s”; or, as the Septuagint translated, “very beloved plant.”

Here is the difference between Israel and Judah. At first the entire people were called Israel.<sup>557</sup> Later, when David reigned over the tribe of Judah, and Rehoboam, son of Solomon, reigned over two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, those who were in Samaria, that is, the ten tribes, were called Israel; and those over whom they reigned from the family of David were called Judah. And since Israel worshiped calves in Dan and in Bethel, for that reason Samaria was captured by the Assyrians first [cf. [2 Kgs 10:29](#); [17:6](#)]; and after a long time Judah was led to Babylon by the Chaldeans, because they had committed lesser sins. And this is why in Ezekiel, for the cleansing of the sins of both peoples, Israel is placed on the left side, according to the Septuagint, for 190 days, or, as it is more truly contained in the Hebrew, 390 [cf. [Ezek 4:5, 9](#)]; but Judah for forty days [cf. [Ezek 4:6](#)].

I say this to show Judah lovable and beloved by comparison with Israel, in other words, with the ten tribes. In Judah there were priests and Levites, and the religion of God was practiced at that time when the prophet Isaiah was speaking to the people. And he says beautifully that *Israel*, that is the whole people, is the *house*. But *Judah*, who sprouted up later from separated tribes, is called a *delightful sprout*. Moreover, it should be noted that it is typical of prophetic usage later on to explain more clearly things that were first spoken metaphorically or in a parable. Thus he says that the *vineyard* and the *young plant* is *Israel* and *Judah*.

42. ([5:7c](#)) *And I waited for it to produce judgment, and behold iniquity; and justice, and behold a cry*. Or, as the Septuagint has translated, “I waited for it to produce judgment, and it produced iniquity, and not justice but a cry.”

We want to introduce Latin ears to what we have learned from the Hebrews. Among them *judgment* is expressed as *mesphat*; *iniquity*, or “dissipation,” as Aquila translated it, is *mesphaa*. Moreover, *justice* is called *sadaca*; but *cry* is named *saaca*. Consequently by changing or adding one letter he has fittingly created a similarity between the words. Thus corresponding to *mesphat* he said *mesphaa*, and for *sadaca* he recorded *saaca*. Indeed in the Hebrew language he has produced an elegant construction and sound of the words.

<sup>556</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 148 (361B).

<sup>557</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 149 (361C).

Now God waited for the Jewish people to produce *judgment*, that is, “grapes,” and it produced *iniquity*, that is, “wild grapes” [cf. [Isa 5:2, 4](#)]; and he waited for *justice*, that they would receive the one sent from the Father to give them such great gifts, and they produced a *cry* (*clamorem*), whereby they shouted against the Lord and cried out, saying, “Take him away, take him away, crucify him” [[John 19:15](#)]. This is also why Paul the Apostle writes, “Let all wrath and crying (*clamor*) and slander be removed from you, together with all malice” [[Eph 4:31](#)].<sup>558</sup> Or at any rate, since they had shed the blood of the just one, the blood of the Lord’s passion was crying out to God, therefore they gave back a *cry* in place of *justice*, in accordance with what we read in Genesis: “The voice of the blood of Abel your brother cries out to me” [[Gen 4:10](#)].<sup>559</sup>

43. ([5:8](#)) *Woe to you who join house to house and link field to field up to the end of the place. Will you alone dwell upon the earth?* In place of what we have said, *up to the end of the place*, the Septuagint translated, “So that you may take it away from your neighbor.” Symmachus and Theodotion have, “until it fails,” or “there is no place.” Thus, even though the land runs out, their avarice is never sated.

I think that this statement is indeed spoken generally against everyone for whom nothing is enough. And in particular it is directed against the Lord’s vineyard [cf. [Isa 5:2, 4, 7](#)], which produced “wild grapes” instead of “grapes”; that is, instead of “judgment,” “iniquity,” and instead of “justice,” a “cry.” For what sort of madness is it, when homes and fields ought to be had in order to ward off the rain and to sow crops, to desire to have all those in which you cannot dwell, and which you are not able to cultivate? To make another’s necessity your pleasure?

In accordance with tropology, some think that this is spoken against the heretics, who when they moved their feet from the east, come to the field of Shinar [cf. [Gen 11:2](#)], which means “knocking out the teeth,” and they build a city of confusion and a tower of pride [cf. [Gen 11:4](#)]; and they hear in response (using the words of another), “Listen to these things, leaders of the house of Jacob and remnant of the house of Israel, you who abhor judgment and pervert everything that is straight, you who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with iniquity” [[Mic 3:9–10](#)].<sup>660</sup> They *join houses to houses*, that is, doctrines to doctrines. Micah says to them, “Do not build derision into a house” [[Mic 1:10](#)]. Otherwise, upon the foundation of Christ, which Paul the Apostle laid and on which they should have built gold, silver, and precious stones, they build instead wood, hay, and straw [cf. [1 Cor 3:10–12](#)], whose end is for burning [cf. [Heb 6:8](#)]. Concerning *houses* of this sort the Savior says in the Gospel, “Everyone who hears my words and does not do them will be compared with a foolish man, who built his *house* upon sand. The rain came down, the rivers came, the winds blew and struck against that *house*, and it fell; and the collapse of that *house* was great” [[Matt 7:26–27](#)]. But the heretics seek to join new things to old and to change the old by means of more recent things, for as long a time as both the human meaning and words run out.

44. ([5:9](#)) *These things of the Lord of hosts are in my ears, unless many great and fair houses*

<sup>558</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (364B).

<sup>559</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 33 (30, 25–7).

<sup>660</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 152 (368BC).

*will become desolate, without an inhabitant.* Instead of this, which we have rendered in accordance with the Hebrew as, *These things of the Lord of hosts are in my ears*, that is, the words that the Lord spoke still resound in my ears, the Septuagint translated, “These things have been heard in the ears of the Lord Sabaoth.” Thus it is not that the *prophet* has heard the words of the Lord, but the things that the prophet will say were heard in the ears of the *Lord*, though it is more coherent to understand that the *prophet* heard what the *Lord* has spoken; but the Lord has said that after the captivity the great and very beautiful houses will be deserted, having no inhabitant.

45. (5:10) *For ten acres of vineyards will yield one jar full, and thirty pecks of seed will yield three pecks.* For *jar full*, which the Septuagint alone translated, all the others have translated “bath,” which is said in Hebrew as *beth*; and instead of thirty pecks, which we have recorded in place of “core,” which is said in Hebrew as *omer*, the Septuagint rendered it, “six artabas,” which is an Egyptian measure and amounts to twenty pecks.

In the extreme barrenness that follows the captivity, then, *ten acres of vineyards will yield a “bath,”* that is, three jars full; and *thirty bushels, that is, “cores,” of seed will yield an ephah,* which the Septuagint translated “three measures,” that is, *three pecks.* Now a “bath” is said for liquids, and *oephi*, or *ephah* is the same measure for dry goods, just as in Ezekiel we read according to the Hebrew, “You will have a just *oephi* and a just bath. The *oephi* and the bath will be equal and of one measure, so that the bath contains the tenth part of a core, and the *oephi* the tenth part of a core; their weight will be equal according to the measure of a core” [[Ezek 45:10–11](#)]

Anagogically, we ask how the houses of the heretics are *great and fair*, which will have no occupant when the time of judgment comes. For all the pomp and arrangement of words and dialectical arguments will be reduced to nothing. And since, according to the Apostle Paul, not only are we God’s building, but also his field [cf. [1 Cor 3:9](#)],<sup>661</sup> which the heretics imitate and which are dug up and uprooted by Jeremiah [cf. [Jer 1:10](#); [31:28](#)], therefore, when *ten acres of vineyards*, or when *ten yokes of oxen are working*, they will yield one bath, and *thirty pecks of seed* will make an *oephi*, so that from the number of the denarius, which is mystical and perfect in the Holy Scriptures, and from the number “thirty” at which Ezekiel prophesied [cf. [Ezek 1:1](#)] and the Lord was baptized [cf. [Luke 3:21, 23](#)], they may be reduced to an *oephi*, which in comparison with multiples of the number, is constrained by a union.

Now in another passage as well, the Apostle Paul shows that the building and field should be referred to the spiritual understanding, when he testifies that believers have been rooted and founded in love [cf. [Eph 3:17](#)]. This is also why Ecclesiastes says that he not only built *houses* for himself, but planted *vineyards* and made gardens and orchards and established all fruit-bearing trees and created fishing ponds to irrigate the wooded areas [cf. [Eccl 2:4–6](#)]. On the other hand, heretics have only the likeness and shadow of the virtues, not the reality itself. They promise the foliage of words without the fruit of works. The Lord says of their trees, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted” [[Matt 15:13](#)]. “For their vineyard is from the vineyard of Sodom, and their offspring is from Gomorrah. Their grape is the grape of gall, and their cluster one of bitterness, their wine is the rage of serpents and the

<sup>661</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 153 (369BC).

incurable rage of asps” [cf. [Deut 32:32–33](#)].

46. ([5:11–12](#)) *Woe to you who rise in the morning to follow drunkenness and to drink until evening, to be inflamed with wine. (12) The harp and the lyre, the drum and the flute, and wine in your feasts; and you do not regard the work of the Lord, nor do you consider the works of his hands.* Instead of *drunkenness*, which Aquila and Symmachus translated, the Septuagint recorded the Hebrew word itself, *sicera* (“strong drink”), which signifies every drink that is capable of causing drunkenness and of disturbing one’s state of mind.<sup>662</sup>

But in a way that is coherent with the comparison that was begun [cf. [Isa 5:5–6](#)], he rebukes the farmers of the vineyard who devoted themselves to excess and pleasures, when barrenness was threatening and when the burning was nearby, in which the briars and the thorns were to be burned. They did this not merely by their eating and drinking, but by their being attracted to gold too, and to various kinds of musical arts. When they do these things, they do not *regard the work of the Lord* nor do they *consider* what things are coming.

We may use this testimony against the rulers of the church who *rise in the morning* to pursue strong drink and *drink till evening*. In another passage it is said of them, “Woe to you, O city, whose king is young and your rulers feast in the morning” [[Eccl 10:16](#)]. While occupied with pleasures [cf. [Eccl 5:19](#)], they do not understand the Creator from the creatures [cf. [Wis 13:5](#); [Rom 1:20](#)] and they *do not consider the works of his hands*, of which we read, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens established and all their power by the breath<sup>663</sup> of his mouth” [[Ps 33:6](#)].

According to a deeper understanding, every disturbance of the soul can be called *drunkenness*, which is conceived from the wine of the rage of serpents and from the incurable venom of asps [cf. [Deut 32:32–33](#)], which some drink from youth to old age, that is, from *morning* till *evening*. But others are roused from their feasting at the third hour, sixth or ninth, and eleventh [cf. [Matt 20:3](#), [5](#), [6](#)],<sup>664</sup> and it is said to them, “Wake up, you who are drunk with wine” [[Joel 1:5](#)]. The Lord rained “sulfur and fire from the Lord” on this wine and on grapes and vineyards of this sort [cf. [Gen 19:24](#)], and whoever drinks of their<sup>665</sup> wine [cf. [Joel 1:5](#)] is inflamed and burned.

He looks for a harp and a psaltery, whose inventor is Jubal [cf. [Gen 4:21](#)], who was born from the stock of Cain [cf. [Gen 4:17–21](#)]. He does not listen to the Lord who says to Aaron, “You and your sons will not drink wine and strong drink, when you enter into the tabernacle of testimony, or approach the altar” [[Lev 10:9](#)]. The king of Babylon had these *harps and lyres, drum and flutes*. When they played in unison the people of all nations were prostrated on the ground and worshiped the golden statue [cf. [Dan 3:5](#)].<sup>666</sup>

Now multiple testimonies could have taught us that the first period of human wisdom, when we leave childhood behind and come to the age of reason, is understood in the Scriptures as

<sup>662</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 154 (372A).

<sup>663</sup> Or “pirit.”

<sup>664</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 160 (381A–).

<sup>665</sup> Feminine, referring either to the grapes or the vineyards.

<sup>666</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 161 (381C).



*morning*.<sup>667</sup> A few of these should be recorded as examples: “In the *morning* I sent the prophets” [Jer 25:4]; and: “In the *morning* you will hear my prayer. In the *morning* I will stand near you and see” [Ps 5:3–4]; and: “My spirit rises from the night” [Isa 26:9]; and: “God, my God, I watch for you from the light” [Ps 63:1]; and: “In the *morning* I killed all sinners of the land, that I might destroy from the city of the Lord all who work iniquity” [Ps 101:8]; and in another passage: “Weeping will linger toward evening and gladness in the *morning*” [Ps 30:5]; and other things similar to these.

Now we *rise from the morning* when we abandon vices in childhood and are able to say, “Remember not the sins of my youth and of ignorance” [Ps 25:7]. When the sun of justice has risen for us [cf. Mal 4:2], darkness is put to flight and at once we put to death all the thoughts that provoke us to sin [cf. Rom 8:13; Col 3:5]; and from the city of our mind we destroy those sinners [cf. Ps 101:8]<sup>668</sup> of whom the Savior speaks: “From the heart proceed evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false testimony, blasphemy” [Matt 15:19], and so on. Now they are very wretched who from *morning till evening* are occupied with *drunkenness*, gluttony, and various pleasures, and who do not understand the works of the Lord within themselves and do not consider why they have been created.

47. (5:13) *Therefore my people have been led captive, because they did not have knowledge, and their nobles perished with hunger and their multitude withered with thirst.*

Both Greek and Latin history narrates that these things happened literally to the Jewish people under the Roman rulers Vespasian and Titus.<sup>669</sup> And indeed they suffer these things spiritually today too, enduring a famine not of bread and a thirst not for water, but a famine for hearing the word of God [cf. Amos 8:11]. For they have not “regarded the work of the Lord,” nor have they “considered the works of his hands” [Isa 5:12], nor have they *had knowledge* of him who always spoke through the prophets [cf. Heb 1:1]. This is also why in the Psalms it is said of them, “They will turn back toward evening and will suffer famine, so that even dogs will encircle the city” [Ps 59:14]. Now the following words of the Gospel show that the entire word of doctrine may be called bread and water: “Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” [Matt 4:4; Luke 4:4]. And: “Whoever will drink of the water that I will give him, will not thirst forever” [John 4:13]. And in the Psalm it is said, “He has raised me on the waters of refreshment” [Ps 23:2]. This is also why the Lord does not want to leave the people hungry in the desert, lest they faint and collapse and die of famine [cf. Matt 15:32]. And it is said of the just man, “I was young and have become old, and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” [Ps 37:25].

Some maintain that the words *My people have been led captive, because they did not have knowledge; and their nobles perished by famine and their multitude withered from thirst* are to be interpreted in general of hell and Gehenna, in which all who do not have the knowledge of God will be punished.

48. (5:14–15) *Therefore hell (infernus) has enlarged its soul and opened its mouth without any limit, and its strong ones and its people and its lofty and glorious ones will descend to it.*

<sup>667</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (384AB).

<sup>668</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 163 (388AB).

<sup>669</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 35 (32, 1–); *Bas Is* 165 (389B–92A).



(15) *And the human will be curved and man will be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty ones will be brought low.*

Those who “rose in the morning to follow strong drink” [cf. [Isa 5:11](#)] and continued in drunkenness until evening, and being occupied with pleasure and delights were unwilling to have regard for the work of the Lord, and did not consider the works of his hands [cf. [Isa 5:12](#)], have been led into captivity for this reason, because they did not “have the knowledge” [cf. [Isa 5:13](#)] of the Son of God, when he says to them, “You know neither me nor him who sent me” [[John 8:19](#)]. And in that very captivity they perished from famine and withered from thirst. This is why *hell* and death has *enlarged its soul* and *opened its mouth*, and it devoured without any number and satiety those deserving to be punished forever. Thus the rulers and people and lofty and glorious ones of the land of Judah descended to it and all pride was *humbled* and the *eyes of the lofty ones were laid low*, since they were mortals in their understanding; and everything is fulfilled in reality that the Lord announced through the prophets as things that were to come.

Now *hell* is said to have a *soul*, not because it is living, as some erroneously claim; but because we may express the state of insensible realities by means of words taken from human usage. The meaning is that it is insatiable and is never filled up by the multitude of the dead. It is similar to the way death is said [to be] under the command of the tongue [cf. [Prov 18:21](#); [Jas 3:5–9](#)], and the way Almighty God says that his *soul* hates the Sabbaths and new moons of the Jews [cf. [Isa 1:13–14](#)].

Whatever we have said about the Jewish people can be referred by tropology to those who, while occupied with the delights of the age, do not have regard for the works of God and are led captive to sin and do not have the knowledge of God [cf. [Isa 5:12–13](#)]. And on that account they perish by the famine and thirst for good works and virtues, and they are dragged down to Gehenna. And there, destined for eternal tortures, they will perceive that their power and arrogance has been changed into misery and humiliation.

49. (5:16) *And the Lord of hosts will be exalted in judgment, and the holy God will be sanctified in justice.*

When the people are led captive, because they did not have knowledge, and perish by famine and wither from thirst, and when *hell* has enlarged its soul and the strong and lofty and glorious ones have descended into the depths, and the human will has been curved and man humbled [cf. [Isa 5:13–15](#)], and everyone has received in accordance with his merits; at that time *the Lord will be exalted in judgment*, whose judgment previously seemed to be unjust, and *the Holy God will be sanctified* by all in justice. Hence what is said in the Gospel is fulfilled: “Our Father, who art in heaven, *sanctified* be thy name” [[Matt 6:9](#)], and: “Just Father, the world has not known you” [[John 17:25](#)].

This is why we ought to be careful not to anticipate God’s judgment [cf. [Wis 17:1](#)], whose judgments are great and inexpressible, and of which the Apostle says, “His judgments are inscrutable and his ways beyond tracking down” [[Rom 11:33](#)], until that one illumines the secrets of darkness and reveals the thoughts of hearts [cf. [1 Cor 4:5](#)], who says in the Gospel, “Do not judge, so that you are not judged” [[Matt 7:1](#)]. With this thought the Apostle Paul is in agreement when he commands, “Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master

he stands or falls. But he will stand; for God is able to make him stand” [[Rom 14:4](#)].

50. ([5:17](#)) *And the lambs will feed according to their order, and strangers will eat the deserts turned into fruitfulness.* In place of *lambs feeding according to their order*, which is understood in a good sense, the Septuagint, intending something or other, translated, “And they that were plundered will feed as bulls.” They understood “bulls” in place of *lambs*, and again translated “lambs” for *strangers*.

But when the Lord has been exalted in judgment [cf. [Isa 5:16](#); [John 12:31–32](#)] and the Holy One has been sanctified in his own justice, so that the wretched farmers perish wretchedly [cf. [Matt 21:41](#)], and the exalted cedar is cut down by the Lord’s axe [cf. [Ps 37:35–36](#); [Sir 24:17](#); [Matt 3:10](#)], then those who have been in the number of the *lambs*, not of the goats [cf. [Matt 25:32–33](#)], *will feed (pascentur)* in the meadows of the church, and they will say, “The Lord is my shepherd (*pascit*), there is nothing I shall want” [[Ps 23:1](#)]. And the people of the Gentiles *will eat* those things that were deserted by the Jews and *turned into fruitfulness*. This is in accordance with tropology.

However that may be, in order to fill in the progression of history, the same thing is said in different words, of which we read above: “Strangers devour your region in your presence and it is deserted and overthrown by outside peoples” [[Isa 1:7](#)].<sup>770</sup> For a multitude gathered from the whole world of nations lives in Judea, and when the former people were ejected, therefore a blindness in part has occurred to the house of Israel, resulting in the fullness of the nations stealthily entering in [cf. [Rom 11:25](#)]. And it is nicely said, in accordance with the Septuagint, that for the lambs to occupy the place of the bulls, they were “plundered” and laid waste and led into captivity as “bulls,” of whom the Lord had said, “Fat *bulls* have beset me” [[Ps 22:12](#)].

51. ([5:18–19](#)) *Woe to you who draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as the chain of a cart.* (19) *You who say, “Let him make haste and let his work come quickly, that we say see, and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near (appropiet) and come, and we will know it.”* For *chain of a cart*, the Septuagint translated “thong of a heifer’s” or cow’s “yoke.”

Now we quite frequently read that sins are called *chains*. For example, there is the following: “Each one is bound by the *cords* of his sins” [[Prov 5:22](#)]. And the Lord, when he rebukes the transgressing people, who were joining sins to sins, made a whip from *cords* [cf. [John 2:15](#)] and shows them how they had made the house of God into a den of thieves [cf. [Matt 21:13](#)], and how they had turned the seat of prayer into a house of business [cf. [John 2:16](#)]. Also, the guest of the Lord’s supper who does not have a wedding garment is bound by his hands and feet and thrown into the outer darkness [cf. [Matt 22:11–13](#)].<sup>771</sup> And the Lord came in order to tell “those who were in chains, ‘Come forth’; and those who were living in darkness, ‘Be revealed’ ” [[Isa 49:9](#); cf. [John 11:43](#)]. For he himself releases those in shackles and gives light to the blind [[Ps 146:7–8](#)], whom Jeremiah calls “those chained to the land” [cf. [Lam 3:34](#)]. He is not lamenting those who start to sin and immediately stop—for “there is no one just on earth, who does good and never sins” [[Eccl 7:21](#)]<sup>771</sup>—rather, he is lamenting those who have dragged out their sins with a long *cord*.

This is why we even read in Numbers that a red cow, whose ashes are an expiation for the

<sup>770</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 35 (32, 12–7).

<sup>771</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 170 (400B–).

people, is not sacrificed and offered at the altar of the Lord unless it is one that has not done earthly tasks and has not drawn a yoke [cf. [Num 19:2–10](#)]. It has not been bound by the chains of the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar [cf. [Jer 28:11](#)]. And in this same prophet in place of a belt of truth [cf. [Eph 6:14](#)], the daughters of Zion are girded with a rope [cf. [Isa 3:24](#)]. Ahithophel too, and Judas, one of whom betrayed David [cf. [1 Chr 27:33](#); [2 Sam 15:12–17:4](#)], the other the Lord [cf. [Matt 26:16](#); [John 13:2](#)], when dragging out their sins with a very long *cord*, perished by hanging [cf. [2 Sam 17:23](#); [Matt 27:5](#)]. They thought that the evil of conscience is finished by death in the present and that there is nothing after death.

Now what are called *corde of vanity*, in accordance with the Hebrew and all the other translators, signifies that it is easily woven together by those who commit sin, and it is as insubstantial and light as the weaving of a spider's web, but when we want to come forth from there, we are fettered by absolutely unbreakable *chains*.

Now those who recall what is written in Zechariah, that impiety sits upon a talent of lead [cf. [Zech 5:7–8](#)], understand quite easily the *cart* that is full and loaded down with sins; and the Egyptians, who were pressed down by the heavy gear of sins, were drowned like lead in the Red Sea [cf. [Exod 15:10](#)]. And in another passage a sinner says, "My iniquities have gone over my head; they have weighed me down like a heavy weight" [[Ps 38:4](#)].

But these things are said to the rulers of the Jews who up above were rebuked for avarice and luxury because, though they have been summoned by the Lord to penitence, and afterward by his apostles, they have persevered until today in their blasphemies. Moreover, in all their synagogues three times a day they anathematize [cf. [Gal 1:8](#)] the Christian name under the term of "the Nazarenes."<sup>772</sup> But the sense is this: Woe to you who think that there will be no day of judgment, or that the captivity is not coming, which the prophetic discourse predicts, who say to the prophet, "How long do you threaten us with the wrath of God? We want to know it, let it come already." But they are saying this ironically, since they do not think that it will come, but that it is being made up by the prophet.

52. ([5:20](#)) *Woe to you who call evil good and good evil; putting darkness for light and light for darkness; putting bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.*

To call *good light* and *sweet* using opposite designations is the same crime as applying the names of the virtues to *evil, darkness* and *bitter*. This is directed against those who do not think it a sin to withdraw from the *good*, and do not consider it an offense to praise *evil*. Now the Jews *put good for evil, and light for darkness, and sweet for bitter*, when they received Barabbas, the instigator of theft and sedition [cf. [Matt 27:15–26](#)],<sup>773</sup> and crucified Jesus, who had come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel [cf. [Matt 15:24](#)], to save what had perished [cf. [Matt 18:11](#); [Luke 19:10](#)]. In Barabbas we may understand the devil, who, though he is night and *darkness*, is transfigured into an angel of *light* [cf. [2 Cor 11:14](#)].<sup>774</sup> This is also why

<sup>772</sup> [Justin, Dialogue with Trypho 16](#) (ANF [1.202](#)) reports that the Jews curse in their synagogues those who believe in Christ. Epiphanius, *Pan* 29.9.2, says that it was thrice a day that they cursed the *Nazoraei*. Cf. A. F. J. Klijn, "[Jerome' Quotations from a Nazoraean Interpretation of Esaiiah](#)," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 60 (1972): 241–5.

<sup>773</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 37 (33, 4–).

<sup>774</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 175 (413A).

the Apostle says, “What fellowship does justice have with iniquity? What association does *light* have with *darkness*? What agreement does Christ have with Belial?” [[2 Cor 6:14–15](#)]. For a lamp must not be taken and placed under a basket or under a bed, but upon a lampstand, that it might give *light* to everyone [cf. [Matt 5:15](#)]. Nor should a tree that bears *evil* fruit be called by the designation of *good* tree [cf. [Matt 7:16–20](#); [12:33–35](#)]. This is why in Genesis it is said with mystical language that God separated the *light* from the *darkness*, which was being manifested (*ferabantur*) over the abyss in the beginning [cf. [Gen 1:4, 2](#)]. But the Savior himself says in the Gospel that he is called *good*: “The *good* shepherd lays down his life for his sheep” [[John 10:11](#)]. He also claims to be *light*: “I am the *light* of the world” [[John 8:12](#)]; and every day when we have been filled with heavenly bread we say, “Taste and see how *sweet* is the Lord” [[Ps 34:8](#)]. On the other hand, when we say, “Deliver us from *evil*” [[Matt 6:13](#)]; and, “The world lies in the *evil* one” [[1 John 5:19](#)], we desire to be liberated from the devil’s treachery. But we quite frequently read that he is signified by the terms of *darkness* and *bitterness*.

Moreover we can say that all doctrines that are contrary to the truth are *bitter* and the truth alone is *sweet*. This is why one must be on guard lest instead of truth we follow falsehood, lest instead of *light* we follow *darkness*. For there are many ways that seem right to men, and the worst of these reaches into the depths of hell [cf. [Prov 14:12](#); [16:25](#)].<sup>775</sup> There is also the just man who perishes in his justice [cf. [Eccl 7:16](#)], to whom it is said, “Do not be overly just” [[Eccl 7:17](#)]. For these reasons Israel promises in return that she will walk on the royal way, not to turn aside to the left or to the right [cf. [Num 20:17](#); [Deut 5:32–33](#)]. And to be honest, someone can be free from this curse only with difficulty, since we frequently kowtow to evils for the sake of power, and we despise what is *good* on account of the lack of resources. Hence Aquila has translated this quite meaningfully: “Woe to him who says to the evil [man]: You are good; and to good [man]: You are evil.” And what Solomon says in the Proverbs agrees with this meaning: “Whoever judges the just to be unjust, and the unjust man to be just, is abominable with the Lord” [[Prov 17:15](#)]. The scribes and the Pharisees too, by not receiving the words of the Savior, but the traditions of men [cf. [Mark 7:8](#); [Col 2:8](#)] and old wives’ tales [cf. [1 Tim 4:7](#)], made *good* *evil* and *evil* *good*.

53. ([5:21](#)) *Woe to you who are wise in your own eyes and prudent among your own selves.*

He is saying, you who follow not God’s but men’s prudence seem to be *wise* to yourselves, and though you do not receive the power of God and the wisdom of God [cf. [1 Cor 1:18–25](#)], you think that you are *wise*. According to the Stoics the difference between wisdom and prudence is this: that wisdom is the knowledge of human and divine things, whereas prudence is [the knowledge] only of mortal things.<sup>776</sup> Now it is reasonable to see this as spoken against the scribes and Pharisees. Though they have the key of knowledge, they do not themselves enter to Christ nor do they permit others to enter [cf. [Luke 11:52](#)].

54. ([5:22](#)) *Woe to you who are mighty at drinking wine and stout men at mixing strong drinks, that is, at drunkenness.*

He is still speaking about those to whom he had said above, “Woe to you who rise up early in the morning to follow drunkenness and drink till the evening, so that you may be inflamed

<sup>775</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 173 (408B).

<sup>776</sup> Cf. [Cicero, De Offic 1.153](#); *Bas Is* 176 (416A).

with wine” [[Isa 5:11](#)]. They are *mighty at drinking wine and stout men at mixing strong drink*. Having been made drunk by the *wine* of the serpent and by the incurable venom of asps [cf. [Deut 32:33](#)], they were faulted by the virtue of the Lord. And the drunks themselves were making the people drunk, so that while reveling (*bacchantes*) in the same frenzy, they shouted against the Lord.

We already said earlier that according to tropology the priests about to enter the tabernacle of God should not drink *wine* and *strong drink* [cf. [Lev 10:9](#)].<sup>777</sup> To those things we now add that it is also commanded to the Nazarenes, who consecrate themselves to the Lord that they are not to drink or consume *wine* and *strong drink* and anything that comes from grapes, not even a dried grape and vinegar that comes from wine [cf. [Num 6:1–4](#)]. Moreover, in Proverbs it is commanded, “Let not the powerful who are subject to wrath drink *wine*, lest when they drink, they forget wisdom” [[Prov 31:4–5](#)]. According to anagogy I think that the difference between *wine* and *strong drink* is that wine is a single disturbance out of many, for instance, of lust, avarice, gluttony, and envy; but strong drink, that is, drunkenness, contains all the passions of the vices within itself, which we can express more correctly in Latin speech as disturbances.<sup>778</sup> For they upset the state of the mind and make those who are drunk not know what they are doing. Therefore, those who have the greatest influence ought to be free from vices and especially from anger, which approaches madness. Otherwise, they may harm those subject [to them] in proportion to their influence. He mixes *strong drink* who, when he is full of drunkenness, pretends that he has certain shadows and images of the virtues, thus deceiving men.

55. ([5:23](#)) *You who justify the wicked for gifts and you take away the justice of the just from him.*

And this portion of vices comes from the vineyard that produced wild vines for grapes, and practiced iniquity while the Lord was waiting to judge [cf. [Isa 5:2, 4, 7](#)]. They *justify the wicked for gifts*, and do not consider the causes but the gifts, which blind the eyes even of the wise [cf. [Deut 16:19](#)]. This is why we must beware that we do not become drunk with wine, in which there is excess [cf. [Eph 5:18](#)]; and the thighs of our shame would be exposed [cf. [Gen 9:21–23](#)]; and we would flatter the wicked for the sake of gifts and despise the justice of the just man on account of the lack of resources. This is also commanded in the Epistle of James: “Lest by honoring the impious rich and despising the holy poor, we should become judges of iniquity” [[Jas 2:2–4](#)].

56. ([5:24](#)) *For this reason, just as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and the heat of the flame burns it, so will their root be as ashes, and their bud will go up as dust. For they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts and have blasphemed the words of the Holy One of Israel.*

Their root of malice will be reduced to *ashes* for the more important reasons of pride, drunkenness and avarice, since in place of grapes they produced thorns and hay, wood, stubble and brambles for burning [cf. [Isa 5:2, 4](#); [1 Cor 3:12](#)].<sup>779</sup> The whole flower and beauty of their wealth will be likened to physical *ashes*. For not only have they done those things, but by these

<sup>777</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 177 (416BC).

<sup>778</sup> Cf. *Cicero, Tusc* 3.7; 4.10.

<sup>779</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 39 (33, 27–4, 8).

stages they reached the point of blasphemy. Consequently, they did not accept the *law of the Lord* and they *blasphemed the words of the Holy One of Israel*. We read above about this, “A law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” [[Isa 2:3](#)]. *Root* can be understood in respect to evil thoughts, but fruit and *bud* in respect to evil deeds and words, so that what lies hidden in the *root* will be shown in the *bud*. Both of these will be devoured by the fire of the Lord. This is also why the Apostle speaks of a “root of bitterness” of evils sprouting up [cf. [Heb 12:15](#)].

57. ([5:25](#)) *Therefore the fury of the Lord has been kindled against his people and he has stretched out his hand upon them and struck them, and the mountains were shaken and their corpses became as dung in the midst of the streets. In all this his fury has not been turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*

They have “rejected the law of the Lord of hosts” [[Isa 5:24](#)], which the Lord through Jeremiah promises that he will give, saying, “Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the agreement that I struck with your fathers on the day when I took their hand and led them from the land of Egypt” [[Jer 31:31–32](#)]. Moreover, they have “blasphemed the words of the Holy One of Israel” [cf. [Isa 5:24](#)], by saying, “He has a demon, he is a Samaritan” [[John 8:48](#)]; and, “Is this not the son of the carpenter?” [[Matt 13:55](#)]. Because of this *the fury of the Lord is kindled against his own people*, which was previously kindled against the rulers and the powerful who were wise in their own eyes [cf. [Isa 5:21](#)] and who “justified the wicked for gifts” [cf. [Isa 5:23](#)]; and the “tongue of fire devoured them like stubble and the heat of flame burned” [cf. [Isa 5:24](#)], so that “the powerful suffered powerful torments” [cf. [Wis 6:5–6](#)]. And he *stretches out his hand* against them, whom he calls his own people, since they were the portion of his inheritance and the line of his possession [cf. [Deut 32:9](#)].

But he *stretches out his hand* to strike and his fury is kindled. In another passage as well, we read, “Lord, do not rebuke me in your fury, nor chastise me in your anger” [[Ps 6:1](#)]. And Jeremiah says, “Chastise us, Lord, but in judgment and not in fury” [[Jer 10:24](#)]. Now when the Lord is said to be *furious*, it is not that he is subject to human disturbances, but because we who transgress do not fear the Lord unless we hear from one who is angry. This is also why the Apostle writes that the goodness and patience of God provokes us to penitence; but we, in accordance with our hardness and our impenitent heart, store up wrath for ourselves on the day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God [cf. [Rom 2:4–5](#)].

Now Job tells very clearly what is the *hand that is stretched out* or raised over the sinning people: “For the hand of the Lord touched me” [[Job 19:21](#)]. This is why the devil knows the powerful hand of the Lord [cf. [1 Pet 5:6](#)] and the arm that has been revealed to all nations [cf. [Isa 53:1](#)]. He says to the Lord, “Put forth your hand and touch everything that he has, if he will not bless you to [your] face” [[Job 2:5](#)].

Now he is following prophetic usage when he speaks of what is future as if it were past. According to such usage, things that are coming are said to be so certain that they are thought of as having come to pass. This is sung even in the Psalms: “They *gave* gall as my food and they *gave* me vinegar to drink for my thirst” [[Ps 69:21](#)]. And again: “They *divided* my clothing among themselves and they *cast* lots for my clothes” [[Ps 22:18](#)].



As for what follows, *And he struck them*, that is, his own people, *and the mountains were shaken*, some think that the *mountains* refer to the opposing powers, or to those spirits who are in God's service and to which sinners are handed over for punishment. But we think that it is said hyperbolically, that in view of the extent of the imminent evils, even the *mountains* are moving, and all the streets of the cities are filled with the corpses of the dead. No one doubts that this happened to the Jews under Vespasian and Hadrian after the passion of the Lord. And since these things have happened, his fury is not in the opposite direction but his *hand* is still *stretched out*, or "raised," which shows the disposition of one who is angry and striking. And in all these things one should note that he reproaches them not for idolatry, or other sins on account of which they offended God, but because they have "rejected the law" of the Gospel and have "blasphemed the words" of the Lord [cf. [Isa 5:24](#)].

58. ([5:26–30](#)) *And he will lift up a sign to the nations far off, and will whistle to it from the ends of the earth; and behold the hastening one will come swiftly. (27) There will not be one who faints nor labors in it; and he will not slumber or sleep, neither will the girdle of his loins be loosed, nor the latchet of his shoes broken. (28) His arrows [will be] sharp, and all his bows bent. The hoofs of his horses [will be] like the flint stone, and his wheels like the force of a storm. (29) His roaring [will be] like that of a lion, he will roar like young lions, and he will gnash his teeth and take hold of the plunder, and he will keep fast hold of it, and there will be none to deliver. (30) And he will make a noise over him on that day, like the roaring of the sea. We will look on the land, and behold darkness of tribulation, and the light is darkened with his mist.*

The Hebrews understand this passage as a prophecy of the Babylonians and Nebuchadnezzar, because by the will of God he was led into Judea and Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. But we, by following the progression and by linking what follows to what precedes, say that the reason the *sign* was *lifted up afar to the nations*, and that the Lord *whistled*, or drew them [cf. [John 12:32](#)] *from the ends of the earth*, was because they "rejected the law" of the gospel and "blasphemed the holy words" [cf. [Isa 5:24–25](#)]. For if the words were about the Babylonians, then in accordance with prophetic usage [cf. [Isa 41:25](#); [Jer 1:15](#)] he would have said, "I will call him who is from the north."<sup>880</sup> For with respect to the location of Judea, the Assyrians and Chaldeans are in a northerly region, or surely he would have described the Babylonians and Assyrians more clearly. But now by saying, *He will raise a sign to the nations far off and he will whistle to him from the ends of the earth*, he means the nations that are located far off, and that dwell at the ends of the earth. Doubtless this refers to the Romans and all the people of Italy, Gaul, and Spain, who under Vespasian and Hadrian became subjects of the Roman Empire. This is also why Italy was once called *Hesperia*, from the fact that the evening star (*Hesperus*) sets there. And when this one comes, it is struck and all the mountains of Judea are "shaken," as Theodotion and Symmachus translated it, or "moved," as Aquila has recorded, or "embittered," as the Septuagint translated it. Thus by the violent force of the enemy all the streets are filled with the corpses of the dead.

Therefore the divine words are describing the speed of an approaching army, which comes not by its own will, but by the Lord's, or rather, it is drawn and summoned by his *whistling*. For it does not *faint* or *labor* at such a great journey, and out of the lust for *plunder* it does not allow

<sup>880</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 40 (35, 5–0).

its eyes to sleep; its *shoes* too are not worn out, a multitude of archers, squadrons of cavalry, the raging of four-horse chariots, which come *like a lion*, not so much to fight as to plunder and devour, and the howling of a conquering army is likened to the waves of the *sea*. From this one should take note of what is being signified wherever the “roaring of the sea” is named in the Scriptures.<sup>881</sup>

Therefore, when the Roman army will *come and take hold of the plunder* and there will not be *anyone to deliver*, the prophet identifies himself with the people by the affection of a cosufferer and says, *We will look on the land, and behold darkness of tribulation*. For we will not dare to look at heaven, whose inhabitant we have offended, and our *light* that we always had in God *is darkened by the mist of tribulations*.

I have read in someone’s commentary<sup>882</sup> that the words, *He will lift up a sign to the nations far off, and he will whistle to him from the ends of the earth*, ought to be understood concerning the calling of the Gentiles, because when the *sign* of the cross was lifted up [cf. [John 12:32](#)] and the burdens of sin were laid down, they came *swiftly* and believed. But I do not know how what follows can agree with this meaning.

<sup>881</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (35, 15–7).

<sup>882</sup> Possibly, Basil, *Is* 182 (PG 30:425AB).

## [THE THIRD BOOK]

1. The length of the books that we are composing as a commentary on the prophet Isaiah is sufficient for me. For to leave something out would result in a loss in understanding. This is why I have recorded brief little prefaces for the individual books that indicate merely the book number and sequence. And I beg you, Eustochium, Christ's virgin, that you help me by your prayers in the exposition of the very difficult vision in which God almighty is seen in his majesty [cf. [Isa 6:1–2](#)], and there are two seraphim standing around him and shouting, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth, all the earth is full of his glory" [[Isa 6:3](#)]; and the lintel of the temple was shaken and struck [cf. [Isa 6:4](#)]; and the house of the Jews was filled with the darkness of error; and in comparison with the divine glory, the prophet says that he has unclean lips and dwells in the midst of a blaspheming people [cf. [Isa 6:5](#)], who shouted in their impious unison, "Crucify him, crucify him" [[John 19:6](#)]; and, "We have no king but Caesar" [[John 19:15](#)]. One of the seraphim, which was sent to Isaiah, took hold of a coal from the altar with tongs and purged the lips of the prophet [cf. [Isa 6:6–7](#)], and the people remained unclean. Therefore, the third book on Isaiah will have this beginning.

2. ([6:1a–b](#)) *In the year that Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up.*

In the heading of the first vision it was shown that Isaiah prophesied about Judah and Jerusalem under four kings, namely Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah [cf. [Isa 1:1](#)].<sup>11</sup> So then, when Uzziah died, under whom everything was spoken that we have explained above, his son Jotham succeeded him. He reigned for sixteen years, did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and built the upper gate of the temple [cf. [2 Kgs 15:32–35](#)]. When he was in command, Isaiah *saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up*, so that he displayed the character of one who was reigning.

3. ([6:1c](#)) *And the things that were under him filled the temple*, or as Theodotion and Symmachus translated it, "And the things that were under *his feet* filled the temple." The Septuagint translated this as, "And the house was full of his glory."

About thirty years ago while I was in Constantinople and was being educated in the study of the Holy Scriptures by the very eloquent man Gregory Nazianzus—at the time he was the bishop of that city—I know that I dictated a brief and hastily composed treatise on this vision, in order to make an experiment of my meager talent and obey my friends who commanded me.<sup>22</sup>

1 Cf. *Eus Is* 40 (35, 20–7).

2 Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 18A](#) to Damasus, written from Constantinople in 381. This is the earliest of Jerome's expository letters in which he explains at length the vision recorded in [Isa 6](#). For other references to Gregory Nazianzus, see [Vir III 113, 117, 120, 128](#); [Adv. Iov. 1.13](#); [Contra Ruf 1.13](#),

And so I will send the reader to that little book and I ask that he be content with the brief exposition of that time.

Sacred history relates that Uzziah was struck with leprosy, because he laid claim to an unlawful priesthood for himself [cf. [2 Chr 26:16–21](#)].<sup>33</sup> When he died the Lord is seen in the temple that he had polluted. From this we observe that while a leprous king is reigning within us, we are not able to see the Lord reigning in his majesty, nor are we able to recognize the mysteries of the Holy Trinity. This is why even in Exodus, the people cried out to the Lord after Pharaoh died, who was oppressing Israel with mud, straw, and bricks [cf. [Exod 1:14](#); [5:7](#)]. For they were not able to cry out while he was alive [cf. [Exod 2:23](#)]. Moreover, it was after the terrible ruler Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died that Ezekiel falls on his face and cries out to the Lord with a loud voice [cf. [Ezek 11:1–4](#), [13](#)]. And it is nicely expressed by the Hebrew word that it was not the Lord himself who *filled the temple*, whose throne is heaven and whose footstool for his feet is the earth [cf. [Isa 66:1](#)]; and we read about him in another passage, “The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord, his throne is in heaven” [[Ps 11:4](#)]; but *the things that were under his feet filled the temple*.

Now in John the Evangelist and in the Acts of the Apostles we learn more fully who is this *Lord* who is seen. John says of this, “Isaiah said this when he saw his glory and spoke about him” [[John 12:41](#)], doubtless signifying Christ. In the Acts of the Apostles, on the other hand, in Rome Paul speaks to the Jews, and says,

The Holy Spirit spoke through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, saying, “Go to this people and say: You will hear with hearing and you will not understand, and seeing you will see and you will not perceive. For the heart of the people is fat and with difficulty they have heard with their ears, and they have closed their eyes, lest perhaps they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and convert themselves and I would heal them.” [[Acts 28:25–27](#); [Isa 6:9–10](#)]

But the Son is seen in the character of one reigning, and the Holy Spirit has spoken on account of the association of their majesty and the unity of their substance.

Someone may ask how the prophet can say now that he has *seen the Lord*, not the Lord without qualification, but the *Lord Sabaoth* [cf. [Isa 6:5](#)], as he himself testifies in what follows, although John the Evangelist has said, “No one has ever seen God” [[John 1:18](#); [1 John 4:12](#)], and God says to Moses, “You cannot see my face, for no man will see my face and live” [[Exod 33:20](#)]. We will respond to this that fleshly eyes are not able to see not merely the divinity of the Father, but not even that of the Son and the Holy Spirit, since the nature in the Trinity is one. But the eyes of the mind [can see him], of which the Savior himself says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” [[Matt 5:8](#)]. We read that the Lord of Abraham was seen under the figure of a man [cf. [Gen 18:1–3](#)], and a man, as it were, who was God, wrestled with Jacob. This is why the place itself was called Penuel, that is, face of God [cf. [Gen 32:24–30](#)]. He says: “For I have seen God face to face and my soul was saved” [[Gen 32:30](#)]. Ezekiel too saw the Lord in the form of a man sitting over the cherubim; from his loins and below he was like fire and the upper parts

[30](#); *Comm. in Ephes.* 5.32; [Epp. 50.1](#); [52.8](#); [70.4](#).

3 Cf. *Eus Is* 41 (35, 28–8, 9); [Jerome Is Hom 1, 1](#); [5, 3](#).

had the appearance of amber [cf. [Ezek 1:26–27](#)]. Therefore, the nature of God is not discerned, but he is seen by men as he wills.

4. ([6:2–3](#)) *Seraphim were standing upon it; the one had six wings and the other had six wings; with two it covered his face, and with two it covered his feet and with two it flew. And one was crying out to the other and saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; all the earth is full of his glory.”* What we have translated by following the other translators and the Hebrew truth, in which is written *memmaal lo*, that is, *επᾶνω αὐτοῦ*, which is said in Latin as *upon it*, the Septuagint translated, “Round about him,” so that the seraphim are described as standing not upon the temple but round about the Lord. And again, where we have said that one of the seraphim covered *his* face and feet, by which *God’s* are understood, in the Hebrew it is written as *phanau* and *reglau*, which can be translated both “his” and “their own.” Consequently according to the ambiguity of the Hebrew language, the seraphim are said to cover both *God’s* face and feet and *their own* face and feet.

In the seventy-ninth Psalm we read, “You who sit on the cherubim, shine forth!” [[Ps 80:1](#)]. In our language, cherubim is translated “multitude of knowledge.” This is also why the Lord is shown to sit upon cherubim [cf. [1 Sam 4:4](#)] in the manner of a charioteer. But I do not know that I have read of seraphim elsewhere in canonical Scripture except in this passage, which are said to *stand upon the temple*, or “round about the Lord.”<sup>44</sup> They are in error, therefore, who are accustomed to say in their prayers: “You who sit upon cherubim and seraphim,” which Scripture has not taught. But seraphim are translated *εμπρησταί*, which we can express as “set on fire” or “burning,” in accordance with what we read elsewhere: “He who makes his angels spirits and his ministers burning fire” [[Ps 104:4](#)]. This is also what the Apostle Paul says in the Epistle to the Hebrews (which [attribution of authorship] Latin custom does not accept): “Are they not all ministering spirits sent to minister for the sake of those who will receive the inheritance of salvation?” [[Heb 1:14](#)]. Daniel too, when he had described the Lord in the character of one reigning, added, “Thousands and thousands were ministering to him and ten times a thousand times a hundred thousand were assisting him” [[Dan 7:10](#)]. The Lord is shown in the cherubim; therefore, in the *seraphim*, he is partially shown, partially covered.<sup>55</sup> For they cover his face and feet, because we are not able to know both the things that have come to pass before the world, and the things that will come to be after the world; but we contemplate only the things in the middle, which were made in six days [cf. [Gen 1](#)]. It is not surprising to believe this about seraphim, since even the apostles disclose the Savior to those who believe, [but] conceal him from those who do not believe; and there was a veil in front of the ark of the covenant [cf. [Exod 40:3](#)].

They are said to have *wings* too on account of their speed and movement in all directions, or because they always tarry in higher places. For in what is said about the winds, “He who walks upon the wings of the winds” [[Ps 104:3](#)], it is not being genuinely attested that the winds have wings, in accordance with the fables of the poets and the license of painters; but rather it refers to swift movement in all directions. And each has *six wings*, because we only know about the construction of the world and of the present age.

4 Cf. [Jerome Ep. 18B,1, 4](#). See appendix.

5 Cf. [Jerome Is Hom 1.2; 4.1](#). See appendix.

Now in the words *one cries out to the other*, or, according to the Hebrew, “This one to that one,” that is, one to one, they are exhorting each other to the praises of the Lord, and they say, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord of hosts*. Hence they show the mystery of the Trinity in one divine nature, and they bear witness that by no means is the temple of the Jews, as before, but *all the earth, filled with the glory* of him who deigned to assume a human body for our salvation and to descend to earth. After all, the Lord responded even to Moses, when he prayed to the Lord to spare the sinful people who had worshiped a calf, “I will forgive them. Yet I live, and my name lives, for all the earth will be filled with my glory” [[Num 14:20–21](#)]. And the seventy-first Psalm sings, “All the earth will be filled with his glory” [[Ps 72:19](#)]. For this reason also angels *cry out* to the shepherds, “Glory to God in the highest and peace upon earth among men of good will” [[Luke 2:14](#)].

Therefore a certain individual impiously understands the two seraphim to be the Son and the Holy Spirit,<sup>66</sup> since we teach according to John the Evangelist and the Apostle Paul that the Son of God was seen in the majesty of one reigning, and that the Holy Spirit spoke.

Some of the Latins<sup>77</sup> understand the two seraphim to be the Old and New Testaments (*instrumentum*), which speak only of the present age.<sup>88</sup> Accordingly it is also said to have six wings and to cover the face and feet of God, and earnestly to provide a witness of the truth, and everything that it *cries out* reveals the mysteries of the Trinity. They also express wonderment to each other that the *Lord Sabaoth* who was in the form of God the Father accepted the form of a slave and humbled himself unto death, even death on a cross; and by no means is it only heavenly things that recognize him, as before, but also the earthly things [[Phil 2:6–8, 10](#)].

5. ([6:4](#)) *And the lintels of the doors were moved by the voice of the one crying out, and the house was filled with smoke.*

While the seraphim were crying out and proclaiming the mystery of the Trinity throughout the whole earth,<sup>99</sup> when the whole earth recognized the passion of the Lord and Savior, immediately the *lintel* of the temple was *moved*, or “lifted up,” and all its doors fell, when the

6 He is referring to Origen, who ascribes the interpretation to his “ebrew teacher” cf. *Princ* 4.3.14. See also Jerome, *Hom in Is* 1.2; 1.3; [Ep. 61.2.1](#); [84.3.4](#). H. de Lubac, [Medieval Exegesis](#), trans. M. Sebanc and E. M. Macierowski, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998–2009), 1:255, observes that Origen’s interpretation did not at all have the “impious” and “blasphemous” character that Jerome ascribes to it. The assimilation of the Word and the Spirit (Wisdom) to the cherubim and seraphim came from Judeo-Christian sources and was already found in the work of [St. Irenaeus, Dem 10](#). Philo, *De Deo* 6, 9 applied the two seraphim to the creative and ruling power, respectively named God and Lord. J. Daniélou, [A History of Early Christian Doctrine, vol. 1: The Theology of Jewish Christianity](#), trans. and ed. John A. Baker (Chicago: The Henry Regnery Company, 1964), 134–0, discusses “the Two Seraphim” and reports that before Jerome’s time a rebuttal of Origen’s exegesis had been written, “rebuttal all the more necessary in that Origen’s exegesis was being used by the Arians and the Pneumatomachi to support the thesis that the Son and the Holy Spirit were creatures” (135).

7 Jerome himself proposes this interpretation in [Ep. 18A, 6.6–5](#).

8 Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 84.3](#).

9 Cf. *Eus Is* 41 (40, 9–0).



threatening words of the Savior were fulfilled, saying, “Your house will be left to you desolate” [[Matt 23:38](#)]. The sequence of expressions is very beautiful here. After the earth was filled with the glory of the Lord Sabaoth, the temple of the Jews *was filled with* the darkness of ignorance and with mist and *smoke* [cf. [Isa 6:3](#)], which is harmful to the eyes [cf. [Prov 10:26](#)]. Or at least by *smoke* of the temple, fire is shown.<sup>110</sup> For first the gospel of the Savior is preached in the whole world, and forty-two years after the Lord’s passion, Jerusalem was captured and the temple burned. The Jews think that the temple *filled with smoke* signifies *thymiama*, that is, incense [cf. [Exod 25:6](#) Vulg], and by this is signified the presence of the divine majesty.

6. (6:5) *And I said, “Woe is me, because I have kept silent, for I am a man of polluted lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people having polluted lips; and I have seen with my eyes the king, the Lord of hosts.”*

Both Abraham, after he saw the Lord and heard his voice, says that he is earth and ash [cf. [Gen 18:27](#)],<sup>111</sup> and Isaiah testifies according to the Septuagint translators that he is “pricked,” not on account of other offenses but because he had unclean *lips*. A peaceful (*felix*) conscience that sinned only in words, not by his own vice, but by association with the people who have *polluted lips*, with whom he was very often compelled to speak!<sup>112</sup> From this it is shown that it is harmful to live with sinners: “For whoever touches pitch will be defiled” [[Sir 13:1](#)].

But since we read in the Hebrew, *Woe is me, because I have kept silent*, the prophet mourns for himself because he was not worthy to praise the Lord Sabaoth with the seraphim, which we understand to be angelic powers. But he did not dare to praise the Lord, because he had unclean lips, and the reason he had unclean lips is because he lived with a sinful people. Or at any rate it should be understood as follows:<sup>113</sup> Since I kept silent and did not boldly chastise the impious King Uzziah, therefore my lips are unclean and I do not dare to sing the Lord’s praises with the angels, lest it be said to me, “Why do you tell of just statutes and adopt my covenant by your mouth?” [[Ps 50:16](#)]. For “praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner” [[Sir 15:9](#)]. But we say this not because we teach that Isaiah was like this, but because he himself admits in view of his humility and unclean lips only, that he is unworthy of God’s praise.

7. (6:6–7) *And one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a pebble which he had carried from the altar with tongs, and he touched my mouth and said, “Behold, this has touched your lips, and your iniquity will be taken away, and your sin will be cleansed.”*

One of the *seraphim*, which means “set on fire,” flew, or, “was sent,” to cleanse the unclean lips of the prophet [cf. [Isa 6:5](#)], and bake them with a “live coal,” or *pebble which he had carried from the altar*. Now many think that there are two *seraphim*, since one was crying out to the other, though each one out of many could cry out to the others individually [cf. [Isa 6:3](#)], and the Septuagint version may rather signify very many, which has translated, “Seraphim were standing round about him.” But if he were speaking about two, he would not have said “round about,” but “on each side.” And this agrees with the multitude of angels, which has been prepared for God’s service [cf. [Heb 1:14](#)]. Now they are called *seraphim* in the plural, in the singular *seraph*,

<sup>110</sup> Cf. [Jerome Ep. 18A, 9, 1; 10, 3](#).

<sup>111</sup> Cf. [Bas Is 182 \(428A\)](#).

<sup>112</sup> Cf. [Eus Is 41 \(40, 31–4\)](#).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. [Jerome Ep. 18A, 12, 3](#).

just like cherubim and cherub.

But even John in the Apocalypse says that an altar may be seen in heaven, under which are the souls of the martyrs [cf. [Rev 6:9](#)]; and that *pebble* that the Septuagint alone translated as  $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\alpha\xi$ , that is “carbuncle,” can signify not coal, or live coal, as the majority think, but  $\alpha\nu\theta\rho\alpha\kappa\alpha$ , that is the carbuncle stone, which is called “fiery” on account of its resemblance to the color of a flame. From this we understand that the altar of God is filled with carbuncles, that is with fiery pebbles and live coals, which purge sins. This is why we read that it is written of God,<sup>114</sup> “Coals have been ignited by him” [[Ps 18:8](#)], and it is said of God himself that he is a “consuming fire” [cf. [Deut 4:24](#); [Heb 12:29](#)]. And the Savior says in the Gospel, “I have come to cast fire upon the earth” [[Luke 12:49](#)], to baptize in the Holy Spirit and fire [cf. [Matt 3:11](#)]. For “fire will test the quality of each man’s work” [[1 Cor 3:13](#)], and he who is to be saved will be saved in this way, as though passing through fire [cf. [1 Cor 3:15](#)].

And note this: that to Jeremiah, to whom it was said, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you and sanctified you in your mother’s womb” [[Jer 1:5](#)], since he did not have unclean lips [cf. [Isa 6:5](#)], but had merely said, “I do not know how to speak, for I am a youth” [[Jer 1:6](#); cf. [1:9a](#)], the Lord himself extended his own hand. He touched his mouth and said, “Behold, I have put my words into your mouth” [[Jer 1:9b](#)]. On the other hand, to Isaiah, who had said, “I am a man with polluted lips and I live in the midst of a people who have polluted lips” [[Isa 6:5](#)], the hand of God is not extended, but a *seraph* is sent from God, or it flies by its own will, since it has been handed over to this task. And in its hand it holds a *pebble*, which it takes hold of, according to the Septuagint and Theodotion, with tongs, according to Aquila and Symmachus, who followed the Hebrew, with “tongs,” that is, *malcain*, in order to touch his mouth and purge his former transgressions. Now the *hand* is sent both from God and from the *seraph*<sup>115</sup> so that the prophet, upon seeing the member of his own body, would not be terrified by external contact. Some of our own people think that the *tong* with which the *pebble* is grasped is the two Testaments, which are associated among themselves by the union of the Holy Spirit. But since the Lord is introduced as sitting [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)], and sitting in the temple, and “the house is filled with smoke” [cf. [Isa 6:4](#)], as the Jews think, with incense; consequently also “tongs” are recorded, which we read even in respect to the priestly ministry [cf. [Exod 27:3](#)].

8. ([6:8](#)) *And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here I am, send me.”* In view of the fact that both we and all the other translators rendered, *for us*, which is said in Hebrew as *lanu*, I do not know what the Septuagint intended when it recorded, “to this people,” which is completely missing from the Hebrew.<sup>116</sup> Now when *for us* is said under the persona of God, it should be understood in that sense in which one reads even in Genesis, “Let *us* make man in *our* image and likeness” [[Gen 1:26](#)], so that it points to the mystery of the Trinity. For just as when we read that the Lord says in the Gospel, “I and the Father, we are one” [[John 10:30](#)], we refer the “one” to the nature, and we refer the “we are” to the different persons, so when the *Lord* commands, the Trinity commands.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 42 (41, 4–3).

<sup>115</sup> Cf. [Jerome Ep. 18B, 2, 6 \(100, 10–3\)](#).

<sup>116</sup> Cf. [Jerome Ep. 18B, 4, 2](#).

Now the reason the Lord does not say whom he is instructing to go,<sup>117</sup> but he offers the hearers a choice, is so that the will may obtain a reward. And it was not rashly and by the arrogance of his own conscience that the prophet promises that he will go, but with confidence.<sup>118</sup> For his lips have been purged [cf. [Isa 6:7](#)], his iniquity has been removed, and his sin has been cleansed. Therefore, even Moses was responding out of humility, not contempt, to whom the Lord had said, “Come, I will send you to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt” [[Exod 3:10](#)], and he says, “I beg you, Lord, I am not worthy”; and, “Provide another whom you may send” [[Exod 4:10, 13](#)]; or, as one reads in the Hebrew, “Send him whom you will send.” For he who had been educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians [cf. [Acts 7:22](#)] had heard nothing about having his lips purged, and Isaiah offers himself for ministry not on the basis of his own merit, but by the grace of the Lord by which he was purged.

But others think that Isaiah offered himself because he thought that the things that were to be announced to the people were favorable, but because he heard, “Go, say to this people, ‘You will hear with your ears and not understand, and seeing you will see and will not recognize’ ” [[Isa 6:9](#)], for this reason in what follows, when the voice of the Lord says to him, “Cry out,” he does not cry out immediately, but inquires, “What shall I cry out?” [[Isa 40:6](#)]. To Jeremiah also it had been said, “Take this cup and you will make all the nations to whom I will send you drink from it” [[Jer 25:15](#)]. By his willing acceptance of the cup of punishments, to give it to hostile nations to drink, vomit and fall [cf. [Jer 25:16](#)], he later heard, “Go and you will first offer Jerusalem a drink” [[Jer 25:17–18](#)]. To this he replied, “You deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived” [[Jer 20:7](#)]. This is an observation of the Hebrews. However that may be, we say that it is not a question of rashness, but of obedience to the Lord that he offered himself to be sent.

9. (6:9–10) *And he said, “Go, and you shall say to this people, ‘Hear with hearing, and do not understand; and see with seeing and do not recognize.’ Blind the heart of this people and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest perhaps they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and be converted and healed.”*<sup>119</sup>

The Septuagint translated this passage the way the Evangelist Luke recorded it in the Acts of the Apostles: “And since they disagreed among themselves”—doubtless referring to the Jews—

they departed, after Paul had made one statement: “The Holy Spirit has spoken well to our fathers through Isaiah the prophet, saying, ‘Go to this people, and say, “You will hear with hearing and you will not understand, and seeing you will see, and you will not perceive.” For this people’s heart has become fat, and their ears have become heavy of hearing, and they have closed their eyes, lest perhaps they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert themselves, and I would heal them.’ ” [[Acts 28:25–27](#)]

Now in what follows the Apostle Paul himself speaks about the time when this prophecy was fulfilled: “Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; and they will hear” [[Acts 28:28](#)]. This is also why we read in the same Acts of the

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 42 (41, 29–5).

<sup>118</sup> Cf. [Jerome Is Hom 6.1; 9; Ep. 18B, 15, 2–](#)). See appendices.

<sup>119</sup> See Craig A. Evans, “[Jerome’ Translation of Isaiah 6:9–0](#),” *Vigiliae Christianae* 38 (1984): 202–.

Apostles that Paul and Barnabas said to the Jews who were unwilling to believe,

It was necessary first to speak the word of God to you, but since you reject it and have judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we are turning to the Gentiles; for thus did the Lord command us: "I have appointed you for a light to the Gentiles, that you may be for the salvation to the ends of the earth." [[Acts 13:46–47](#); cf. [Isa 49:6](#)]

Therefore, according to the Septuagint, the interpretation is easy: at the Lord's command Isaiah the prophet is predicting what the people will do. The difficulty is in the Hebrew version: How could God himself command the people to *hear with hearing*, and *not understand*, and to *see with seeing*, and *not recognize*? And later the prophet is introduced as speaking, and he pleads with the Lord and says: *Blind the heart of this people and weigh down their ears and close their eyes, lest perhaps they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and be converted and healed.*

The first question in particular that needs to be solved, which can be raised as an objection to us, is this: When carrying on his discussion with the Hebrews, why did the Apostle Paul not speak according to the Hebrew version, which he knew was correct, but according to the Septuagint? Ancient transmitters of ecclesiastical tradition report that Luke the Evangelist was very knowledgeable in the art of medicine and that he knew Greek literature rather than Hebrew. This is why his language, both in the Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles, that is, in both books, is quite polished, and is redolent of secular eloquence, and he uses Greek citations rather than Hebrew.

Matthew and John, on the other hand, one of whom composed his Gospel in the Hebrew language, the other in Greek, produce citations from the Hebrew, as for example in the following passages: "Out of Egypt I have called my son" [[Hos 11:1](#); [Matt 2:15, 23](#)],<sup>220</sup> and: "For he will be called a Nazarene" [[Matt 2:23](#)];<sup>221</sup> and: "Rivers of living water will flow from his belly" [[John 7:38](#)], and: "They will look on him whom they have pierced" [[Zech 12:10](#); [John 19:37](#)]; and other examples similar to these.<sup>222</sup> An objection is raised against Paul's Letter to the Hebrews for this reason, that when writing to the Hebrews he uses testimonies that are not found in the Hebrew books. But if someone should say that the Hebrew books were later falsified by the Jews, let him listen to what Origen says in response to this little question in the eighth book of

<sup>220</sup> The Septuagint of [Hos 11:1](#) reads, "ut of Egypt have I called his children."

<sup>221</sup> See Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* [2.23](#), where he cites Matthew's reading as a rendering of the Hebrew of [Isa 11:1](#).

<sup>222</sup> In the cases of both Matthew and John, their use of the OT is complex. Both evangelists make extensive use of the LXX as well as the Hebrew. For Matthew, see R. Gundry, [Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art](#) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982); and [The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel](#), NovTSup 18 (Leiden: Brill, 1967). In the latter work (147–0), Gundry concludes that of approximately eighty formal and allusive quotations of the OT in Matthew, about thirty clearly follow the LXX reading, and most of these instances happen to be in the direct speech of Jesus and John the Baptist. For John's use of the OT, see C. K. Barrett, [The Gospel According to St. John](#), second edition (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), [27–0](#).

his *Commentary on Isaiah*, namely that the Lord and the apostles, who rebuke other offenses in the scribes and Pharisees, would never have been silent about this offense, which would have been the greatest one of all.<sup>223</sup> But if on the other hand they say that after the coming of the Savior and the preaching of the apostles, the Hebrew books were falsified, I will not be able to contain my laughter, that the Savior, the evangelists and the apostles would have produced testimonies in such a way that Jews were going to falsify them later.

Concerning the present passage, however, one should say that it is in vain that we have recourse to the Septuagint translation to avoid the apparent blasphemy of the Hebrew reading: “Hear with hearing and do not understand, and see the sight and do not recognize,” since we may find testimonies like this also in the Septuagint translators.<sup>224</sup> For example, there is the following that is spoken to Pharaoh in Exodus: “For this reason I have raised you up, to show my power in you” [[Exod 9:16](#)]. But if *he himself* raised him up, and *hardened* Pharaoh’s heart so that he would not believe [cf. [Exod 4:21](#)], and [if] it is said of others, “*God* gave them a spirit of remorse, eyes that would not see, and ears that would not hear” [[Rom 11:8](#)], and in the Psalms, “Let their table become a snare and a trap and a stumbling block and a retribution; let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see, and their backs always bent” [[Ps 69:22–23](#)]; [then] they are not at fault who do not see, but rather he who gave them the eyes not to see. Therefore, even apart from this testimony, which we are now attempting to explain, the same question remains in the churches, and either along with it the other testimonies will also be resolved; or with the others this one too will be a problem that defies solution.

The blessed Apostle Paul explains this passage in greater detail [in the Epistle] to the Romans, and what he has pursued in nearly that whole letter, we make superfluous if we should want to summarize it in a few words. For after many things he says, “God has enclosed all things in unbelief, that he may have mercy on all” [[Rom 11:32](#)]. And marveling at the Lord’s mysteries, he added, “O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments and his ways beyond tracing out!” [[Rom 11:33](#)]. And again, when discussing the unbelief of the Jews, he says, “Have they sinned in such a way as to fall? By no means; but by their transgression [came] the salvation of the Gentiles, to make them jealous” [[Rom 11:11](#)]. And after a little bit, “For if their rejection [is] the reconciliation of the world, what is their reception? Is it not life from the dead?” [[Rom 11:15](#)]. And again, “For I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of this mystery, that you not be prudent in yourselves, for a blindness in part has taken place in Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles enters, and then all Israel may be

<sup>223</sup> Cf. Origen, *In Esaiam* 8.

<sup>224</sup> The difference in the readings is that in the Hebrew the hardening formula is given in the imperative mood, whereas in the Greek Septuagint it is given in the future indicative. B. Childs, [The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture](#) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), [94](#), writes, “erome’ solution is of interest in that he does not offer an easy harmonization; rather, he reflects theologically on the integrity of both interpretations and points out that the New Testament Gospels share the same tension when citing the Isaianic text. Although Jerome is often harsh in his repudiation of Jewish interpretations, he does not accept the widespread Christian allegation that the Jews intentionally distorted the Hebrew text to deny a Christian appeal to fulfillment.”

saved” [[Rom 11:25–26](#)]; and after a bit, “Indeed, according to the gospel [they are] enemies on account of you, but according to election, beloved because of the fathers; for without penitence are the gifts and calling of God. For,” he says, “just as you once did not believe in God, but now you have attained mercy on account of their unbelief, so also they now have not believed in your mercy, so that even they themselves might attain mercy. For God has enclosed all things under sin, that he might have mercy on all” [[Rom 11:28–32](#)].

Therefore, it is not the severity, but the mercy of God, that one nation perishes, so that all might be saved, that a portion of the Jews do not see, so that the whole world may see. This is why even the Lord himself in the Gospel turns the mystery of the man blind from birth, who had received sight [cf. [John 9:1–7](#)], into a tropology, and says, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that those seeing might not see and those who do not see may see” [[John 9:39](#)]. And in another passage Simeon says, “Behold this one is appointed for the falling and rising of many” [[Luke 2:34](#)]. And so, while those ones do not see, we ourselves do see; when they fall, we rise again. Understanding this, the prophet says it in different words, as it were: O Lord, you command me to speak to the Jewish people, that they may hear and not understand the Savior, and see him and not recognize. If you want your command to be fulfilled and the whole world to be saved, which I too desire to happen, then you, *blind the heart of this people and weigh down their ears and shut their eyes*, so that they do not understand, hear, and see; for if they will have seen and been converted and understood and been healed, the whole world will not receive healing. From this we notice that, although sin is *heavy*, if someone is converted, he can be *healed*. At the same time this too should be understood, that in proportion to the extent of the crime, they have been judged unworthy even of penitence, since the Lord himself says to Jerusalem, “How often have I wanted to gather your sons as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling!” [[Matt 23:37](#)].

10. ([6:11–13](#)) *And I said, “How long, O Lord?” And he said, “Until the cities are left desolate without inhabitant and the houses are without men, and the land is left deserted.” And the Lord will make men far away, and that will be multiplied which had been abandoned in the midst of the land. And there will be still a tenth in it, and again it will be for plundering, just like a turpentine tree, and as an oak that has flung away its fruits, there will be a holy seed which will stand in it.*

Since the Lord says, Go and tell this people what they should hear and not hear, see and not see [cf. [Isa 6:9](#)]*—*but the reason they neither hear nor see is because they will neither understand the Lord’s words nor recognize his works, and because they have been made fat [cf. [Isa 6:10](#); [Deut 32:15](#)] and enlarged and have forgotten their Creator—the prophet responded and anxiously asks about his own people,<sup>225</sup> *How long, O Lord, will this sentence remain* [cf. [Isa 6:9](#)], that hearing they do not hear, and seeing they do not see? The Lord answered him, For as long as they will not hear and not see and will have a blinded heart [cf. [Isa 6:9–10](#)], *until the cities* of Judea are completely demolished, during the war with Vespasian and Titus, to such an extent that not even the original name [of the land] remains, and the *houses*, if any will have remained, would be *without inhabitant*, and the land is reduced to a *desert*, and either by flight or captivity the Jewish people are dispersed into the whole world; and by no means are the

<sup>225</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 42 (42, 30–3, 19).



Jewish people *multiplied* in Judea, as previously, but among all nations. Now when I say that they will *be multiplied*, the misfortune of the remaining people will be so great that in comparison with the former multitude, scarcely a *tenth* part will remain. At that time the *desert* will be both in the *land* itself—for that location<sup>226</sup> can be understood in two ways, that a *tenth* part would hardly remain even in the whole world, and in Judea itself scarcely a tiny portion of the people will be preserved—again the very remnant will be *for plundering*, when nearly fifty years later Hadrian will have come and will have completely *plundered* the land of Judea, to such an extent that it will be compared to the *turpentine tree* and the *oak*, which has lost its “acorns” [cf. [Isa 6:13](#)]. After all, after the final devastation, even public laws have decreed that the Jews are prohibited from entering the land from which they had been cast out.<sup>227</sup> Now if someone believes in Christ, that is fulfilled that we read above: “Unless the Lord Sabaoth had left us seed, we would have become like Sodom and we would have been likened to Gomorrah” [[Isa 1:9](#)], when according to the apostle the remnant will be saved [cf. [Rom 9:27](#); [11:5](#)], *there will be a holy seed*, and from the bud of the apostles all the churches will sprout.

What we have said as, *There will be a holy seed, which will stand in it*, or according to Aquila, “The holy seed will be his sprout,” is not contained in the Septuagint translators, but was added by Origen from the Hebrew and Theodotion’s edition. Thus it is witnessed in the church’s copies, that after the fullness of the Gentiles has entered, at that time all Israel is saved [cf. [Rom 11:25–26](#)]; and even in this the Lord’s words are fulfilled that say, “I will kill and I will make alive, and I will strike and I will heal” [[Deut 32:39](#)].<sup>228</sup>

11. ([7:1–2](#)) *And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to fight against it, and they could not prevail over it. (2) And they declared to the house of David, saying, “Syria has allied with Ephraim, and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the woods are moved by the face of the wind.”*

*Uzziah*, who is also Azariah [cf. [2 Chr 26:1](#)], reigned in Jerusalem as king of Judah for fifty-two years [cf. [2 Kgs 15:1–2](#)]. Already at the end of his time period, Isaiah saw the things that his previous words discussed. At his death, and while his son Jotham, a very just king [cf. [2 Kgs 15:34](#)], was reigning in his place, immediately the prophet saw the Lord and Savior [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)] reigning in his majesty and declaring the blindness of the Jewish people and the overthrow of Jerusalem and of the other cities [cf. [Isa 6:9–11](#)] under Vespasian and Hadrian, and how in the apostles a remnant is to be saved [cf. [Isa 6:13](#)]. A third king, the most impious Ahaz, a son of Jotham, succeeded. He shut the gates of the temple, and in the valley of Gehenna he worshiped the Baals and dedicated his own son to the idols [cf. [2 Kgs 16:1–4](#); [2 Chr 28:1–4](#)], removing the bronze altar that Solomon had made [cf. [2 Kgs 16:10–14](#)]. Moreover, he placed an altar of idols in the temple of God, the model for which he had received from Damascus [cf. [2 Kgs 16:14–16](#)]. Therefore the Lord’s help abandoned him justly, and Rezin, king of Syria, that is, Aram, rose up against him, and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel in Samaria, and they came to Jerusalem in order to attack it.

<sup>226</sup> I believe he means *terra*, which means both land and earth.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. [Justin, 1 Apol 47](#); [Eusebius, HE 4.6.3](#).

<sup>228</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 190 (445A).

We read in the Book of Chronicles [*Paralipomenon*] that Rezin the king of Damascus conquered Ahaz and transferred many from Judea to Damascus [cf. [2 Chr 25:5–8](#)], and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of the ten tribes that were called Israel and were reigning in Samaria, slew on one day 120,000 soldiers from Judah and led captive to Samaria 200,000 women, boys and girls, together with infinite plunder [cf. [2 Chr 28:5–8](#)]. The prophet was silent about this battle at present, but he reports the second battle, when having an experiment of his fortitude and victory, and having been enticed by the extent of the booty, they again come to Judea and desire to attack Jerusalem, and they were not able because the Lord helped it. Consequently, on the occasion of mercy, whereby he was delivering a besieged people, he declares that his Son would be born of a virgin [cf. [Isa 7:14](#)].

When the *house of David*, that is, the royal house, heard this, namely that Syria and Ephraim, Rezin and Pekah were coming, joined by their armies, it was terrified and thoroughly frightened, and both the king and the people trembled all over, so that you would have thought that the leaves of the trees were being blown by the breezes of the winds.

The anagogical<sup>229</sup> interpretation is easy: when the impious King Ahaz was reigning, the king of Aram [comes], whose name means high and lofty, indicating the arrogance of secular wisdom. Moreover, Pekah the son of Remaliah [comes], who even himself, according to Hosea the prophet, severs from the house of David both the tribe of Ephraim [cf. [Hos 5:3](#)],<sup>330</sup> from which Jeroboam the son of Nebat had set up golden calves in Bethel and Dan [cf. [1 Kgs 11:26; 12:28–29](#)], and the people of God [[1 Kgs 12:20](#)]. This refers to the heretics who agree with one another to attack the church. When the house of David heard this, David must be raised up. He is the good shepherd of whom we read in Ezekiel [cf. [Ezek 34:23](#)], and his people are in great fear by simply believing in the Lord. And the reason they are in great fear is because they are compared not to fruit-bearing trees but to an unfruitful forest. Now no one doubts that heretics and pagans fight against the house of David with these same swords of dialectical art and arguments. Consequently those who dissent among themselves consent in their attack on the church. It is in accordance with this that Herod and Pilate, while having a disagreement between themselves, are leagued together in friendship by the passion of the Lord [cf. [Luke 23:12](#)].

12. ([7:3–9](#)) *And the Lord said to Isaiah, “Go forth to meet Ahaz, you and Jashub your son who has been abandoned, at the end of the aqueduct of the upper pool, in the way of the fuller’s field. (4) And you will say to him, ‘See that you are quiet, do not fear, and let not your heart be afraid of the two tails of these smoking firebrands, with the wrath of Rezin’s fury, and of Syria and of the son of Remaliah. (5) Because very evil Syria has taken counsel against you, Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, saying, (6) “Let us go up to Judah, and rouse it, and let us draw it away to us, and make the son of Tabeel king in the midst of it.” (7) Thus says the Lord God, “It will not stand, and this will not be, (8) but the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin, and still sixty-five years and Ephraim will cease to be a people. (9) And the head of Ephraim [is] Samaria and the head of Samaria the son of Remaliah. If you will not believe, you will not continue.’ ”*

Isaiah’s son Jashub, whose name means “remnant” and “converting,” as a type of the

<sup>229</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 191 (445D–48B).

<sup>330</sup> Cf. Jerome, *Os* 1 (49, 435–55).

people of Judah, who were to be liberated from the hands of the two kings, is commanded to *go forth* with his father and to *meet Ahaz*, king of Judah in the location of the *aqueduct of the upper pool in the way of the fuller's field*. We will later read that at the time of Hezekiah king of Judah, Rabshakeh stood on this location and blasphemed the people of God by the command of Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians [cf. [Isa 36:2–3](#); [2 Kgs 18:17–18](#)]. The rulers of the city went forth to that place, having been sent by Hezekiah, rulers whom we read about in the Book of Kings. And Ahaz, though he was an impious king, is instructed for the sake of God's mercy to be *silent* and not to *let his heart be terrified and frightened*, thinking that he would suffer things similar to what he had previously endured.

But he calls Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Samaria, *two tails of firebrands*, that is, of smoking firebrands, because in them has come to an end the kingdom of Syria, that is, of Damascus, and the kingdom of Samaria, that is, of the ten tribes, which were called by another name, Ephraim. For it is written that Tiglath-Pileser, the king of the Assyrians, went up to Damascus when Ahaz was king and devastated it and transferred its inhabitants to Cyrene,<sup>331</sup> and he killed Rezin [cf. [2 Kgs 16:9](#)]; and that Hoshea son of Elah formed a conspiracy against Pekah, son of Remaliah, and struck him down and killed him and reigned in his place in Israel for nine years [cf. [2 Kgs 15:30](#)]. [It is also written] that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came and for three years besieged Samaria, which is now called Sebaste.<sup>332</sup> And in the ninth year of Hoshea's reign, he captured it and threw Hoshea into prison in chains and transferred Israel to the Assyrians and put them in the cities of Halah and Habor, near the river Gozan, or, as the Septuagint translated it, "in the mountains of the Medes" [cf. [2 Kgs 17:3–6](#)].

For although two very wicked kings *took counsel* to go up to Judah, whose region is situated in the mountains, and to *rouse it* while it was resting and asleep, as it were, and to subjugate it by their power; and they placed over it a king, the son of Tabeel, who is interpreted "good God," so as to show either a man by this name, or an idol; nevertheless, *Thus says the Lord God: This policy will not stand*, but meanwhile in a moment the head of the cities of Syria will be Damascus, and in the very metropolis of Damascus, Rezin will be in charge. Further, in Ephraim on account of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who first reigned from Ephraim, Samaria will be the head, that is the royal house will be in the city of Samaria, and the head of Samaria will be the son of Remaliah, that is Pekah. But after sixty-five years the kingdom of the ten tribes *will cease to exist*, that is, the people of Ephraim. Unless we pay very careful attention to this, it cannot stand.

For in the fourteenth year of Ahaz son of Jotham in the tribe of Judah, Hoshea reigned over Samaria, and in the ninth year of his command, he was captured [cf. [2 Kgs 17:2–6](#)]. But Ahaz reigned over Judah for sixteen years [[2 Kgs 16:2](#)]. After his death, Hoshea was captured in the seventh year of his command, and Samaria was destroyed, and all the people were transferred to the Medes [cf. [2 Kgs 17:6](#)]. Thus, if we want to reckon sixteen years of Ahaz and seven of Hoshea, it would become twenty-three years, or as many as twenty-four. Where then will the sixty-five years be within which the kingdom of Israel is said to have to come to an end?

<sup>331</sup> RSV: Kir.

<sup>332</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 43 (45, 30).

Therefore, the Hebrews have explained this passage as follows.<sup>333</sup> Amos, who began to prophesy under Uzziah, when Isaiah too made a beginning of his prophecy, first prophesied against Israel, saying, “But Israel will be led captive from their land” [cf. [Amos 7:11, 17](#)]. The heading of his prophecy is also against Samaria, and he began to prophesy in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, two years before the earthquake [cf. [Amos 1:1](#)]. They think that this means that it happened at the time when Uzziah entered the temple of God and laid claim to the priesthood for himself, and the earth was struck, and the ashes of the altar were poured out, and the king himself was struck with leprosy [cf. [2 Kgs 15:4–5](#); [2 Chr 26:16–20](#)].<sup>334</sup> They think that the year when these things happened was Uzziah’s twenty-fifth, his remaining years totaling twenty-seven; for he reigned all fifty-two years [cf. [2 Kgs 15:2](#)]. After him, Jotham his son reigned for sixteen years [cf. [2 Kgs 15:32–33](#); [2 Chr 27:1](#)], and his son Ahaz for another sixteen years [cf. [2 Kgs 16:1–2](#); [2 Chr 28:1](#)]. After him Hezekiah reigned, in the sixth year of whose command Samaria was captured [cf. [2 Kgs 18:10](#)]. Thus altogether the years add up to sixty-five.

Though the Lord predicted these things through the prophet, both Ahaz and the people did not believe in what was coming. This is why it is added, *If you will not believe, you will not continue*, as Symmachus translated it, that is, you too *will not continue* in your kingdom, but you will be led into captivity, enduring the punishments of those whose infidelity you have emulated; or at least in accordance with the Septuagint, “You will not understand,” and the meaning is that because you do not believe the things that the Lord says are coming, you do not have understanding. We have said these things according to history.

However that may be, one should consider according to the tropology that we have commenced, that Isaiah is being commanded to meet the impious king, going out from his place, not at the beginning of the aqueduct but in the *extreme limits of the upper pool, which was in the fuller’s field*, where filth and defilements were purged. For although Ahaz reigned over Judah, nevertheless since he was impious, he lingered in the *extreme limits of the upper pool*. Therefore God has mercy not so much on the king, whom he reckoned unworthy of salvation, as on his people. Now, as we said above, he is calling secular wisdom and the words of the heretics, whose end is conflagration, the *two tails of smoking firebrands*. They *took counsel in vain to go up against Judah and capture it*, while it was off guard and asleep, as it were, and to join it to their own errors, and *make the son of Tabeel*, that is, the “good God,” *king over it*. For every adversary thinks that the truth is with him; he thinks that the teaching among themselves is best. After all, the heretic Marcion thinks that Christ is the son of the “good God,” that is, of another [god], not of the just One, to whom the prophets belong, whom he calls a bloodthirsty, cruel judge.<sup>335</sup> When they say these things, the Lord threatens that their

<sup>333</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (46, 15–2); Hollerich, [Eusebius of Caesarea’s Commentary on Isaiah: Christian Exegesis in the Age of Constantine](#) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 149–0, conjectures that the original Jewish source is *Seder Olam*.

<sup>334</sup> Cf. [Josephus, Ant 9.10.4.222–7](#).

<sup>335</sup> Marcion of Sinope in Pontus was reputedly the son of the bishop of Sinope, who came to Rome and founded a heretical sect in the 140s. Scandalized by the problem of evil and other philosophical issues, he responded by rejecting his prior faith and forming a doctrinal system based on the irreconcilability of justice and grace, law and gospel, Judaism and Christianity, the

counsel does not stand, but in the meantime they have dominion in their own borders and in their cities, now, while this world stands and those things that are of the world. But when the time of consummation comes, that is sixty-five years, and both the things of the world, which were made in *six* days, and everything that pertains to the *five* senses, will have come to an end, then the universe must be dissolved [cf. [2 Pet 3:10](#)]. Pagans and heretics do not believe that this will happen, and on account of unbelief they do not understand what is being said.

13. ([7:10–11](#)) *And the Lord spoke again to Ahaz, saying, “Seek a sign for yourself from the Lord your God in the depth of the underworld or in the height above.”*

He had previously spoken to Ahaz through the prophet, “See that you are silent, do not be afraid,” [[Isa 7:4](#)], and so on. When that man does not believe and therefore does not understand [cf. [Isa 7:9](#)], he himself speaks to Ahaz, so that at least when he has been terrified by the Lord’s authority, he might receive what is being said. For to you, he says, it seems to be difficult that very powerful kingdoms are to come to an end in a brief moment, and you with your people will be delivered from great danger. *Seek for yourself a sign*, not from the idols in whose error you are held fast, but *from the Lord your God* who promises to help you. Now it is a matter of your choice from where you should ask for the very sign, whether from the *depth* or from the *height*. Since only the Septuagint said the latter, the others translated it more meaningfully according to the Hebrew, *from the depth of the underworld*.

Therefore just as *depth* signifies *underworld*, so we ought to understand *height above* as the heavens. Thus when you receive the sign from the world below or from the *height*, you may believe that what I have said is coming to pass. Do you want the earth to be torn apart, he says, and the lower world to lie wide open with a huge chasm, which is said to be in the heart of the earth [cf. [Matt 12:40](#)], or the heavens to be opened [cf. [Matt 3:16](#); [Ezek 1:1](#)]?<sup>336</sup> Both of these apply as types of the death and ascension of the Lord: “For he who descended is the same who also ascended” [[Eph 4:10](#)]. And we read in the Apostle, “Do not say in your heart, who ascends into heaven? That is, to bring Christ down. Or: who descends into the abyss? That is, to bring Christ back from the dead” [[Rom 10:6–7](#)]. And in another passage where he discusses Christ, he says, “What is the breadth and length and *height* and *depth* of the surpassing knowledge and love of Christ” [[Eph 3:18–19](#)]. This pertains largely to mystical understandings.

However that may be, even Moses received *signs* from the earth<sup>337</sup> concerning which we read in the Psalms, “He sent *signs* and wonders into your midst, O Egypt” [[Ps 135:9](#)], frogs,

God of the Old Testament and the Father of Jesus. He posited two deities: a good nonjudgmental God (the Father of Jesus), who is not to be feared, and a just but inferior god (the Creator of the world, who is the God of the Old Testament and of the Jews), in whom resides the grounds of fear, anger, severity, judgment, vengeance, and condemnation. He repudiated the Old Testament in its entirety, denying that it predicted the coming of Jesus or spoke about the good Father proclaimed by Jesus. He taught his followers that the received form of the New Testament had been corrupted by Judaizing Christians, whom he identifies as the Catholics of his day. His own sect made use of an “dited” collection of Paul’ letters and Luke’ Gospel, altered and changed by Marcion.

<sup>336</sup> Cf. [Jerome Is Hom 2, 1](#) (248, 24–49, 16); *Bas Is* 198 (460D–61A).

<sup>337</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 44 (47, 6–5).

locusts, stinging insects and the fly; but from heaven [he sent] hail and fire and a three-day darkness [cf. [Exod 8–10](#)]. Moreover, I think that Hezekiah received a *sign* from heaven when the sun went backward by ten lines [cf. [2 Kgs 20:9–11](#)]. So did Jesus son of Nun, when the sun and moon were standing still over Gibeon and Aijalon [cf. [Josh 10:12–13](#)]. Most think that Saul received a *sign* from the earth and from the *depth of the underworld* when he appeared to have raised Samuel by means of the incantations and magic arts [cf. [1 Sam 28:8–20](#); [Sir 46:20](#)]. Moreover, Jonah the prophet both gave and received a *sign* of the underworld, when he was liberated from the abyss and from the *depth* and from the jaws of death [cf. [Jonah 2:1–10](#)].

In someone's commentary<sup>338</sup> I have read this passage expanded upon allegorically, so that he understood *depth* and *height* as αἰσθητὰ and νοητὰ, which we can call sensible and intelligible things, one of which refers to the senses, the other to the mind and reason. The *virgin*, too, he interprets of the soul, which has been defiled by no awareness of sin, and is capable of producing the word *Emmanuel* from itself, "God with us," that is, the presence of God. But we do not consume flesh of the lamb boiled but roasted [cf. [Exod 12:8–9](#)] and things that can dry up all the juices of the pleasures in us, lest we should neglect the mystery of our faith, while we are more wise than is fitting to be [cf. [Rom 12:3](#)].

14. ([7:12](#)) *And Ahaz said, "I will not ask and I will not tempt the Lord."*

It is not from humility but from pride that he does not wish to ask for a sign from the Lord. For although it is written in Deuteronomy, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God" [[Deut 6:16](#)],<sup>339</sup> and the Savior used this testimony against the devil [[Matt 4:7](#)], nevertheless, when Ahaz was commanded to ask, he should have obediently fulfilled the command, especially since both Gideon and Manoah sought and received a sign [[Judg 6:36–40](#); [13:8–11](#)]*—*although according to the ambiguity of the Hebrew expression, in which it is written, *ulo enasse adonai*, it could be read as "I will not exalt the Lord," everyone translated this in the same way, *I will not tempt the Lord*. For the impious king knew that if he had asked for a sign, he would have received one, and the Lord would have been glorified. Like a worshiper of idols, therefore, the one who had set up altars on all the street corners and on mountains and in wooded groves [cf. [2 Kgs 16:4](#); [2 Chr 28:4, 24–25](#); [Ezek 6:13](#)], and who instead of the Levites employed fanatics, does not want to ask for the sign that was commanded.

15. ([7:13](#)) *And he said, "Listen, therefore, O house of David. Is it a small thing for you to be distressing to men, that you are distressing to my God also?"*

Who is the speaker of the words, *Listen, therefore, O house of David*? Hardly God who had said above to Ahaz, "Ask for a sign for yourself from the Lord your God" [[Isa 7:11](#)]. On the contrary it is the prophet, as is proven from what follows: *That you are distressing to my God also*. And the meaning is that not only do you persecute the prophets and despise their words, but you go against the judgment of God who is present and giving commands. Thus do you "labor" him, who in another passage says, "I have patiently *labored*" [[Isa 1:14](#)]. On that account the Lord will do what follows. In place of "labor" and "distress," which Aquila and Symmachus translated, the Septuagint and Theodotion have interpreted it "struggle," that is, fight and combat, since they contentiously refuse to submit their neck to the Lord's service, but though

<sup>338</sup> Probably Origen' or other Alexandrians'

<sup>339</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 199 (161A).



he is willing to cure their wounds, they reject his healing. And this should be noted, that while the very impious king Ahaz is unwilling to ask for a sign, the prophetic discourse turns to the house of David, that is, to the royal tribe, of which we have read above, “And they declared these things to the house of David, saying, ‘Syria and Ephraim have come to an agreement’ ” [[Isa 7:2](#)].<sup>440</sup>

16. ([7:14](#)) *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin will conceive and give birth, and you shall call his name Emmanuel.*

God will not speak “in many and various ways,” according to the Apostle Paul [cf. [Heb 1:1](#)]; nor according to another prophet will he be “represented by the hands of the prophets” [cf. [Hos 12:10](#)]; but he who previously spoke through others will *himself* say, “I am here” [[Isa 58:9](#)]. The bride in the Song of Songs also asked of him, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth” [[Song 1:1](#)]. For “the Lord of powers is himself the king of glory” [[Ps 24:10](#)]. He *himself* will descend into a virginal womb and will enter and exit through the eastern gate that is always closed [[Ezek 44:1–2](#)].<sup>441</sup> Gabriel speaks to the virgin about him, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the holy thing that will be born in you will be called the Son of God” [[Luke 1:35](#)]. And in Proverbs it says, “Wisdom will build a house for itself” [[Prov 9:1](#)].

Now when it is said, *The Lord himself shall give you a sign*, this must be something new and amazing. But if, as the Jews think, a young woman or a girl gives birth, and not a *virgin*, what kind of *sign* would it be, since this is a term of age, not of integrity?<sup>442</sup> And indeed, let us fight toe to toe with the Jews, and in our tug-of-war let us offer them no occasion for laughter at our ignorance.<sup>443</sup> In Hebrew, a virgin is called *bethula*.<sup>444</sup> This word is not used in the present

<sup>440</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 44 (47, 25–9).

<sup>441</sup> This passage in Ezekiel was first applied to the doctrine of *Virginitas in Partu* of the Virgin Mary (the preservation of Mary’s virginity during the birth of Jesus) by St. Ambrose, *De institutione virginum*. See Luigi Gambero, SM, [Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought](#), trans. Thomas Buffer (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999).

<sup>442</sup> This same argument is used by [Justin, Dial 84.1–](#); [Irenaeus, Haer 3.21.6](#); [Tertullian, Marc 3.13.5](#); [Jud 9.8](#); [Origen, Cels 1.35](#).

<sup>443</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 201 (464A–); [Jerome, Jov 1, 32](#); q (29, 1–0, 4); *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* (24.43).

<sup>444</sup> For a discussion of Jerome’s exegesis of this passage, see C. Rico, [La Mère de l’infant-Roi. Imah et parthenos dans l’univers de la Bible: un point de vue linguistique](#) (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2013). Rico contends that Jerome’s understanding of the linguistic meaning of *almah* is basically correct, even if the arguments he produces are to be reset within the framework of his time and could not be held today in the same way from a linguistic point of view. A. Kamesar, [“The Virgin Birth of Isaiah 7:14: The Philological Argument from the Second to the Fifth Century,”](#) *JTS* 41, no. 1 (1990): 51–5 (62–5), commends the “onsiderable philological acumen” employed by Jerome in this section. Likewise, C. T. R. Hayward, [Saint Jerome’s Hebrew Questions on Genesis](#) (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), 186, summarizes Jerome’s discussion of the meaning of *alma* as follows: “n all this, his arguments are philological, and are based on the Hebrew text of Scripture: Jerome does not resort to what was perhaps the most famous Christian defense for understanding ‘oung

passage, but instead *alma* is recorded, which everyone except the Septuagint translated as “young girl.” Moreover, among them *alma* is an ambiguous word, for it is used both of “young girl” and of one who is “hidden,” that is ἀποκρυφος.<sup>445</sup> This is why even in the heading of the ninth Psalm, where in Hebrew *almanoth* is recorded, the other translators rendered it, “for the youth,” which the Septuagint translated, “for the hidden things” [cf. [Ps 9:1](#)]. And we read in Genesis, where Rebecca is called *alma* [cf. [Gen 24:16, 43](#)], that Aquila translated it neither as “young girl” nor “girl,” but “hidden.” The Shunammite woman too who had lost her son, when she prostrated herself at Elisha’s feet and Gehazi thrust her away, heard from the prophet, “Dismiss her, for she is in grief, and the Lord has hidden from me” [[2 Kgs 4:27](#)]. What is said in Latin as, “has hidden from me,” is written in Hebrew as, *eelim memmenni*. Therefore *alma* is said not only of a “girl” or a “virgin,” but has an extension (*cum επιτασει*) of a “hidden” and “secret” virgin, who has never been exposed to the sight of men, but who has been guarded by her parents with great diligence.<sup>446</sup> In the Punic language too, which is derived from Hebrew sources, *alma* is said of a virgin proper.<sup>447</sup> And that we might offer an occasion for laughter to the Jews, in our speech too *alma* means “holy.”<sup>448</sup> The Hebrews use words from nearly all languages; for example, there is that word in the Song of Songs [cf. [Song 3:9](#)] from Greek, φορλιον, that is, the “litter Solomon made for himself,” which we read thus also in the

woman’ in [Isa 7:14](#) as ‘irgin,’ the claim of Fathers like Irenaeus ([Adv. Haer. 3.21.15](#).) that the Jews had falsified the text.”

<sup>445</sup> Kamesar, “he Virgin of Isaiah 7:14,” 63n41 writes, “hen Jerome says in *Comm. in Is.* that *almah* is ‘mbiguum’ he does not mean that it means *adolescentula* [young girl] only or *abscondita* [hidden] only. He means rather that it involves the concepts inherent in both words, and can be translated by either word.”

<sup>446</sup> Kamesar, *ibid.*, 63–5, comments, “he presbyter [Jerome] skillfully refutes the objection according to which *almah* does not mean virgin by claiming that it entails ‘ore than virginity.’ ” Kamesar thinks that Jerome’ original contribution was inspired by both rabbinic technique and Christian exegetical tradition. Jerome’ methods of reasoning are typical in rabbinic biblical interpretation. Kamesar further observes that this type of exposition was particularly suited to the Hebrew language, since in Hebrew only consonants are represented in written form and many different words may be derived from a common three-consonant root. “herefore, connections between different words having the same or a similar consonantal root offer themselves in abundance.” Kamesar concludes that Jerome’ interpretation “s no more fanciful than similar interpretations offered by rabbinic exegetes, and will have constituted a legitimate argument in the contemporary Christian-Jewish debate concerning [Isa. 7:14](#).”

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.*, 69, says that there is not sufficient information to verify (or dismiss) Jerome’ claim here. Jerome also employs Punic to shed light on Hebrew in *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* 36:24.

<sup>448</sup> Jerome is considering the possibility that the Hebrew *almah* is a loanword from the Latin adjective *almus-a-um*, which can connote “oly.” Kamesar, *ibid.*, 71, summarizes the reasoning to which Jerome seems to be alluding here: “f *almah* = *alma*, then *almah* implies virginity, since *alma* = *sancta*, and *sancta* implies virginity.”

Hebrew.<sup>449</sup> In the same manner and with the same meanings, the Hebrews also use the words *nonsense*<sup>550</sup> and *measure*.<sup>551</sup> And the more I struggle to remember, the more I think that I have never read *alma* used in reference to a married woman, but in reference to one who is a virgin. Consequently, she is not only a virgin, but a virgin of younger age and in the years of her youth. For it can happen that a virgin is old. But this virgin was in the years of her girlhood, or at least a virgin, not a girl, and she was one who was not able to know a man yet, but was already marriageable. Finally, even in Deuteronomy a virgin is understood by the term *girl* and *young girl*. It says,

If a man finds in the field a girl that is betrothed, and overcoming her by force he sleeps with her, you will kill only the man who lay with her, and you will do nothing to the girl; in the young girl there is no sin [worthy] of death. For just as if someone rises up against his neighbor and takes his life, so does this business come to pass. He found her in the field; the betrothed girl cried out, and no one was found to help her. [[Deut 22:25–27](#)]

And we read in the Book of Kings that they sought a virgin girl by the name of Abishag and brought her in to the king, who slept and kept him warm; and the girl was exceedingly beautiful and was serving him, and the king did not know her [cf. [1 Kgs 1:1–4](#)].

And what follows, *And you*<sup>552</sup> *shall call his name Emmanuel*, both the Septuagint and the three others have translated similarly. In Matthew this is written as, “*They shall call*” [cf. [Matt 1:23](#)], which is not found in the Hebrew. Therefore let that child who will be born of a virgin, O house of David, now be called by you *Emmanuel*, that is, God with us, since by these facts you will prove that you have God present, having been delivered from the two hostile kings [cf. [Isa 7:1](#)]. And let him who will later be called Jesus, that is, Savior, in view of the fact that the whole human race will be saved, now be called by you by the designation *Emmanuel*. The verb *carathi*, which all have translated “*you*<sup>553</sup> *will call*,” can be understood as “*she will call*,” namely because the virgin herself, who will conceive and give birth, will designate Christ by this name. One should pay very careful attention to the fact that in many testimonies that the evangelists or apostles have adopted from the old books, they did not follow the order of the words but the meaning. This is why even in the present passage, in place of, *she will conceive in the womb*,

<sup>449</sup> The majority of modern commentators concur with Jerome’ claim that the Greek φορεῖον underlies the Hebrew אפריון in [Song 3:9](#). Cf. Kamesar, *ibid.*, 70.

<sup>550</sup> Jerome is attempting to explain the Hebrew word נוגי of [Zeph 3:18](#) via the Latin *nugae* (nonsense) by simply transliterating the word into Latin. Cf. Jerome, *Comm in Soph 3:14–8*. Kamesar, *ibid.*, 69, claims that Hebrew text in [Zeph 3:18](#) is corrupt.

<sup>551</sup> Here Jerome is associating the rare Hebrew word משורה with *mensura* (measure) by means of transliteration and a slightly different orthography (*messura*). Kamesar, *ibid.*, 70, writes, “these interpretations based on Latin usage are quite fanciful, but it is a credit to Jerome’ philological erudition that he was aware of such rare Hebrew words and that he attempted to come to terms with them through appeal to the concept of loan-words.”

<sup>552</sup> Singular.

<sup>553</sup> Singular.

Matthew recorded, “She will have in the womb” [[Matt 1:23](#)]; and in place of, *you will call*, “they will call.”

The Hebrews think this is prophesied about Hezekiah son of Ahaz, because Samaria was captured when he was ruling. This cannot be completely proven, if indeed Ahaz son of Jotham reigned over Judah and Jerusalem for sixteen years [cf. [2 Kgs 16:1–2](#)]. His son Hezekiah succeeded him in the kingdom at the age of twenty-five years and reigned over Judah and Jerusalem for twenty-nine [cf. [2 Kgs 18:1–2](#)]. How then, granting that this prophecy was made to Ahaz in his first year, is there talk of the conception and birth of Hezekiah, when at that time when Ahaz began to reign, Hezekiah was already nine years old, unless perchance they say that the sixth year of Hezekiah’s rule [cf. [2 Kgs 18:10](#)] when Samaria was captured was called his infancy not in terms of his age but of his rule? It is plain even to fools that this is a forced and violent interpretation.

Some of our own contend that Isaiah the prophet had two sons, Jashub and Emmanuel; and Emmanuel was born from his wife, a prophetess [cf. [Isa 8:3](#)], as a type of the Lord and Savior, so that the first son Jashub [cf. [Isa 7:3](#)], which means “abandoned” or “turning,” signifies the Jewish people, who were abandoned, and afterward will return; but the second, that is Emmanuel and God with us, [signifies] the calling of the Gentiles, after “the Word became flesh and dwelled among us” [[John 1:14](#)].

17. ([7:15](#)) *He will eat butter and honey that he may know to reject evil and to choose the good.* The Septuagint translated this as, “before he knows”; and what follows, “to adopt evil,” is not found in the Hebrew.

And the meaning is, O house of David, you whom the word of God commands to call, that is, invoke the name of Emmanuel [cf. [Isa 7:14](#)], that is, God with us; when you find yourself in danger, you should not marvel at the novelty of the thing, if a virgin gives birth to God, who has such great authority that when he will be born after a very long time, he will deliver you now when he is invoked; for it is he who was seen by Abraham [cf. [John 8:56](#)] and who spoke with Moses [cf. [John 5:46](#)]. Let me say something else even more wonderful, lest you think that he will be born as a phantasm.<sup>554</sup> He will make use of an infant’s food: *he will eat butter* and milk. And although the evangelist testifies about him after many ages, “But the boy grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men” [[Luke 2:52](#)], and let this be said to prove the truth of his human body; nevertheless, while still wrapped in swaddling clothes and fed with *butter and honey*, he will have the judgment of *good* and *evil*, so that by *rejecting evil* he might *choose the good*. It is not that he will do either of these, *reject* or *choose*, but that he will *know to reject* and to *choose*. Consequently, we recognize through these words that the infancy of his human body was not prejudicial to his divine wisdom.<sup>555</sup> After all, the angels announce to the shepherds the one lying in a manger [cf. [Luke 2:7, 12](#)]; the magi who come from the East worship [cf. [Matt 2:1–12](#)]. Assuredly one must believe that they were also *chosen*. And on the other hand, Herod, the scribes and the Pharisees are *rejected*, who slaughtered many

<sup>554</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 44 (50, 5–5).

<sup>555</sup> I believe that Jerome’s defense of Christ’s omniscience is directed against Eunomius and the Arian interpretation. See my introduction to Jerome’s [Commentary on Matthew](#), FOTC 117 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

thousands of children for the sake of one infant [[Matt 2:16](#)].

18. ([7:16](#)) *For before the child knows to reject evil and to choose the good, the land which you detest will be forsaken from the face of her two kings.*

In the sixth year of the reign of Hezekiah, Samaria was captured by the Assyrians [cf. [2 Kgs 18:2, 10](#)], that is, in the thirty-first year of his life. And so, if that one who is to be born, either from a virgin, as we propose, or from a young girl, as the Jews think, will eat butter and honey [cf. [Isa 7:15](#)] and will be so small that he is not capable of discerning evil from good, and before that one departs from the time of his infancy, the land of Syria and Samaria has to be devastated by the Assyrians, let the Hebrews answer how Hezekiah is proclaimed to be a tiny infant at thirty-one years of age, and of such a raw age that while eating honey and butter, he knows neither his left nor right hand, after the manner of the children of Nineveh [cf. [Jonah 4:11](#)], that is, neither *evil* nor *good*. But when the passage is applied to Emmanuel, which means “God with us,” the understanding of this will be easy, that for the mystery and invocation of his name, the land of Syria and Samaria will be devastated, while Assyria has the upper hand; and the house of David will be delivered from the two kings whom it feared, namely Rezin and Pekah.

19. ([7:17](#)) *The Lord will bring upon you, and upon your people, and upon the house of your father days that have not come since the days of the separation of Ephraim from Judah with the king of the Assyrians.*

This passage ought to be read as a hyperbaton.<sup>556</sup> After all, even we who have followed the Hebrew truth have translated it thus [cf. [Isa 7:13, 16](#)]: O house of David, heed what I say! In order that the land of Syria and Samaria be forsaken from before the two kings whom you dread very greatly, *the Lord will bring days upon you and upon the house of your father* David, which you have never had since the time when the ten tribes were separated from the two tribes and began to have a kingdom in Samaria; but he will bring those *days*, that is, times, with the king of the Assyrians, so that when they have been overcome and destroyed, you will be delivered by the presence of Emmanuel.

The Septuagint translated this passage as follows: “The Lord will bring upon you and upon your people and upon the house of your father days that have not yet come from the day on which Ephraim took away from Judah the king of the Assyrians.” We cannot comprehend what meaning this has, unless perchance one should say this, that by the magnitude of their sins, Ephraim, that is, Samaria caused the first attack of the Assyrians to be deflected to itself. Here is another interpretation: Now for the time being, two kings Rezin and Pekah who are besieging you and hastening to destroy you; in a short time they will be destroyed. But that time of your devastation will come, when the Assyrian will have come, that which you had never expected, or rather, had never feared. Through this he is showing the house of David that it is not Syria and Samaria but the Assyrians who are the ones to be feared. Thus he frees [them] from the present fear and threatens them concerning a future time.

20. ([7:18–19](#)) *And it will be in that day, that the Lord will whistle for the fly which is in the uttermost parts of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee which is in the land of Assyria. (19) And they will come, and will all rest in the torrents of the valleys and in the holes of the rocks and in*

<sup>556</sup> Confusion or transposition in the order of the words.

*all the bushes and in all hollow places.*

When the land of the two kings is deserted, Damascus and Samaria, a land that you now detest and fear [cf. [Isa 7:16–17](#)], then, O house of Judah, the Lord will bring upon you and your people days that you never saw before, and the king of the Assyrians [cf. [Isa 7:4](#)]. In vain therefore do you fear the present things, the half-burned firebrands and those who do not have fire completely; for you ought to know that the Lord by his *whistle* will summon the “flies” of *Egypt* and its *rivers*, doubtless signifying the seven *δλωρυγας*<sup>557</sup> of the Nile; and [he will summon] the *bee which is in the land of Assyria*. Now he calls the Egyptians “flies” on account of the filth of their idolatry and their being a people unfit for war.<sup>558</sup> He calls the Assyrians a *bee* since at that time its kingdom was extremely powerful and most ready for war, or on account of the fact that practically the entire region of the Assyrians and of Persia makes use of arrows. Therefore they will all come and occupy your land *in the torrents of the valleys and the openings of the rocks and in all the bushes, hollow places and woody groves*. But these things are said metaphorically, in order that, since he had once named “flies” and *bees*, he could preserve the comparison in respect to the rest. Let us read the books of Kings and Chronicles<sup>559</sup> and we will discover that the holy King Josiah was killed by the Egyptians and the people of Israel were subjugated to Egyptian authority, so that it set up a king over them [cf. [2 Kgs 23:29, 34](#); [2 Chr 35:20–24](#); [36:4](#)].<sup>600</sup> And after not much time Nebuchadnezzar came with a countless multitude of warriors, and when he captured Jerusalem and destroyed the other cities of Judea, he set fire to the temple and appointed Assyrian inhabitants in Judea [cf. [2 Kgs 24:11–16](#)].

21. ([7:20](#)) *In that day the Lord will shave with a hired razor the head and the hairs of the feet, and the whole beard, by those who are beyond the river, by the king of the Assyrians.*

Some<sup>661</sup> think that these things are prophesied about the Assyrians who possessed the kingdoms of Asia, Egypt, and Libya thirteen hundred years before they destroyed Jerusalem, that they would be conquered by the Medes and Persians, and that their empire would be destroyed. But others think that the Egyptians were to be cut down on the other side of the Euphrates river. But we think that the *razor hired* for a wage is the Assyrian himself, whom he even calls his own dove in Jeremiah on account of the vengeance of the sinful people [cf. [Jer 25:38](#); [50:16](#)]. After all, even in the vision of Tyre, Nebuchadnezzar had labored very much at destroying fortifications and piling up ramps, and while they were fleeing with their fleet, he had been a private citizen for a wage. For this reason Egypt was given to him as the wage for his labor [cf. [Ezek 28:1–19](#); [29:18–20](#)]. Therefore, by this extremely sharp *razor* and by those who dwell on the other side of the Euphrates *river*, namely, by the Assyrian king, the Lord will *shave* from Judea all the *hairs* and strands of the entire body, from the *head* to the *feet*, and the charming *beard*, which is a sign of virility. Consequently nothing strong, nothing beautiful remains in it, but they will be likened to effeminate men, or rather to ignominious women.

22. ([7:21–25](#)) *And it will be on that day a man will raise a young cow and two sheep.* (22)

<sup>557</sup> Trenches, canals.

<sup>558</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 45 (50, 31–2, 2).

<sup>559</sup> Paralipomenon.

<sup>600</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 45 (51, 13–0).

<sup>661</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (51, 32–2, 25).



*And because of the abundance of milk he will eat butter; for butter and honey will every one eat who will be left in the midst of the land. (23) And it will be on that day that every place where there were a thousand vines for a thousand pieces of silver will become both thorns and briers. (24) With bow and arrows they will go in there; for briers and thorns will be in all the land. (25) And all the mountains that will be raked with a rake, the fear of thorns and briers will not come there, and it will be for the ox to feed on, and the livestock to tread upon.*

After the overthrow of Jerusalem and the captivity of the people and the burning of the temple, Nebuzaradan captain of the army, whom the Septuagint calls ἀρχιμαγειρον [chief cook], left a few poor people in the land, who were to cultivate vineyards and fields [cf. [2 Kgs 25:8, 11–12](#)].<sup>662</sup> Finally Gedaliah, who had been appointed as a survivor from the royal family, exhorts them and says, “Do not be afraid of the Chaldeans; dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon and it will be well with you” [[2 Kgs 25:24](#)]. On that day, therefore, that is at that time when all the wealth of the Jews will have been transferred to Chaldea, there will be such a great desolation of the land of Judea and a devastation so unbelievable that they have no herds of oxen or flocks of sheep, as they were accustomed to have previously; but scarcely a rare inhabitant would be able to *raise a cow and two sheep*, not for plowing, but for food and clothing, for milk and wool. For on account of the lack of grain and of everything that the earth produces for consumption, they will feed on *milk, butter, and wild honey*. And what he says, *And because of the abundance of milk he will eat butter*, this signifies that the land would be more fertile for the lack of cultivators and more suitable for grazing. At that time, owing to the scarcity of men, there will be such great lack of wine from the deserted vineyards that will not be pruned out of fear of the enemy, that individual vines are hardly purchased for single shekels of silver. For the entire land will be reduced to *briers and thorns*, and the sense of dread of savage swords everywhere will be so great that no one dares to inspect his own field without his bow and arrows, and with the flatlands abandoned they flee to the *mountains* and there, protected by the difficulty of the place, they scarcely dig the harsh mountains by hand because the oxen will not have plows and plowshares. If, therefore, a rare cultivator will be found on the mountains anywhere, they will endure a wretched life there. Grazing animals are exposed to other things, however, and without anyone to guard them from the wild beasts they will be *trampled*. Would that we did not know that these things customarily happen after a captivity! But now a great part of the formerly Roman world is like Judea, which we think happened apart from the wrath of God, who avenges his own contempt not through the Assyrians and Chaldeans, but through fierce nations and those formerly unknown to us. Their visage and speech are frightful, their females display engraved faces, and they stab the fleeing backs of men and of very old men.<sup>663</sup>

I know that I have read a very extensive and complex tropology on these passages,<sup>664</sup> which claims that everything that we have explained according to history happened to the Jews

<sup>662</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 47 (53, 6–2).

<sup>663</sup> Presumably Jerome is referring to the devastation of regions of the Roman Empire by barbarian hordes that occurred within his own lifetime, culminating in the invasion of Italy by the Goths under Alaric in 410–11.

<sup>664</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 47 (53, 19–4, 14).

spiritually, to those who hardly have *one cow and two sheep*, that is to say, clean animals, so that they do not feed on solid food but on the *milk* of infancy [cf. [Heb 5:12–13](#)]. Moreover they eat the *honey* of words that drip from the lips of a loose woman [cf. [Prov 5:3](#)], and they do not have the wine that gives joy to the heart of man [cf. [Ps 104:15](#)]. Instead, all their works are reduced to *thorns*, so that they are wounded by their adversaries, who shoot in the dark at the upright in heart [cf. [Ps 11:2](#)]. But if at some time they want to think something more lofty [cf. [Rom 11:20](#)] and by the effort of extreme labor over the Holy Scriptures to discover something mystical, nevertheless they do not bear fruit, but they are filled with *briers and thorns* that rise in the hands of the drunkard [cf. [Prov 26:9](#)]; and their land and teaching [are] not from human beings, the rational animal, but from *oxen*, for whom God does not care [cf. [1 Cor 9:9](#)], and it is *trampled* by wild animals.

23. (8:1–4) *And the Lord said to me, “Take to yourself a large book and write in it with a man’s pen: ‘Take away the spoils with speed, plunder quickly.’ ”* (2) *And I provided myself with faithful witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah,* (3) *and I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. And the Lord said to me, “Call his name, ‘Be swift to take away the spoils, hasten to plunder,’* (4) *for before the child knows how to call his own father and mother, the strength of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of the Assyrians.”* The Septuagint translated *large book* as “great new book,” and in place of what the Hebrew has, *I provided myself with faithful witnesses*, it said, “For it is near at hand, and make me faithful witnesses”; and in place of *Uriah the priest*, it has only “Uriah.” The rest is similar.

First the prophet was sent to Ahaz to foretell to him what the Scripture records [cf. [Isa 7:3–9](#)]. When he refuses to listen, the Lord himself speaks to Ahaz and commands him to ask for a sign for himself in the depth or on high [cf. [Isa 7:10–11](#)]. When he responds, “I will not seek and tempt the Lord” [[Isa 7:12](#)], the impious king is dismissed and God’s words are turned to the house of David, and a virgin is promised to it who will give birth to a son whose name would be Emmanuel, that is, God with us [cf. [Isa 7:13–14](#)]. If he will be frequently called upon, Samaria and Syria would be overthrown, but it is overthrown by the king of the Assyrians who would later take captive even Judah itself, so that the whole land of Judea is turned into a desolation [cf. [Isa 7:16–25](#)]. Therefore, once again, under a different figure, the virgin birth is being described.<sup>665</sup> And the Lord told the prophet not to publish among the people the secret of the new birth, but to write it in this *large book* that we are now reading and, what is more remarkable, to summarize God’s mysteries with human words and with a *pen* with which men have been accustomed to write. Now what is it that is written with a human pen? That the child born *takes away the spoils with speed* and *plunders quickly*, that is, so that the devil may not be allowed to rule any longer. And he does not send angels and prophets, but he himself comes down to save his own creatures. The prophet therefore does what has been ordered and provides himself with two faithful witnesses, *Uriah the priest*, who is a teacher of the law, as Malachi says, “The lips of the priest guard knowledge, and they will seek the law from his mouth, because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts” [[Mal 2:7](#)]; and *Zechariah son of Jeberechiah*, who doubtless was a prophet. We read that while Ahaz was ruling, Uriah was the

<sup>665</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 48 (54, 28–5, 3).

priest of the Lord's temple whom Ahaz commanded to make an altar similar to the altar of Damascus [cf. [2 Kgs 16:10–16](#)].<sup>666</sup> And the Book of Days reports that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz sought the Lord in the days of *Zechariah*, who was brought up in the fear of God [cf. [2 Chr 26:5](#)].<sup>667</sup> Now Isaiah has shown himself to be worthy of the prophetic spirit and he has yielded to the prophetess, that is to the Holy Spirit, who in the Hebrew language is spoken of in the feminine gender, *Ruha*, according to what is written, "Draw near to the Lord and be enlightened" [[Ps 34:5](#)].<sup>668</sup> And so the Lord was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and although human speech is not capable of unfolding the mysteries of his birth, nevertheless Gabriel says to the very virgin who conceived, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the holy thing that will be born from you will be called the son of God" [[Luke 1:35](#)]. Some interpret Mary as the holy prophetess, and doubtless she was a prophetess, for she herself says in the Gospel, "For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed, since he who is mighty has done great things for me" [[Luke 1:48–49](#)], and so on. And Isaiah is now ordered to name the very child who was first called Emmanuel: *Be swift to take away the spoils, hasten to plunder*; for "ascending on high he led captivity captive, he received gifts among men" [cf. [Ps 68:18](#); [Eph 4:8](#)]. And before he assumed a human body and in accordance with his infancy *called God father and Mary mother, the strength of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be removed by the king of the Assyrians*. Thus the one not yet born saved his own people, the house of David, solely by being called upon.<sup>669</sup> *Uriah* means "light of the Lord," *Zechariah* "memory of the Lord," *Jeberechiah* "blessing of the Lord." Through these witnesses the birth of Christ is verified. For in the Gospel, when the two were going to Emmaus, he himself, beginning with Moses and the prophets, explained everything that they had predicted about him [cf. [Luke 24:13, 27](#)].

According to tropology this takes place in a virginal soul and one stained by no defilement. The word of God concerning the Holy Spirit, when conceived *with speed, takes away the spoils* from the hostile powers, and it makes everything serve himself. And when it now "sees in part" and "prophesies in part," before it can be "perfect" [cf. [1 Cor 13:9, 10](#)] and deservedly *calls* God *father* and the heavenly Jerusalem its *mother* [cf. [Gal 4:26](#); [Heb 12:22](#)], still placed in infancy and in a state of progress, it will conquer *the strength of Damascus*, namely the teaching of secular wisdom, and it will *remove the spoils of Samaria*, by which heretics have despoiled the church, saying, "We have no part with David nor an inheritance with the son of Jesse" [[2 Sam 20:1](#)]. Meanwhile the very *king of the Assyrians*, the devil, is present, who will not be able to help them. Now not only does Mary, a perpetual virgin, generate such sons for the prophets, but so do the holy women for the patriarchs, Sarah, which is interpreted  $\alpha\rho\chi\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha$ , that is, "ruler," and Rebekah, which in our language expresses "patience."

24. ([8:5–8](#)) *And the Lord spoke to me again, saying, (6) Because this people has cast away the waters of Shiloah, that go with silence, and has rather adopted Rezin and the son of Remaliah, (7) therefore behold, the Lord will bring upon them the strong and abundant waters*

<sup>666</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 48 (55.10–4).

<sup>667</sup> The passage concerns King Uzziah. Jerome's error proceeds from Eusebius.

<sup>668</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 208 (477B).

<sup>669</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 207 (476CD)

*of the river, the king of the Assyrians, and all his glory, and he will come up over all his channels, and will overflow all his banks, (8) and he will pass through Judah, overflowing and going over; he will reach even to the neck, and there will be a stretching out of his wings, filling the breadth of your land, O Emmanuel.*

He had said above that the strength of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria are to be removed in the presence of the king of the Assyrians [cf. [Isa 8:4](#)], and two kings are to be captured in the war with Assyria. Now God speaks to the prophet with the accustomed manner of the Scriptures, by means of a comparison to *Shiloah*, the spring of Jerusalem, and to Assyria's most powerful *river*, which floods the whole land of Israel with its waters and comes out of the *banks* of its riverbed, and is borne along with such great force that after it has occupied the land of the ten tribes, it reaches *Judah* and passes through and *reaches even up to the neck*. By this means he indicates the approaching captivity, for Judah was not captive at that time, but Jerusalem remained alone, with all the cities of the two tribes having been subjugated. She was delivered by the incredible mercy of God. Therefore, through another comparison he now shows the power of Assyria and of its innumerable army, which [power] he had described as the flooding of a *river*. He says that with its *wings*, that is, leaders, and with its infinite multitude, it has covered the land of Emmanuel, that is [the land] of the God who defends it, but nevertheless it has not taken possession, although in the following section, the Septuagint adapts *Emmanuel* not to a proper name, as it is called among the Hebrews, but to its translated meaning, that is, "God with us." Now we especially who live in this region cannot doubt that *Shiloah* is a spring at the foot of Mount Zion. It bubbles up not with perennial waters, but at certain hours and days, and with a great roar it passes through the deep places of the lands and the caves of very hard rock. But this is the meaning: because the people of the ten tribes preferred to be subject to Rezin and to the son of Remaliah, that is, to the kings of Damascus and Samaria, than to the offspring of David, which began to rule by my decision, I will make that people serve not those kings whom they have adopted, but the Assyrian king, whose power is compared to the flooding of a river that occupies the land of Samaria. And he makes an apostrophe<sup>770</sup> to *Emmanuel*, that is, to God who is present, that the Assyrian has roused himself to such an extent that he tried to take possession even of that one's land of Judah.

Anagogically, every heretic who by his own assistance has linked secular wisdom and Jerusalem, that is, the church, wants to attack. He abandons the waters of the spring of *Shiloah*, which means "sent" [cf. [John 9:7](#)], and which springs up to eternal life [cf. [John 4:14](#)]. He will be handed over to the *ruler of the Assyrians*, which we will read about later on as "great meaning" [[Isa 10:12](#)].<sup>771</sup> Handed over to his power, he will come to the depth of sins. For he possesses such great pride that he dared to show the Savior all the kingdoms of the earth and to say, "All these have been handed over to me" [cf. [Luke 4:5-6](#)]. He will also try to enter *Judah*, that is, the "house of confession," and repeatedly, through those who are negligent in the church, will come up *to the neck*, desiring to drown those who believe in Christ. He *stretches forth his wings, filling the whole region of Emmanuel*, but he will not be able to take possession of it, because Judah has the presence of God.

<sup>770</sup> See bk. 1, n. 50.

<sup>771</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 209 (481A).

We read in the Gospel according to John that the man blind from birth, whose sight the Lord had restored with mud made from his own saliva, was sent to the waters of *Shiloah*. When the blind man had washed off the mud in them, his blindness was wiped away and he received the clear light of the eyes [cf. [John 9:1, 6, 7](#)]. In addition to the greatness of the sign, this indicates that the blindness of the Jews and of every unbeliever is able to be healed in no other way except by means of the doctrine of the waters of Christ. They flow gently without the rattle and roar of words, and they put to flight the darkness of previous errors.

What is read in the Septuagint, “And he will walk over every wall of yours, and he will take away from Judea the man who will perhaps be able to lift up his head or be able to do anything,” is not found in the Hebrew, and in the Greek manuscripts has been marked by an obelus.<sup>772</sup>

25. ([8:9–10](#)) *Gather yourselves together, O ye people, and be overcome, and give ear, all you lands afar off, and strengthen yourselves, and be overcome, gird yourselves, and be overcome; (10) take counsel, and it will be dissipated, speak a word, and it will not be done, because God is with us.* In place of *gather yourselves together*, or “be weakened” and “be shattered,” as the others have translated, the Septuagint recorded, “Know.” For they understood the Hebrew word *rohu* as *dou*, on account of the similarity of the letter *res* and *daleth*.

Therefore, O you people of Samaria and Syria, know that you are infirm and weak and are capable of nothing against Jerusalem, the city of God, while Emmanuel is present; and not only you who are near should know this, but let all the land far off know it. For although you should gather an army and gird yourselves for battle, and though there may be a greater number of besiegers than besieged, nevertheless not once but again I will say *be overcome*, and whatever *counsel you will take* against Jerusalem, *it will be dissipated*; and although you said above: “Let us go up to Judah and rouse it while it rests, and let us appoint a king over it, the son of Tabeel” [[Isa 7:6](#)], you *speak the word*, to be sure, but *it will not be done*, because *God is with us*, that is, Emmanuel.

We can use this testimony also against the nations in times of persecution, that although they appear to be strong and to overcome us in those who have lapsed, nevertheless they will *be overcome* in those who have poured out their blood on Christ’s behalf, and because after the wars peace is restored to the churches and all their *counsels* against Emmanuel are *dissipated*, because *God is with us*. Those who speak against the truth will also beneficially *give ear*, so that they may at least be overcome by reason and will not want to overcome by means of lying, since whatever they will have said, perversity will never be able to overcome what is right.

26. ([8:11–15](#)) *For thus says the Lord to me, as he has taught me, with a strong hand, that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, (12) do not say, “a conspiracy”—for all that this people speaks is a conspiracy—neither fear their fear, nor be afraid. (13) Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. (14) And he will be for sanctification to you, but for a stone of offense, and for a rock of stumbling to the two houses of Israel, for a snare and a ruin to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, (15) and very many of them will stumble and fall and will be broken in pieces and will be ensnared and captured.*

<sup>772</sup> Lit., “tabbed with a slaying dart.” The obelus was a critical sign on the margin in Origen’s Hexapla used to mark passages of doubtful authenticity. Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 106.7](#).

The Septuagint translated this passage as follows:

Thus says the Lord, With a strong hand they have withdrawn from the course of the way of this people, saying, (12) Lest perhaps they should say, "It is hard"; for everything that this people says is hard. But do not fear their fear, neither be disturbed; (13) sanctify the Lord of powers himself, and he will be your fear, (14) and if you will trust in him, he will be for sanctification to you; and you will not come against [him] as against a stone of offense, neither as against the falling of a rock. But the house of Jacob will be in a snare and in a pit for the dwellers in Jerusalem; (15) therefore very many among them will be weak in themselves and will fall and be crushed; and they will draw near and be captured.

But what follows, "men in security," should be marked with an obelus. Since there are significant differences between the Hebrew and the common (*vulgata*) edition, we have recorded both.

And one should first conduct a discussion of the Hebrew. The *Lord spoke these things* to me, who because of good works and the grace that I have attained through good works, either *taught me with his own strong hand* and instructed that *I should not walk in the way of this people* and be held fast in the same error, or at least caused me to *withdraw from the evil way of this people* and said to me, Do not fear the *conspiracy* of the two kings, but consider this instead, that *everything that this people says against me is a conspiracy*, and, according to Symmachus, who translated as  $\alpha\nu\tau\alpha\rho\sigma\iota\nu$ , "a treasonous enemy (*perduellis*) has risen up against me." But you, prophet, and those who are with you, *do not fear* the treachery of the people, but fear the Lord, and *let him be your fear*. For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom [cf. [Ps 111:10](#); [Prov 1:7](#)];<sup>773</sup> he will be for sanctification for believers, but for unbelievers, namely for the two houses of Judah and Israel, he will be a "stone of offense" and a *rock of stumbling*—but especially *for a snare* and a *source of ruin for those who live in Jerusalem*, in which *very many* will dash and *fall and be crushed*, and having been *ensnared* in the chains of their own sins, they will be led into captivity.

The Nazarenes,<sup>774</sup> who receive Christ in such a way that they do not set aside the observation of the old law, interpret the two houses as the two families of Shimmei and Hillel.<sup>775</sup>

<sup>773</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 51 (58, 13).

<sup>774</sup> The Nazarenes were a second-century sect first mentioned by Epiphanius, *Pan* 29, who distinguishes Jewish and Christian branches. Cf. [Jerome, Vir III 3](#). In an important and relevant article, A. F. J. Klijn, "[Jerome' Quotations from a Nazorean Interpretation of Isaiah](#)," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 60 (1972): 241–5, concludes that the text used by the Nazorean interpretation presupposes knowledge of Hebrew, and shows agreement with the Targum and Symmachus, which points to acquaintance with Jewish exegetical traditions.

<sup>775</sup> Hillel the Elder (ca. 60 BC–D 20) was one of the greatest Jewish teachers of the time, a contemporary of Herod and Jesus. In rabbinic tradition, he is compared with Moses and Ezra. Gamaliel I, teacher of St. Paul, was his grandson, and his pupil Yohanan ben Zakkai (Johannan son of Zaccheus) is credited with preserving Judaism after the destruction of AD 70. Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 121.10](#).



From these families the scribes and Pharisees arose. Akiba<sup>776</sup> took over their school, whom they assert was the teacher of Aquila the proselyte. After him came Machir, whom Johanan son of Zaccheus succeeded;<sup>777</sup> and after him came Eliezer, and in order Thelphon, Joseph the Galilean, and Joshua up to the captivity of Jerusalem. Shimmei and Hillel therefore arose in Judea not long before the Lord was born. The former name means “destroyer,” the latter “profane,” because he destroyed and defiled the precepts of the law by his own traditions [cf. [Matt 15:3](#)], and ΔΕΥΤΕΡΩΣΕΙΣ;<sup>778</sup> and these are the two houses that did not receive the Savior, who was made a *ruin* and a *stumbling block* to them.

According to the Septuagint, the Lord’s people resist his will “with a strong hand” and say that everything that the Lord commands is “hard,” in accordance with what we read in the Gospel: “These words are *hard*, who can listen to them?” [[John 6:61](#)].<sup>779</sup> This is why they are commanded to “heed the Lord” and “fear him” alone; for if they “will have placed their trust in him,” they will have him as “sanctification” and they will not dash as against a “stone of stumbling” and as against a “rock of ruin.” And from this passage also the apostle derives the testimony that Christ became a *stumbling block* to the Jews, but folly to the Gentiles [cf. [1 Cor 1:23](#)];<sup>880</sup> and again: “Israel, by pursuing a law of justice has not attained to the law of justice. Why? Because not from faith but as if from works of the law they stumbled against the stone of offense and the rock of stumbling; all who will have believed in him will not be disappointed” [[Rom 9:31–33](#)]. Therefore, because they did not receive Emmanuel, but he was made to them into a stone of offense and a rock of scandal, they will be crushed and led away as captives. And what he says, “But the house of Jacob [will be] in a snare and in a pit for the dwellers in Jerusalem,” this means that they do not live on the mountains or linger in the high places of the Scriptures, but always understand low things, joining sins to sins, and they are locked up in the “snares” of transgressions.

27. ([8:16–17](#)) *Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples, (17) and I will wait for the Lord, who has hid his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.*

The voice of God is speaking to the prophet: because, he says, the Lord has been made into a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling for the two houses of Israel [cf. [Isa 8:14](#)], and because they refused to receive Emmanuel when he was sent to them, *bind up the testimonies* of the Old Testament (*instrumenti*) and hand them over to *my disciples* who have received the gospel, namely to the apostles or to apostolic men; or at least, among them the *law* and prophecy is *bound* until John [cf. [Matt 11:13](#)] and closed and “sealed,” so that they do not understand what they read; for because of the ambiguity of the Hebrew language, we can also translate *disciples*

<sup>776</sup> Akiba (ca. 50–35AD) was a Jewish teacher, extremely poor in youth, who became one of the greatest teachers in Israel. He attributed value to every detail of Scripture, even particular spellings. He died a martyr for continuing to teach the Torah despite Roman prohibitions. See L. Finkelstein, *Akiva, Scholar, Saint and Martyr* (New York: 1936).

<sup>777</sup> Johanan, pupil of Hillel, is credited with preserving Judaism after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

<sup>778</sup> See n. above at [2.17](#).

<sup>779</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 213 (485D).

<sup>880</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 51 (59, 7–); cf. *Bas Is* 214 (489C).

as “doctrines.” This is why the prophet responded: because the law was closed and sealed among the Jews when the gospel succeeded it, and you are commanding it to be unsealed not for the Jews but for the Gentiles, therefore *I will wait* for Emmanuel whom you promise will come. You spoke of him above, that he himself ought to be our fear and dread and for sanctification for us [cf. [Isa 8:13–14](#)]. And *I will look for the Lord who has hidden his face from the house of Jacob*, that is, from the Jews, since they refused to receive him.

The Septuagint translated this passage as follows: “Then shall those who are sealed be made manifest so that they do not learn the law,” which has this meaning: when very many will have fallen and been crushed and dashed against the stone of offense and the rock of stumbling [cf. [Isa 8:15](#)], then those who will be sealed among the people will be made manifest, so that they do not learn the law of Moses, but obey the precepts of the Gospels.

28. ([8:18](#)) *Behold I and the children whom the Lord has given to me as Israel’s signs and wonders from the Lord of hosts who dwells on Mount Zion.*

The Lord has instructed me, he says, to bind up the testimony [cf. [Isa 8:17](#)] among the Jews and hand over and seal the law to his disciples, who had hidden their face from the house of Jacob; therefore I will look for him and wait for my Lord [cf. [Isa 8:17](#)], and not only I, but also *the children whom the Lord has given to me*, namely other prophets and sons of the prophets who have been born not from the will of flesh and blood, but from God [cf. [John 1:13](#)].<sup>881</sup> The Apostle also spoke of them: “My little *children* for whom I am again in birth pains until Christ is formed in you” [[Gal 4:19](#)]. Now these *children*, that is, the prophets, were given as *signs and wonders to Israel*, according to what we read in Ezekiel: “And Ezekiel will be a *sign* to you” [[Ezek 24:24](#)]. In Zechariah too, the holy men and the disciples of the prophets are called  $\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\omicron\sigma\kappa\omicron\tau\omicron\iota$  men [[Zech 3:8 \(9\)](#)], that is, doers of *wonders and signs*, because prophets always precede as a *sign* of things to come. This has been said for the time being in accordance with the letter.

On the other hand, granting that Latin usage does not receive it among the canonical Scriptures, the Apostle, in the epistle that is written to the Hebrews, shows that this testimony needs to be understood as spoken by the persona of the Lord and Savior:

Therefore he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, “I will announce your name to my brothers; in the midst of the church I will praise you”; and again: “I will trust in him”; and again: “Behold, I and my children whom God has given me”; for therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, and he himself likewise has become the sharer of the same sufferings. [[Heb 2:11–14](#)]<sup>882</sup>

Now the same apostle shows how these *children* will have become a *sign* and *wonder* of the wisdom of the age and of the arrogance of the Jews. He says that the Lord and Savior chose the foolish and weak things of the world to confound the wise and the strong [cf. [1 Cor 1:27](#)]. This is also why the Savior said to the apostles, “Unless you are converted as one of the *children*, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven” [[Matt 18:3](#)]. Now a preacher of the new gospel becomes a *child* who lays aside the old man, who is being corrupted by seductive desires, and puts on the new, who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the creator [cf.

<sup>881</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 52 (59, 36–7).

<sup>882</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 216 (494A).

[Col 3:9–10](#)].<sup>883</sup> Likewise the Apostle writes that the *Lord of hosts dwells on Mount Zion*: “You have come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” [[Heb 12:22](#)].<sup>884</sup>

This is why I am amazed that one of our own understands these *children* as Isaiah’s two sons, whom he fathered from the conception of his prophetic wife, namely Jashub and Emmanuel [cf. [Isa 8:3](#)]. He says that the former of them anticipates the rejection of the first people, the latter, the reception of the Gentiles. The one who accepts this will affirm consequently that Hosea the prophet also truly had a wife who was a whore [cf. [Hos 1:2](#)].

29. ([8:19–22](#)) *And when they shall say to you, “Seek from the pythons and from the diviners, who shriek in their incantations, should not the people seek from their God, for the living from the dead?” (20) To the law rather, and to the testimony. But if they speak not according to this word, they will not have the morning light, (21) and they will pass by it. They will fall and be hungry, and when they will be hungry, they will be angry and curse their king and their God, and look upward. (22) And they will look to the earth, and behold trouble and darkness, weakness, distress, and a mist following, and they cannot fly away from their distress.*

If the voice is that of Isaiah the prophet, as the Jews think, “Behold I and the children whom the Lord has given me as Israel’s sign and wonder” [[Isa 8:18](#)], the same person should also be believed to be saying to his disciples the things that follow. He says, Although the nations and peoples will speak to you, concerning whom it was read above, “Be weak, O peoples, and be overcome” [[Isa 8:9](#)], why do you want to hear the prophets, why are you taken in by Isaiah’s words and think that what he knows is going to happen? *Seek rather from the pythons and from the diviners, who shriek in their incantations.* The Septuagint translated this as, “Who speak out of the earth, who shout out of their belly.” For everyone who is of the earth speaks “from the earth” [cf. [John 3:31](#)]. Moreover, those “whose god is their *belly* and whose glory is in their shame” [[Phil 3:19](#)],<sup>885</sup> must be believed to cry out “from the belly.” You must answer them and say, *Should not the people seek from their God, for the living from the dead?* If you, he says, on behalf of the variety of your idols—for you have not one but several gods—consult those whom you think are gods and enquire about *the living from the dead*, or from images of dead men, how much more ought we to listen to our God through the prophets? Therefore he is teaching his disciples and introducing them instead to the *law* and to the *testimony*. If you have doubts about someone, he says, know what is written: “The nations whom the Lord your God will scatter from your presence listen to dreams and diviners; but the Lord your God has not passed this down to you. The Lord your God will raise up a prophet for you from your brothers; you will listen to him as to me” [[Deut 18:14–15](#)]. Therefore if you want to know what is uncertain, hand yourselves over instead to the law and the testimonies of the Scriptures. But if your congregation is unwilling to seek the word of the Lord, it will not have the *light* of truth, but will linger in the *darkness* of error. This light *will pass through it*, that is, through your congregation or land, and you will *fall and be hungry*, and when *you are hungry*, you will *become angry* in accordance with what is written: “And when they do not get their fill, they will murmur” [[Ps 59:15](#)], and you will *curse God your king*. And in your need you will *look upward*

<sup>883</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (492D), 217 (496A).

<sup>884</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 52 (60, 15–6).

<sup>885</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 219 (498C).

into heaven and into the earth beneath, and behold *trouble and darkness, weakness of knees, distress of mind, and a mist over the eyes, and you will not be able to be rescued from the distress.* This [explanation] corresponds to the Hebrew.

On the other hand, as we have said above, if it is the persona of Christ speaking, “Behold I and the children whom God has given me” [[Isa 8:18](#); cf. [Heb 2:11–14](#)], he likewise says this to the apostles and to believers from the nations, who have received his gospel. He says, If your fathers whom you have forsaken will say, seek “ventriloquists,” whom we understand as *pythons*—like the maidservant we read about also in the Acts of the Apostles, who was a source of profit for her masters [cf. [Acts 16:16](#)]*—*and those who “speak from the earth,” which the magicians promise that they do by the summoning up of souls, and other kinds of evil arts, you ought to know this, that each nation consults its own gods and questions the “dead” concerning the welfare of the “living”; but to you God “gave the law as a help,” so that you can say, from the pagans, who often deceive their worshipers, there is no such divination *like ours*, which proceeds from the “law” without any “gift.” This is why the Septuagint translated, “Not *like* this word for which there are no gifts to give”; for, he says, “freely you have received, freely give” [[Matt 10:8](#)].<sup>886</sup> But a very severe “famine will come upon” unbelievers, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but a famine for hearing the word of God [cf. [Amos 8:11](#)],<sup>887</sup> and “when you will grow hungry, you will be grieved and will curse your ruler and the traditions of your fathers,” that is the devil and ancient errors. But he says this to those who will have endured a “famine” for truth, and they will “look up” to heaven above and “to the earth below,” and they will be “in trouble, in darkness and in distress,” so that they do not “see” for a time [cf. [Acts 13:11](#)], until even they themselves are converted to the Lord. These passages require an extensive explanation, but we are economizing the length of the books, so as to remove the tedium of the reading. We have touched upon these things in part according to the Septuagint translation, which in very many respects does not harmonize with the Hebrew.

On the other hand, the Nazarenes have explained this passage as follows. Although the scribes and Pharisees tell you to listen to those who do everything for the sake of their “belly,” and who shriek in their incantations in the manner of *magicians*, so as to deceive you, you should answer them this way: It is not surprising that you follow your traditions, when each nation consults its own idols; therefore we too should not consult from you *dead ones concerning the living*. Instead God gave us a law and the *testimonies* of the Scriptures, which if you will refuse to follow, you will not have *light*, but *mist* will ever oppress you, which will *pass through* your land and teaching. Consequently, when those who have been deceived by you have perceived themselves to be in error and to be enduring a famine for the truth, then they will be “grieved” or *angry* and *curse* you. They were thinking of you as their gods and *kings*, and in vain do they look back to heaven and earth. For they are always in darkness and cannot *fly away* from your treachery.

30. ([9:1–2](#)) *At the first time the land of Zabulon, and the land of Naphtali was lightened, and at the last the way of the sea beyond the Jordan of the Galilee of the Gentiles was heavily loaded. (2) The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; to those who dwelt in*

<sup>886</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 220 (501A).

<sup>887</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 53 (61, 17–8).

*the region of the shadow of death, light has risen.*

Septuagint: “Drink this first, act quickly, O region of Zabulon, land of Naphtali, and the rest of you who are near the sea beyond Jordan of the Galilee of the Gentiles. (2) The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; you who dwell in the region of the shadow of death, a light will shine upon you.”

We have recorded both versions because the testimony is common and was employed by the Evangelist Matthew, in order that the translational differences and similarities may be recognized. And first it must be noted that the Evangelist Matthew has recorded this testimony in accordance with the Hebrew, not the Septuagint. For the words of the Gospel say,

But Jesus, hearing that John had been handed over, withdrew to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelled in Capernaum, which is near the sea at the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, in order to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah, saying, “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way of the sea across the Jordan of Galilee of the Gentiles: the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who sat in the region of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” From that time, Jesus began to preach and to say, “The kingdom of heaven has drawn near.” [[Matt 4:12–17](#)]<sup>888</sup>

Moreover, the Evangelist John reports that Jesus performed his first sign, by changing water into wine, when he was invited with his disciples to a wedding in Cana of Galilee [cf. [John 2:1–10](#)]: “Jesus performed the beginning of his signs in Cana of Galilee and revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him” [[John 2:11](#)].

This explains why it is said in the Septuagint, “Drink this first, act quickly,” because the *land of Zabulon* and the *land of Naphtali* [were] the first to see the miracles of Christ, so that by means of the first faith it drank the “drink” that it had seen the Lord performing as the first of the signs. Now according to the Hebrew, it is said that *at the first time* the burden of sins was *lightened*, because the Savior *first* preached the gospel in the region of these two tribes. This is also why in the sixty-seventh Psalm it is said, “Bless the Lord from the fountains of Israel, there Benjamin is younger” [[Ps 68:26–27](#)], namely, the Apostle Paul [cf. [Phil 3:5](#)] who—in a departure of mind—even elsewhere said, “Whether we depart from our mind for God” [[2 Cor 5:13](#)]. “Princes of Zabulon, princes of Naphtali, their leaders.” This is said because in these tribes were the hamlets from which our leaders the apostles believed, and according to Symmachus they believed “quickly.” Thus it was that upon hearing, “Come and I will make you fishers of men” [[Matt 4:19](#)], *at once* they left both father and boat [cf. [Matt 4:20](#)]. But in the very last time their faith was *heavily loaded* when very many of the Jews were continuing in error.

But he calls the Lake of Gennesaret the *sea* here [cf. [Luke 5:1](#)], which is formed from the flow of the Jordan. On its shore are situated Capernaum, Tiberias, Bethsaida, and Chorazin, in which *region* the Lord spent a great deal of time, so that the people who either *sat* or *walked in darkness saw the light*—not a little *light*, as is that of the other prophets, but a “great light,” as from him who says in the Gospel, “I am the light of the world” [[John 8:12](#)]. And *upon those who lived in the region of the shadow of death, a light has dawned*. I think that the difference

<sup>888</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 54 (62, 6–3, 4).

between *death* and the *shadow of death* is that *death* pertains to those who have reached the underworld with their works of death—for “the soul that sins will itself die” [[Ezek 18:4, 20](#)]<sup>889</sup>—but the *shadow of death* pertains to those who have not yet departed from life when they sin—for they are able to do penance if they wish.<sup>889</sup> For *Galilee of the Gentiles*, Aquila translated ΘΙΝΑΨ of the Gentiles, Symmachus “boundaries.” Now we understand ΘΙΝΑΨ as heaps of sand, which are either on shorelines or banks.

Hebrews who believe in Christ have explained this passage as follows. *In the first time*, these two tribes *Zabulon* and *Naphtali* were captured by the Assyrians and led into a hostile land [cf. [2 Kgs 15:29](#)], and *Galilee* was abandoned, which now the prophet says has been *lightened*, because it endured the people’s sins. But afterward not only the two tribes but also the rest, which *dwelled across the Jordan* and in Samaria, were led into captivity [cf. [2 Kgs 17:6](#); [18:11](#)]. And this, they say, the Scripture now says, that the very *region* whose people was first led into captivity and began to serve the Babylonians, and which formerly was living *in the darkness* of error, will have first *seen the light* of Christ preaching, and from that light the gospel has been sown among all the *Gentiles*.

The Nazarenes, whose opinion I have recorded above, try to explain this passage as follows. When Christ arrives and his preaching flashes forth, the first *land Zabulon* and *the land of Naphtali* was delivered from the errors of the scribes and Pharisees, and it shook off from its neck the extremely *heavy* yoke of the Jewish traditions. But afterward it was *weighed down* through the gospel of the Apostle Paul, who was the latest of all the apostles; that is, the preaching was multiplied and the gospel of Christ became resplendent unto the *limits of the Gentiles* and *the way of the entire sea*. Finally the whole world, which previously *walked or sat in darkness* and was being held fast by the chains of idolatry and death, *saw* the bright *light* of the gospel.

31. ([9:3–5](#)) *You have multiplied the nation, you have not increased the joy; they will rejoice before you just as they rejoice in the harvest, just as they exult when they divide up the spoils. (4) For the yoke of his burden, and the rod of his shoulder, and the scepter of his oppressor you have overcome, as in the day of Midian, (5) for every violent taking of spoils, with tumult, and garment mingled with blood, will be burnt, and be fuel for the fire.*

Septuagint: “You have brought down the greatest part of the people in your joy, and they will rejoice in your sight as they are accustomed to rejoice in the harvest, and as those who divide up the spoils, (4) because the yoke that was laid upon them has been taken away, and the rod from their neck. For the rod of the oppressors will be broken, as in the day of Midian, (5) because they will restore every gown that has been acquired by deceit, and every garment of exchange; and they will desire to be burnt with fire.” In obscure passages we record both

<sup>889</sup> For Jerome death is the end of the Christian contest. J. P. O’onnell, [The Eschatology of St. Jerome](#), *Dissertationes ad Lauream* 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 12, comments on this passage, “hat opportunity enjoyed by those still living differentiates them from those already dead. Although Jerome does not himself draw out the implications of the fact just mentioned, it is obvious that death is decisive for sinners, since they cannot do penance thereafter.”



versions so that the diligent reader may recognize the extent to which the common translation<sup>990</sup> differs from the other versions and from the Hebrew truth.

An apostrophe<sup>991</sup> is made to the very light that appeared to the people established in darkness [cf. [Isa 9:2](#)], that is, to the Lord and Savior, and it is said to him, *You have multiplied the nation*, that is, you have filled all nations with the knowledge of yourself [cf. [Isa 11:9](#)], but *you have not increased joy*. This agrees with what the Apostle says, that his grief is continual for his brothers, who are the Israelites [cf. [Rom 9:2–4](#)]. Moreover, Jonah is grieved because the Ninevites were saved in such a way that a gourd or σιόειλον withered [cf. [Jonah 4:1–11](#)], and the Lord himself says in the Gospel, “I have come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel” [[Matt 15:24](#)]; and in the passion, he says, “Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me” [[Matt 26:39](#)]. This passage means the following: if it can possibly happen that the multitude of nations may believe apart from the destruction of the Jews, I refuse the passion; but if they must be blinded so that all nations may see [cf. [Rom 11:7](#)], Father, “let your will be done” [[Matt 26:42](#)].<sup>992</sup> Therefore, when Christ will have arrived and the Christian nation will have been gathered from all nations, then the apostles will rejoice, as harvesters *rejoice in the harvest*, of whom the Lord said, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few” [[Matt 9:37](#)],<sup>993</sup> and as victors exult who *divide up* the captured *booty*. For when the strong man was captured and bound, his whole house is plundered and the spoils are divided [cf. [Matt 12:29](#)]. For you, O Lord and Savior, have stripped from their *shoulders* the *yoke of his burden*, that is the devil’s, who was formerly *exulting* in the world, who was in command of all nations, who was oppressing the necks of everyone with the extremely heavy *yoke* of his slavery, and you have pulled away the *rod* from their shoulders, with which he was striking everyone and was compelling the payment of sins, as if it were a kind of tax owed to himself; and without any army you have caused those who have been set free to serve yourself, without bloodshed, by your hidden hand, just as formerly you provided the people of Israel with victory over the Midianites under Gideon [cf. [Judg 7:15, 22](#)].<sup>994</sup> For just as *clothing* that has been *stained* by human blood cannot be washed clean, but when dyed with blood it is *burned in fire*, so that the spots may perish with the

<sup>990</sup> This is Jerome’s term for the Old Latin translation of the LXX.

<sup>991</sup> See n. at [1.50](#).

<sup>992</sup> Especially in his [Commentary on Matthew](#), Jerome plays down the apparent meaning of [Matt 26:37–2](#), namely, that Christ in his human nature truly feared his imminent suffering and experienced grave and personal emotional distress on the eve of his passion. Jesus’ agony seems clearly manifested when he prays, “ather, let this cup pass from me” ([Matt 26:39](#)). Jerome, following certain predecessors, emphatically argues that Jesus was sorrowful and distressed not for himself, but out of his mercy and on account of the fate that would befall Judas, the apostles, the Jewish people, and pitiful Jerusalem as a result of his suffering and death. He was saddened for the same reason that Jonah was grieved at the withering of the gourd, that is, not for his own sake but because he could foresee the grim fate of others. See my brief discussion in Jerome, [Commentary on Matthew](#), trans. Thomas P. Scheck, FOTC 117 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), [43–5](#).

<sup>993</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 54 (63, 33–4, 5).

<sup>994</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (65, 1–).

garment of foul gore, so the devil's *violent plundering* and *tumults* and *disturbances* by which he had subjected the human race to himself have been destined for the fires of Gehenna.

The Septuagint indicates that not all, but a certain part of the people believed, although in place of what they said, "You have brought down in joy," others have translated, "You have increased." And though it preserves the same meaning in the remaining things, the Septuagint adds that he, that is, the devil, will give back a "gown acquired by deceit" and a "garment that was exchanged," that is to say, he will pay back all the souls that he had stripped by the help of God with their original adornments, not only he himself but also his satellite demons. If a choice were granted to them, they would choose rather to perish in flames than to lose the booty.

32. (9:6–7) *For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us, and the government has come upon his shoulder, and his name will be called wonderful, counselor, God, the mighty, the Father of the age to come, the prince of peace. (7) His empire will be multiplied, and there will be no end of peace upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and with justice from henceforth and forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*

Septuagint: "For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us, whose government has come upon his shoulder, and his name is called the messenger of great counsel. For I will bring peace upon the princes and his health; his government [will be] great and of his peace there is no end upon the throne of David and his kingdom, to chastise it and to support it with judgment and justice, from henceforth and unto the age. The zeal of the Lord Sabaoth will perform this."

The reason the devil will be "burned" and all his "violent plundering" [cf. [Isa 9:5](#)] by which he had oppressed the human race and had "mixed blood with blood," and he will become "fuel for the" eternal "fire" [cf. [Isa 9:5](#)], is because a child from a virgin has been born to us. Above it was said of him, "Before the child knows how to reject evil and choose the good" [[Isa 7:16](#)], and afterward, at the birth of the prophetess, "Before the child knows how to call his own father and mother" [[Isa 8:4](#)]. Therefore, that child, who is called Emmanuel, that is, God with us, was born from a virgin. He was generated from the "prophetess," that is, from the Holy Spirit, and has been named, "Be swift to take away the spoils, hasten to plunder" [[Isa 8:3](#)]. He is now being called by many names. And although he showed that he was God from the fact that he had said "Emmanuel" above [cf. [Isa 7:14](#); [8:8](#)], that is, God with us, nevertheless now he says that his *government has come upon his shoulder*. This means either that he himself carried his own cross [cf. [John 19:17](#)], or, he is showing by *shoulder* the strength of his arm. For the same Isaiah says, "The Lord God has revealed his holy arm to all nations" [[Isa 52:10](#)], and again, "Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" [[Isa 53:1](#)]. Therefore, after the two names, he will be called by another six names: *wonderful, counselor, God, mighty, father of the age to come, prince of peace*; for it is not as the majority think, that the names should be joined into couplets, so that we read: "wonderful counselor," and again "mighty God." Instead *wonderful*, which is *phele* in Hebrew, should be read separately, and *counselor* should be read by itself, which in their language is called *ioes*, and *God* should be read separately, which is said in Hebrew as *Hel*. After all, in what follows, where we read, "For you are God and we did not know" [[Isa 45:15](#)], and again, "I am God and there is no other

besides me” [Isa 45:22], and many things similar to these, the Hebrew uses *Hel* where the Latin uses *deus*.<sup>995</sup> And what follows, *mighty* is expressed as *gibbor* in Hebrew; this is also why in that passage where the same prophet relates, “They will trust in the Holy God of Israel in truth, and what is a remnant of Jacob to the mighty God” [Isa 10:20–21], for “mighty God” the Hebrew has written, *Hel gibbor*. But anyone who reads that the Savior is “our peace,” according to the Apostle Paul [cf. Eph 2:14], will have no doubt that the *father of the age to come* and of the resurrection, an age that is fulfilled in our calling, is also the *prince of peace*. He said to the apostles, “My peace I give to you, my peace I leave you” [John 14:27]. I imagine that the Septuagint was terrified by the majesty of these names. They did not dare to say openly of a child that he should be called God, and the other things; but in place of these six names, it recorded what is not found in the Hebrew: “messenger<sup>996</sup> of great counsel” and “I will bring peace upon the princes and his health.” To me this seems to have the following meaning: the “messenger of great counsel” is the one who announced to us that Israel must be set aside for a time and the Gentiles are to be saved, and who gave peace to their princes, to the apostles and apostolic men, and left behind the health of their doctrines to those who believe.

Now as for what follows, *His empire will be multiplied and there will be no end of peace*, for which the Septuagint translated “his great government,” we ought to know that the Septuagint translated the Hebrew word *mesra*, both here and above, as ἀρχήν, that is, “beginning.” We translated this above as *government*, here as *empire*. Now Aquila was deceived by the ambiguity of the word and translated it μέτρον, that is, “measure,” which both Hebrew and Latin identify by the same term.<sup>997</sup> Nor can there be any doubt about the Savior’s *multiplied empire* and his *peace* that has *no end* to anyone who reads in the Psalms, “Ask of me and I will give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession” [Ps 2:8]; and again, “And the multitude of peace, until the moon is taken away” [Ps 72:7], that is, until the consummation of the age [cf. Matt 28:20]. Now his *government* and *empire* will be *upon the throne and kingdom of David*, which was destroyed after the Babylonian captivity, so that it *strengthens* and *confirms* it, and shows that it is perpetual, lest the promise of God should be judged to be empty from the time of the incarnation until *eternity*. Now the reason the *zeal*, that is, the jealousy of the Lord of hosts, *did this*, was because they themselves provoked him to jealousy by those things that were not gods [cf. Deut 32:21], and he provoked them to jealousy by a nation that was not a nation [cf. Rom 10:19].

The prophecy of Emmanuel and of the child born of the virgin, which began at the passage where it is said to Ahaz, “Seek a sign for yourself from the Lord your God” [Isa 7:11], has come to an end with that little verse where it is added, *The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this*. Now let us move on to the things that remain.

<sup>995</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (66, 17–7, 14).

<sup>996</sup> Or “ngel.”

<sup>997</sup> See n. 51 at 3.16.

## [THE FOURTH BOOK]

1. We are dictating books of unequal length, and owing to the diversity of the visions and thoughts, one is shortened, another is lengthened. And so, we have finished the third book and are moving on to the fourth, which is shorter than the first by one-third the number of lines, especially because the fifth, which we have appended to this book, is a historical explanation and has nearly twice the number [of lines].<sup>11</sup> For as long as we are unwilling to divide up what has been joined together and move on to what was interpreted long ago, it is as if we have pointed our ship between the two συμπληγάδας of the Black Sea,<sup>22</sup> which is gliding off into the open sea. The Holy Spirit is blowing and the Lord and Savior directing our course, and you, virgin of Christ, Eustochium, are saying, “Come, O Spirit, from the four winds of heaven, and vivify the dead bones” [Ezek 37:9], so that the things that were lying in the dust of the ground may be raised by the Lord’s inspiration.

2. (9:8–13) *The Lord sent a word into Jacob, and it fell in Israel, (9) and all the people of Ephraim will know, and the inhabitants of Samaria, who say in the pride and haughtiness of their heart, (10) “The bricks have fallen down, but we will build with square stones; they have cut down the sycamores, but we will change [them for] cedars.” (11) And the Lord will raise up the enemies of Rezin over him, and will turn his enemies in a tumult, (12) Syria from the east, and the Philistines from the west, and they will devour Israel with their whole mouth. For all this his fury is not turned away, but his hand is still stretched out, (13) and the people have not returned to him who struck them, and have not sought after the Lord of hosts.*

We have read above that in the days of Ahaz son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel went up against Jerusalem to attack it [cf. [Isa 7:1](#)]. Isaiah the prophet was sent with his son Jashub to meet Ahaz [cf. [Isa 7:3](#)], to tell him not to fear and not to let his heart be afraid of the two tails of smoldering firebrands [cf. [Isa 7:4](#)]. For with them the empire of Syria and Israel was to be terminated [cf. [Isa 7:8](#)]. When he does not believe it on account of the greatness of the matter and the present danger, he is commanded to ask for a sign for himself [cf. [Isa 7:11](#)]. And because the idolater refused to do this as well [cf. [Isa 7:12](#)], therefore the Lord gives a sign not to the king himself, but to the house of David [cf. [Isa 7:13](#)], [the sign] of his own Son who will be born from a virgin [cf. [Isa 7:14](#)], at whose invocation they are to be delivered from the imminent danger, and the other things that we have interpreted up to the current passage. With many mysteries placed in between, then, he now returns to what he had begun and predicts the overthrow of Rezin and Ephraim, that is, of Syria and Samaria. He says, *The Lord sent a word into Jacob and it fell in Israel*. In Hebrew *dabar* is written with three letters, the consonants *daleth*, *beth* and *res*, depending on the nature of the context. If one reads it as *dabar*, it signifies *word*, if one reads it

1 See the preface to bk. [5](#) for an explanation of this statement.

2 The Symplegades or legendary “lashing Rocks” guarded the entrance at the Bosphorus to the Black Sea. They ceased clashing together when Jason’s ship, the Argo, succeeded in passing between them.

as *deber*, it means “death” and “pestilence.”<sup>33</sup> For this reason the majority<sup>44</sup> were fooled by the ambiguity of the word and say that it was not the *word* that was sent but “death” [cf. [Isa 9:8](#)]. Therefore, *the Lord sent a word into Jacob and it fell in Israel*. He wanted to reign over Judah, as Jacob prophesies in Genesis [cf. [Gen 49:10](#)], and Israel, that is the ten tribes, laid claim to an empire for themselves. It is said of them, “They made kings for themselves and not through me” [[Hos 8:4](#)]. Therefore, imperial dignity, which began with David by Samuel’s anointing after Saul was rejected [cf. [1 Sam 16:12–13](#)], was sent into Jacob, that is, into the twelve tribes that were summoned by Jacob long ago. It *fell in Israel*, not as the Septuagint translated, “has come upon”; for it *fell* among the impious because what was going to be established had been directed toward the saints. Therefore, *the people of Ephraim will know and the inhabitants of Samaria*, who on account of the multitude are lifted up *in pride* and say, “Judah’s kingdom is small and very worthless compared with ours. Accordingly, with these collapsing *bricks*, as it were, let us *build* a house for ourselves with a *square stone*, since their *sycamores*, which are a worthless kind of wood, were cut down during the enemy’s invasion. Let us build our empire with *cedars*, which is not subject to decay.” Accordingly they are signifying an eternal kingdom. Let this whole *people of Ephraim* and the *inhabitants of Samaria know*, then, that the Syrian who is now their ally is turning into an enemy; or surely that adversarial wars are suddenly arising against the Syrian himself, and all are being turned *into tumult*. Thus *Syria from the east and the Philistines*, in other words, the Palestinians, *from the west* are being roused against Israel, and together they *devour* Israel. And when they do this, *no less is my hand stretched out* or “exalted” [[Isa 9:11](#)] over Israel. Moreover, it does not cease to strike them, and those cut down by God *will not return to the one who strikes them*, nor to *seek the Lord of hosts*, since they are worshiping golden calves instead of God [cf. [1 Kgs 12:28, 30](#)].

Anagogically, our people have explained this passage as follows. God *sent* his own Son to *Jacob*, that is, to the Jews, and he came to *Israel*, that is, to the people of the Gentiles, whom the Apostle also says is named Israel [cf. [Rom 9:6–8](#)]. But others have explained it thus: *The Lord sent his word* to the church, which supplanted the former people, and it *fell in Israel*, that is among the heretics, who claim to “see God.” And so, their rulers *will know*, and all *who dwell in Samaria*, that is, those who claim that they keep God’s law and have an abundance of virtues and produce a harvest of justice, for this is what *Ephraim* means. In the *arrogance* of their heart, they despise the church. Thinking that simplicity equates to ignorance, they say, “Instead of using the church’s *bricks* we will *build* our churches with extremely strong *square stones*; and instead of unfruitful trees that will quickly perish, we will build the loftiest *cedars*.” These the Lord will break [cf. [Ps 29:5](#)] and the just man, under the persona of an impious man, tells that he saw them and there was no place found for them [cf. [Ps 37:35–36](#)].<sup>55</sup> Therefore, the Lord says that *Rezin*, which means “secular wisdom,” whose help Ephraim was using, *is turned against* him, and all his friends fight against him and attack both from the *east* and from the *west* and *devour Israel with its whole mouth*. The Septuagint translated this, “And let us build a tower for ourselves, and God will dash down those who rise up against Mount Zion, and will scatter his

3 Cf. *Comm in Abac* 2 (3:5).

4 I.e., the Septuagint and other Greek translators in Origen’ *Hexapla*.

5 Cf. *Bas Is* 228 (517B).

enemies.” For even they themselves desire to “build” a temple for themselves in Samaria in the likeness of God’s temple, but although they move their feet from the east [cf. [Gen 11:2](#)] and say, “Come, let us *build a tower* and make *for ourselves* a name before we are scattered” [[Gen 11:4](#)], it will be destroyed as the Lord fights against them. Their agreement will be dissipated and their languages will be divided mutually against each other [cf. [Gen 11:5–9](#)]. Otherwise they would become worse in their agreements but be destroyed by one another. And though they have been struck in such a way and devoured by enemies, nevertheless they do not return to the Lord, but his hand is still prepared to strike in accordance with what we read in Jeremiah: “In vain I *struck* your children, you have not received correction” [[Jer 2:30](#)].

3. ([9:14–21](#)) *And the Lord will destroy out of Israel the head and the tail, the one who is bent down and makes crooked in one day; (15) the aged and honorable, he is the head, and the prophet who teaches lies, he is the tail. (16) And those who call this people blessed will be deceivers; and those who are called blessed, [will be] thrown down headlong. (17) Therefore the Lord will have no joy in their young men, nor will he have mercy on their fatherless and widows, for every one is a hypocrite and wicked, and every mouth has spoken folly. For all this his fury is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. (18) For wickedness has been kindled as a fire, it will devour the brier and the thorn, and it will be kindled in the thicket of the forest, and it will be wrapped up in the haughtiness of smoke. (19) At the wrath of the Lord of hosts the land has trembled, and the people will be as fuel for the fire. A man will not spare his brother, (20) and he will turn to the right hand, and will be hungry: and he will eat on the left hand, and will not be filled. Every one will devour the flesh of his own arm, Manasseh Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh, they together [will be] against Judah. (21) In all these things his fury is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*

Not only will the Lord raise up Rezin’s enemies against him and turn his enemies into tumult [cf. [Isa 9:11](#)], Syria from the east and the Philistines from the west [cf. [Isa 9:12](#)], to devour Israel with their whole mouth [cf. [Isa 9:12](#)]; but, because he has not turned back to the one striking him nor sought the Lord of hosts [cf. [Isa 9:13](#)], he stretches out his hand to strike, to scatter from Israel *head and tail, the one bent over and making crooked*, namely, he who twists things that are straight [cf. [Mic 3:9](#)]. As for the identity of the *head*, he himself has interpreted this as *the aged and honorable*, and the tail is *the prophet*, he says, *who teaches lies*, the false prophet, that is. He has spoken of the rulers, now he joins even the people to the nobles, because both perish equally, teachers and disciples, both the educated and the ignorant crowd. For those who were *calling the people blessed are deceivers*, and *those who were being called blessed* not on account of virtue but on account of gifts, will be *thrown down headlong* to their death. This is also why we read above, “My people, those who call you blessed deceive you and trip up the paths of your feet” [[Isa 3:12](#)]. To such a people, *God will show mercy* to “no person” [cf. [Isa 9:15](#)], not to the *fatherless*, not to the *widow*, because *everyone is a hypocrite* and feigns one thing while doing something else. He promises chastity but lives luxuriously, prefers poverty but has a fat wallet. This is why he goes on to say, *And every mouth has spoken folly*. On account of all these things, the Lord does not cease to be *angry*, but *still* raises his *hand* to strike; and because they have done these things, *wickedness will be kindled as a fire*, so that it *devours* not the cultivated field, but the *briers and thorns*, nor does the wise flame consume the fruit-



bearing trees, but the unfruitful *forest*, in which beasts dwell. For this reason it is said that the *thicket of the forest*, when the fire has been set, is *wrapped in haughtiness* and height, for all that is lofty and rises on high can be called *haughty*. I do not know what the Septuagint intended when it translated this, “And it will devour all that is round about the hills” [[Isa 9:18](#)]. Whence also *the earth trembled at the Lord’s anger and the people became fuel for the fire*, because the cruelty meted out to them was so great that it did not even *spare* the dearest name of brotherhood, but abandoning and despising the *right hand*, it was *filled* with those things that were on the *left*, while it suffers a *hunger* for pleasures and evils and always desires to add worse things to its evils. Even *Manasseh* himself and *Ephraim*, who were born from one womb and were generated from the same parent [cf. [Gen 46:20](#)], have given vent to such great madness that they were at variance with each other out of hostile ill-will. Let us read the Books of Kings and Chronicles and we will find in Samaria civil wars, while they fight for different kings, and how when their own kings were killed they would come to an agreement in an attack against Judah.

Tropologically the Lord will remove *the head and the tail*, both the greater and the lesser, and by naming it the *tail*, he shows that the heretics are not men but beasts, which make use of this body part to cover over their dung and to ward off tiny creatures; and after *head* he adds *and tail bending and making crooked*, because they subvert the commands of the law and *make crooked* the straight road. He who is the *head* is *aged* too and *scatters* the false prophet who is placed in the *tail* and the teachers together with their disciples, some who praise sinners on account of gifts, some who when praised do not perceive their own evils and do not do penance. For this reason *the Lord will not rejoice in their young men*, for “woe to the city whose king is young!” [[Eccl 10:16](#)]. And those have destroyed God the Father, or the true Lord will not obtain *mercy*; for every heretic is a *hypocrite*, doing one thing and feigning something else, and whatever they *speak*, though it may seem to be wisdom, is nevertheless *folly*. On account of these things, he *stretches out his hand* to punish, and a devouring *flame* will *consume* all the *thorns* of their wickedness, and their words without virtues, which are compared with an *unfruitful forest*, will be *wrapped* in the *haughtiness of smoke*. The entire ground will *tremble* at their punishment and their *deceived* people will be handed over to eternal flames, because for the sake of base gain [cf. [Titus 1:11](#)] they do not even *spare* their own, but in a struggle over the people who have been deceived they carry off plunder. They abandon the good and linger in the worst things, and though they always find the *left hand* things, nevertheless they are never *filled* with their own errors, as they *devour the flesh of their own arm* and fight against the church with equal zeal. For the sake of luxury, pleasures, and profit from the people, they have discord among themselves. Consequently, from one heresy two more sprout, and these again split into factions. Thus do they lead away their own respective flocks and *devour* the homes of widows and sinful women [cf. [Mark 12:40](#)], of those who are always learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth [cf. [2 Tim 3:6–7](#)]. In all these things *the Lord’s fury is not turned away*, as it consumes and overthrows vices. But to the degree that they make progress in sinning, to such an extent does he *stretch out his hand* for punishment all the more.

4. ([10:1–4](#)) *Woe to those who make unjust laws and when they write, they have written injustice, (2) to oppress the poor in judgment, and do violence to the cause of the humble of my*

*people, that widows might be their prey, and that they might rob the fatherless. (3) What will you do on the day of visitation, and of the calamity which comes from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory, (4) that you be not bowed down under the bond, and fall with the slain? In all these things his fury is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.*

Most think that these things are still being spoken against the ten tribes who were living in Samaria, because they added these crimes as well to their former ones. But to us the prophet's words seem to be shouting out against the judges of the tribe of Judah and Jerusalem, namely the scribes and the δευτερωτας,<sup>66</sup> because they will write *unjust laws* contrary to the law of God, and by their own traditions, they will overturn the truth of the *judgment* [cf. [Matt 15:3](#)]. For though God says, "Honor your father and mother" [cf. [Matt 15:4](#)], they on the contrary admonished their sons to say to their parents, "Whatever would have benefited you from me is a gift," in order not to honor their father and mother [cf. [Matt 15:5](#)], and other things similar to these. But the reason *they wrote wicked laws* was to *oppress the poor and humble of the people, to lead off booty from the widows, and rob the fatherless*. They are asked *what they will do* when the *day* of either "captivity" or *judgment* will come and *of the calamity coming from far off*, which was predicted a long time before. *To whom*, he asks, *will you flee for help?* For you have offended God, who is the true helper. And *where will you leave your glory?* For "wealth did not help on the day of the thief" [[Prov 11:4](#)]. How will you prevent the Assyrian from leading captives off in chains to a hostile land? How will you keep from falling in battle? And finally, just as in the things higher up he had frequently said against Samaria, "In all these things his fury is not turned away, but his hand is still raised" [[Isa 9:12](#), [17](#), [21](#)], likewise against Judah he says that their final captivity is not the end of their troubles, but even in a hostile land the Lord's sword pursues them.

Anagogically, every heretic *writes injustice* to deceive the *poor and humble of the people, to rob widows and the fatherless*. For the one who is wealthy, of whom we read, "The redemption of a man's soul is his own wealth" [[Prov 13:8](#)], does not put up with a threat, he is not quickly taken in by them; but the poor man and he who is humble and small among the people quickly is scandalized by them. A *widow* too is easily tripped up, when she has lost God as her husband, as is the *fatherless*, when he has lost his father, the Creator, of whom it is written, "You have abandoned the God who begot you and you have forgotten God your sustainer" [[Deut 32:18](#)]. What then will they do *on the day of judgment*, seeing that they have deceived so many, and *of the calamity coming from far off*? For just as it is said to the just man, "The word is near in your mouth and in your heart" [[Rom 10:8](#)], and in another passage, "The kingdom of God is within you" [[Luke 17:21](#)],<sup>77</sup> thus the *calamity* of the heretics will come *from far off*. It has been prepared for them for a long time. *To whom will they flee*, since they have a fabricated god? To whom will they hand over their *glory*, since they have feigned everything? They were unable to escape the chain with which they *bound* very many. This is why even in the vision of the valley of Zion [cf. [Isa 22:1](#)], which was forsaken by the height of God and deceived by heretical humility, it is said concerning teachers of knowledge of a false name [cf. [1 Tim 6:20](#)], "All your

<sup>6</sup> See n. [2.17](#).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 233 (528C).

princes have fled and those who were captured have been *bound* hard” [Isa 22:3], and that when *they fall with each of the slain* and themselves perish while they are killing others, and when they suffer many things and the *day of visitation* arrives, there is no end of their destruction [cf. Phil 3:19], but they always tremble greatly within themselves at the threatening hand of the Lord.

Up to this point God’s threat is against the ten and the two tribes, that is, against Samaria and Jerusalem. It began while Ahaz was still reigning over the people. Two and a half of those tribes were captured during his reign, and the rest under Hezekiah, who succeeded Ahaz in the kingdom. The following prophecy is written against the Assyrians.

5. (10:5–11) *Woe to the Assyrian; he is the rod and the staff of my fury, my indignation is in their hand. (6) I will send him to a deceitful nation, and I will give him a charge against the people of my fury, to take away the spoils, and to rob the plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. (7) But he has not thought it so, and his heart has not reckoned it so, but his heart will be set to destroy, and to exterminate very many nations. (8) For he will say, (9) “Are not my princes simultaneously kings? Is not Calno like Carchemish, and Emath like Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus? (10) As my hand has found the kingdoms of the idol, so also their idols of Jerusalem, and of Samaria. (11) Shall I not, as I have done to Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?”*

Let us record the Septuagint translation of this passage, which differs from the Hebrew in very many details.

Woe to the Assyrians; he is the rod of my fury in their hands; (6) I will send my wrath against an unjust nation, and I will command my people to take plunder and spoil, and to trample the cities, and to make them dust. (7) But he did not consider it this way, neither did he think thus, but that his mind would crush and destroy very many nations. (8) But if they will say to him, “You alone are ruler,” (9) he will answer, “Have I not taken the country above Babylon and Calne, where the tower was built? And have I not taken Arabia, and Damascus, and Samaria? (10) As I have taken them, so will I take all the kingdoms.” Howl, you carved images in Jerusalem, and in Samaria; (11) for as I did to Samaria and her idols, so will I do to Jerusalem and her idols.

First, one should know that the Hebrew does not have “Calne” but *Calno*; for the last letter of this name is not *loth*, as they [the LXX] thought, but *uau*. The only distinction between these letters is their size. Now a “tower was built” in the field of Shinar, in which were Erech, Accad, Calne, and Babylon, which received its name from the confusion of the tongues. But the Hebrew does not have “Arabia,” but *Emath*, which the Syrians up to the present day call *Epiphania*. They [the LXX] added on their own that the “carved images in Jerusalem howl.” And what was written above, “If they will say to him: ‘You alone are ruler,’ he will answer: ‘Have I not taken’ ” this and that “country”? Yet “I have taken Arabia, Damascus and Samaria” suggests this meaning. Since, he says, those who were captured will say to the Assyrian, “You are the ruler of all,” perceiving that he is still weak, he will answer, “Why do you call me ruler, when I have only captured Arabia,

,LXX Septuagint

.LXX Septuagint

Damascus, and Samaria, and I have not yet subjugated to my authority the countries located far off beyond Babylon? But just as I captured Arabia, Damascus, and Samaria, so I will make all kingdoms subservient to myself.”

Let us move on to the Hebrew and briefly take note of what seems significant to us. *Woe to the Assyrian*, that is, to Sennacherib, since he is the *rod and staff of my fury*; for *in his hand is my indignation*, and through him I will strike the very deceitful nation that always limps between me and idols [cf. [1 Kgs 18:21](#)], which has told lies when they said that they will keep my commandments. Moreover, against the *people of my fury* I will instruct him to *despoil and plunder* them and reduce them to dust and *trample them like the mire in the streets*, that is, to strike and not kill them, to wound and not deprive of life. But he himself went beyond the measure of my anger, and not only against Israel to whom it had been directed, but he has gone berserk against very many nations, so that he demolished all the kingdoms in a circuit, and with that one’s sword he raged, up to the point of exterminating very many nations. For having been lifted up in arrogance, he dared to say these things: “My leaders are the kings of other nations, and when subjected to me they will give charge to all nations. Just as I captured *Carchemish* so I took *Calno* as well; as *Arphad*, so I took possession of *Emath*; as *Damascus*, so I subjected *Samaria* to myself too; as I subjected to my feet the other *kingdoms*, which were enslaved to the worship of idols, so also I will subjugate to my authority *Jerusalem* and *Samaria* in which the same *idols* exist; just as I captured *Samaria with her idols*, so too will I catch *Jerusalem* because she worships the same gods.”

Now the Septuagint translated *Carchemish* by adding on its own “the country above Babylon,” and to *Calne* it added, “where the tower was built.” *Arphad* it completely omitted. Now we can likewise say the following, in accordance with their translation and the freedom of tropology, provided that it is pious. From the fact that he says, “And I will charge my people to take plunder and spoil and trample the cities and put them in the dust,” daily the Lord gives charge to his people to reduce to “dust” and show to be nothing the cities of the adversaries that are raised up against the knowledge of God [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)] and have been constructed by the excessive effort of the heretics. Whoever understands the weakness of the human heart and that one who is surrounded by mortal flesh cannot have perfect victory and cannot capture all nations; although some may admire him and say, “You alone are ruler,” he will respond to them, “There are many things that I ought to destroy that I have not yet been able to destroy. I know what I do not know, and although I have overcome many of the arguments of the adversaries, nevertheless there are very many that must still be overcome.” And at the same time, by the hope of things to come, from those things that he has overcome, he promises victory to himself even over the others. Now the “images of Jerusalem and Samaria” are commanded to “howl.” This does not refer to the things that have been fashioned, but those who fashioned them, by metonymy. By means of the things that were made he refers to those who made them. Consequently not only do those who have fabricated idols by their heresies testify by their howling and penitence that they have gone astray, but so do those in the church who through ignorance defend falsehood as truth.

6. ([10:12–14](#)) *And it will be, when the Lord will have fulfilled all his works on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, I will visit upon the fruit of the proud heart of the king of Assyria, and upon*

*the glory of the haughtiness of his eyes. (13) For he said, "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by wisdom I have understood, and I have removed the boundaries of the peoples, and have taken the spoils of their princes, and as a mighty man I have pulled down those who were residing on high. (14) And my hand found the strength of the peoples as a nest; and as eggs are gathered, that have been abandoned, so have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing and opened the mouth and yelped."* The Septuagint translated *fruit* as "great mind" or "thought."

After the captivity of Samaria and the victory of the Assyrians and the threat against Jerusalem, since the images copied by Samaria had to be struck by the same verdict, the prophet now speaks against Assyria itself, who was puffed up with arrogance and thought that its conquests had been done by its own strength. For the Assyrian spoke with a swollen heart, boasting that he conquered all the nations by the strength of his own hand, and took possession of the boundaries of all by his unbelievable wisdom. And according to the Septuagint he was of such "great power" that he utterly destroyed the cities of human warriors and seized the whole world like a nest and turned it into his own plunder, like *eggs* abandoned by their mother. And since he had once taken up the metaphor of birds, *nest*, and *eggs*, he has preserved it in the remaining part. Accordingly he said, *There was none that moved the wing and opened the mouth and yelped*; there was such great terror over my strength and victory, he says, that the vanquished did not even freely bring forth weeping and groaning. There are those who might think that these things are spoken generally against the kingdom of the Assyrians, because after the Lord will have fulfilled all his works on Mount Zion and Jerusalem, that is, after Jerusalem will have been overthrown, the empire of the Assyrians would be destroyed. But from what follows the threat appears to me to be uniquely against Sennacherib king of the Assyrians. But what he says, *After the Lord will have fulfilled all his works on Mount Zion and Jerusalem*, does not signify the overthrow of the city, but its siege, when Rabshakeh, Sennacherib's general, came and did those things that the same prophet records subsequently [cf. [Isa 36:2ff.](#)].

According to tropology, when Samaria and Jerusalem will have endured the Lord's wrath and will have perceived that they erred in the fabrication of idols, at that time "great thought" will be destroyed, the Assyrian, who was puffed up with such great arrogance against the Lord that he reckoned that everything will yield to his own wisdom. He thought that no matter how lofty the dogmas are and no matter how much they are fortified by dialectical skill, they were to be trampled upon and completely destroyed. They are like the chicks of birds that cannot rise on high, and they are not yet living things; they cannot feel and are numb. This is what the comparison to *eggs* shows. They do not even dare to mutter a sound and to move their tongue against the reasoning and strength of his words.

7. ([10:15](#)) *Will the axe boast against the one who cuts with it, or will the saw be exalted against him by whom it is drawn? What if a rod should be lifted up against him that lifts it, and a staff be exalted, which is but wood?*

Against Sennacherib, or, as many think, Nebuchadnezzar,<sup>88</sup> who was boasting and saying, "By the strength of my hand I have done it and by my wisdom I have understood" [[Isa 10:13](#)], and the rest, the holy prophet has answered, O most foolish of mortals, do you think that your

8 Cf. *Eus Is* 59 (74, 22–4); *Bas Is* 241 (541BC).



wrath is wisdom, and do you refer his charge to your strength? What if an *axe* would *boast against* the one holding the axe, and a *saw against him by whom it is drawn*, and say that all the works that come about through the axe and the saw have been carried out by their own skill? What if someone were to raise a *rod* and hold up a *staff* to strike anyone he wants, and the *rod* itself and the *staff* boasted and said that the one who was struck was struck by them? In the same way, you are the instrument of God's will. Will you rise up in arrogance and boast that everything that is carried out was done by your power?

But whatever is said to the Assyrian can be referred both to the arrogance of the heretics and to the devil, who is called an *axe*, a *saw* and a *rod* in the Scriptures. For through him fruitless trees are cut down and divided [cf. [Matt 3:10](#); [7:19](#)], and the hardness of unbelievers [cf. [Rom 2:5](#)] will be sawn through, and those who do not accept correction are struck with a *rod* [cf. [Jer 2:30](#)]. The heretics too, whose mouth is set against heaven and whose tongue passes through the earth [cf. [Ps 73:9](#)], misuse into the opposite and perverse sense a meaning that they have accepted from God in a good sense. Consequently they speak against the one by whom they were created, and they turn into blasphemy the service of their tongue by which the Lord ought to be praised.

8. ([10:16–19](#)) *Therefore the sovereign Lord God of hosts will send leanness among his fat ones, and under his glory will be kindled a burning, as it were the burning of a fire, (17) and the light of Israel will be in a fire, and his Holy One in a flame, and his thorns and briers will be set on fire and devoured in one day, (18) and the glory of his forest and of his Carmel will be consumed from the soul down to the flesh, and he will be a refugee from fear, (19) and they that remain of the wood of his forest will be numbered as a few, and a child will write them down.*

Since you have done these things and have spoken what I described above, therefore *the Lord will send* his angel and in a single night 185,000 of your army will die [cf. [Isa 37:36](#)]. In this way each of the most powerful, whom he calls *fat ones*, are reduced to *leanness* and to nothing, and, just as the Hebrews hand down, the bodies of the Assyrians are consumed by a hidden fire with their clothing unscathed. Then the *light of Israel* and the *Holy One*, that is, the angel, will be *in the fire* and *in the flame*, and all the *thorns and briers* of the Assyrians, that is, their malice, will be *consumed* not in a long time but *in one day* and moment. And just as the *forest* and *Carmel*, which is a mountain situated in the groves of Galilee, are speedily incinerated together, once a fire has been set to it, so *from the soul down to the flesh* all the *glory* of the Assyrian will be *consumed*. Then the despoiled army will flee, which the same prophet attests in what follows [cf. [Isa 37:37](#)], and from so countless a multitude, which was compared with *Carmel* and a *forest*, it will become so *few* that a *little child* could count and record them. Indeed the Hebrews hand down the tradition that only ten men remained from his army.

Some of our own<sup>99</sup> want this king to be a type of hostile strength and, just as we read in Daniel that there are princes of the kingdom of the Persians and of the kingdom of the Medes and of the kingdom of the Greeks [cf. [Dan 10:13](#)], so also there is a prince of the Assyrians, who on account of his arrogance is called “great thought” [cf. [Isa 10:12](#)]. They think that on the day of judgment he is handed over to the fires of Gehenna, which are prepared for the devil and his

9 Cf. *Eus Is* 59 (74, 17–1; 76, 10–5); *Bas Is* 240 (541AB).



angels [cf. [Matt 25:41](#)], and the *light of Israel* and the *Holy One*, that is the Lord himself, burns the *briers* and *thorns* of the Assyrian, and all his power and his countless people are to be reduced to nothing. Then, when he has been terrified by fear, like a coiled snake and a fugitive [cf. [Isa 27:1](#)], they think that he will want to avoid the punishments that are threatening; but those who will be able to escape from the forest, and its confusion, and the woods that are about to perish, appear as those worthy ones who will be counted and recorded by the child whose “government is on his shoulders” [cf. [Isa 9:6](#)].<sup>110</sup>

This same thing can be referred to the heretics as well, because after ecclesiastical doctrine has shown its light and all their snares are exposed, then they would come to such great desolation that out of the *forest* and *fruitless trees* and its countless multitude, which they had deceived by heretical deceit, scarcely a *few* would remain to follow his error.

What we have translated as *the Lord will send leanness among his fat ones*, the Septuagint translated as “the Lord will send dishonor among your honor.” And in place of what we said as *and his Holy One in a flame*, it rendered, “and he will sanctify him in fire.” Some want this to be understood of the punishments and torments that are applied to sinners for the purpose of purifying them by means of divine fire. And what we have said as *and the glory of his forest and of his Carmel*, the Septuagint translated as “mountains will be extinguished and the hills and the forests,” whereby the whole splendor of the Assyrians and their arrogance and multitude is laid low and extinguished.

9. ([10:20–23](#)) *And it will be in that day, the remnant of Israel, and those who will have been saved from the house of Jacob, will not continue to lean upon him who strikes them, but they will lean upon the Lord the Holy One of Israel, in truth. (21) The remnants will be converted, the remnants, I say, of Jacob, to the mighty God. (22) For if your people, O Israel, will be as the sand of the sea, remnants of them will be converted. The abridged consummation will overflow with justice; (23) for the Lord God of hosts will make a consummation and an abridgment in the midst of all the earth.* Where in Greek it is said, “The remnants of Jacob will be converted to the mighty God,” for “mighty God” it is written in Hebrew as *Hel Gibbor*, two of the names out of the six by which we have read above that the small child and Son who was given to us was called [cf. [Isa 9:6](#)].<sup>111</sup> And in place of what is written, *The remnants will be converted*, which Hebrew expresses in the singular number, [the Greek has], “Because a remnant will be converted,” that is  $\tau\omicron\ \upsilon\pi\omicron\lambda\epsilon\iota\mu\mu\alpha\ \epsilon\pi\iota\sigma\tau\upsilon\epsilon\psi\epsilon\iota$ . In Hebrew this is written as *sariasub*, and from this occasion of words the Hebrews think that Jashub son of Isaiah [cf. [Isa 7:3](#)] came first from the people of Israel as a sign of salvation.

Therefore, when the light of Israel and the Holy One of Carmel will consume the forest and the briers [cf. [Isa 10:17–19](#)], and the Assyrian king will flee with a few, then the *remnants of Israel* who were besieged in Jerusalem with prince Hezekiah, when the rest of the cities of Judea were captured, will not trust in the Assyrian,<sup>112</sup> as they now do under King Ahaz. He is the one who sent messengers to the king of the Assyrians, saying, “I am your servant, come up and liberate me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who have

<sup>110</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 244 (548C).

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 60 (77, 3–).

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (76, 28–5).

risen up against me” [2 Kgs 16:7]. This was when he carried the gold and silver that was found in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and in the royal palace, and sent gifts to the king of the Assyrians, and the Assyrian king heard him and came to Damascus and captured it and crossed over and killed Rezin [cf. 2 Kgs 16:8–9]. But when they have been liberated by the very Assyrian striker who showed himself first as a friend, afterward as an enemy, they will lean on and trust in the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, without any deceit, as they had done under the previous kings, but they will do so in truth. We read that this happened under Hezekiah [cf. 2 Kgs 18:22]. Consequently when they have abandoned their idols, they will be converted to the worship of God. And since he had said that *remnants* must be saved, he passes over to the later times and says that the fullness of salvation will be under Christ. The Apostle Paul understood this and writes to the Romans,

But Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: “Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the *sand of the sea*, *remnants* will be saved; for the word *consummates* and abbreviates in equity, because the Lord will carry out his *abbreviated word* upon the earth.” And as Isaiah said, “If the Lord Sabaoth had not left us seed, we would have become like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah.” [Rom 9:27–29]<sup>113</sup>

Therefore, when the authority of such a great man has preceded, let every other interpretation cease. And in fact, if we read Josephus<sup>114</sup> and consider what a great multitude of people there were in Jerusalem and in Judea when the Lord suffered, we understand that hardly a few from the Jews were saved by the apostles and apostolic men. Now the word of the gospel is *abbreviated* and *carried out*,<sup>115</sup> which in place of all the ceremonies of the intricately complex<sup>116</sup> law, he has given the very brief command of love and faith [cf. Matt 22:37–39], that we should not do to another what we do not want done to us [cf. Tob 4:15]. This is also why the Lord says in the Gospel, “In these two commandments all the law and the prophets depend” [Matt 22:40].

Some<sup>117</sup> refer this section to the time when a certain part of the people returned to Judea under Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Jeshua son of Jozadak, Ezra, and Nehemiah [cf. Ezra 5:2]. We will respond to them that they are not preserving the progression of history, especially since the things that follow are not spoken against the Babylonians, whose king was Nebuchadnezzar, but against Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians.

10. (10:24–27) *Therefore, thus says the Lord the God of hosts: O my people who dwell in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian. He will strike you with his rod, and he will lift up his staff over you in the way of Egypt. (25) For yet a little and a very little while, and my indignation will be consummated, and my fury upon their wickedness, (26) and the Lord of hosts will raise up a*

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 246 (552A).

<sup>114</sup> Cf. [Josephus, Ant 18, 57.61](#).

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 246 (552BC).

<sup>116</sup> *Laciniosae*. For the use of the same word in a similar context, see [Jerome, Commentary on Galatians 5.13a](#); in [St. Jerome's Commentaries on Galatians, Titus, and Philemon](#), trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 223.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 60 (76, 22–6).

*scourge against him, according to the plague of Midian at the rock of Oreb, and his rod over the sea, and he will lift it up in the way of Egypt, (27) and it will be on that day, that his burden will be taken away from off your shoulder, and his yoke from off your neck, and the yoke will rot at the presence of the oil.* For *rock*, which was translated in accordance with the Hebrew, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion recorded the Hebrew word itself *sur oreb*, which the Septuagint translated “place of affliction.” We will speak about this in its own passage.

It seems difficult to you, he says, you *who dwell in Zion*, that with all the nations in a circuit having been subjugated to the Assyrian, you alone will be delivered from his hands. Listen to what I am saying: *Do not be afraid, my people*, that you might be captured by the conquering Assyrian. For although in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib the Assyrian king will go up against all the fortified cities of Judah and capture them, and he will send Rabshakeh, who would terrify the besieged people in Jerusalem, nevertheless you should know this, that he will strike you not with a sword, but with a *rod*; and the one continuing against Tirhakah king of Ethiopia [cf. [Isa 37:9](#)], and the Egyptians and the Red Sea by the way of Egypt, he will only raise his *staff* against you and will not be able to strike. For yet a *little*, and when he returns from Egypt with the infinite multitude of an army and desires to besiege you, immediately he will be struck by *my indignation*, and I have *raised up that scourge* that [was] once against the Midianites under Gideon, whose other name was Jerubaal. This was when Oreb and Zebbee, princes of the Midianites, were killed upon the hardest rock [cf. [Judg 7:25](#)], that is, flint stone, which in Hebrew is called *sur*. Thus from the rock and from the king who was cut down upon it, the location of the rock Oreb derived its name. Therefore he will *lift up his rod* over the *Red Sea* as he goes against the Ethiopians, and *he will lift it up* when he *returns* to you *by the way of Egypt*; but at once when he has come from Egypt, the *burden will be taken off your shoulders*, and the *yoke* of his empire, and you will cease serving him. This *yoke*, that is, the power of the Assyrian, will rot *at the presence of the oil*, that is at the presence of the mercy of God. We can also interpret what he has said, *The rod will strike you and he will lift up his staff over you on the way of Egypt*, and again, *and his rod over the sea and he will lift it up on the way of Egypt*, as follows: the reason he struck very many from the tribe of Judah and captured cities in a circuit around the kingdom of Jerusalem is because they had placed their trust not in God but in the Egyptians. This is also why Rabshakeh reproached them, saying, “Behold you will rely on a broken staff made of reeds, on Egypt, which will pierce and enter the hand of any man who leans on it; such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him” [[Isa 36:6](#)]. The history of the Midianites is recorded in the Book of Judges [cf. [Judg 7–8](#)]. We also read about them in the Psalm: “Make their princes as Oreb and Zeeb and Zebah and Zalmunna” [[Ps 83:11](#)]. Therefore they are in error who think that the time signified here is when, in the Book of Numbers, the Midianites are referred to as having been killed by Israel [cf. [Num 31:1–12](#)].<sup>118</sup> They think that the desert of Shur [cf. [Exod 15:22](#)] is being signified, and Horeb the mountain of God [cf. [Exod 3:1; 17:6](#)], both of which are written by the Hebrews with different letters. For at that time Israel was not on Mount Horeb, but in the wilderness of Shittim [cf. [Num 25:1](#)].

Anagogically, the people lingering in the church are commanded not to fear the adversaries who are always ready to fight and who have subverted many souls by their disputations. For

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 61 (79, 4–).

that is the reason they receive very little power against God's people and *strike* them not so much with a sword as with a *rod*—that is, they do not kill but threaten—because they walked *on the way of Egypt* and did not trust in the Lord. But when they will have returned to God and have left the road of Egypt, then the scourge of God in judgment must be raised against the adversaries—for *Midian* is translated from “judgment”—so that “by the breath of his mouth” [cf. [2 Thess 2:8](#)] and the *oil* of his mercy he will *rot* the *yoke* of the enemy.

11. ([10:28–32](#)) *He will come into Aiath, he will pass into Migron; at Michmash he will lay up his equipment. (29) They have passed in haste, Geba is our lodging, or as we have found recorded elsewhere, they have remained in a remaining place; Ramah was astonished, Gibeah of Saul fled away. (30) Whinny with your voice, O daughter of Gallim, attend, O Laishah, poor little Anathoth; (31) Madmenah is removed; you inhabitants of Gebim, take courage. (32) It is yet day enough, to remain in Nob; he will shake his hand against the mountain of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.*

Septuagint:

For he will come to the city of Angai, and will pass on to Megiddo, and place his equipment in Michmash, (29) and he will pass by the valley, and will arrive at Angai; fear will seize Ramah, the city of Saul. (30) The daughter of Gallim will flee; attend, Laishah; it will be heard in Anathoth; (31) Madbenah was astonished, and the inhabitants of Gebim. (32) Exhort (*consolamini*) [them] today to remain in the way; exhort the mountain of the daughter of Zion and the hill of Jerusalem.

In this passage the Septuagint disagrees a great deal from the Hebrew; this is why we have recorded both versions, so that with Christ inspiring us, if we deserve it, we may speak about anything that appears significant to us in the details.

The prophetic discourse describes the Assyrian's journey and the pomp of the one returning from Egypt to Jerusalem, and with what great clatter and by what a lengthy course he comes to attack it. And first, he says, *he will come into Aiath*, where by reason of his excessive haste he is unwilling to stay and *he will pass into Migron*. And such great confidence will he have in capturing the city that he will *lay up his gear at Michmash*, as if he will quickly return once the city has been sacked. When these things have been deposited, he will move through it quickly and will have a stay in *Geba*, remaining there for a little while in the same manner, in order to refresh his weary army. The neighboring city of *Ramah* will be terrified; *Gibeah* the one-time *city of Saul will flee*. Then even the *daughter of Gallim*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *Beth Gallim*, will wail in such a way that you would think it is the *whinnying* of horses. This is why, *O Laishah and poor little*, or “obedient” or “humble” *Anathoth*—for it can be translated in three ways—*attend* diligently and turn aside the attack of the one charging, if you can; for the city of *Madmenah* is already *removed* from its home. But you who dwell in the hills, which is what *Gebim* means, *take courage (confortamini)* from the safe height of the location, that is, take up arms. There *still remains enough of the day* that, *stopping* in the little town of *Nob* and regarding the city of *Jerusalem* from the distance, he would *shake his hand* and trample upon Mount *Zion*, or, disregarding and despising it, or greeting and threatening and marveling that with the entire East having been subjected to itself, such a puny city would dare to fight back

against his power. We have lightly touched upon these things with a few words that accord with the Hebrew reading, as they have handed it down to us.

Now let us submit what men of the church think about this passage in accordance with the Septuagint version. When the yoke of the Assyrian, or as some mistakenly think, of the Babylonian, has been removed from your shoulders and broken [cf. [Isa 10:27](#)], the Assyrian Sennacherib will flee with the few who remain and “will come to *Angai*,” which is not found in the Hebrew. And the fear of the one fleeing will be so great that he does not dare to remain there, but “will pass on to *Megiddo*,” which also the Scripture does not contain. And since he is hampered by his gear he will not be able to flee very quickly, and he will “deposit his equipment in *Michmash*.”<sup>119</sup> “He will pass through the valley” with a spurred-on pace, a valley that also the Hebrew speech does not express, and again he will come to “*Angai*,” which is recorded twice in this passage and is not found in the Hebrew. At the sound of his flight, “*Ramah*” trembles, “the city of Saul,” which is plainly wrong; for the “city of Saul” is called Gibeah, as is contained in the Hebrew. Then he will come to “*Gallim*”; “*Laishah*” will hear, “*Anathoth*” will hear, “*Madmenah*”<sup>220</sup> will tremble; but “the inhabitants of *Gebim*” and the hills that are in Jerusalem, that is, all the lofty men, are provoked to “exhort” (*consolandum*) “*Jerusalem*,” not after a long time, but in the present and on the same day, while the Assyrian is on the way. Accordingly, they remain in their places, and having been disturbed from fear, they do not flee. This is according to the letter.

On the other hand, someone sends us to what is uncertain in his commentary on this passage.<sup>221</sup> He says he is unable to discover the etymology of incorrect names according to the Septuagint and testifies that he was unable to discover them in a book of Hebrew names. Therefore he says that at the final period of the world and at the consummation of this age, when punishments threaten, “great thought” [cf. [Isa 10:12](#)], the prince of the Assyrians, will flee and desire to escape from the wrath of God through various locales and different stages; and when he escapes, the inhabitants of “*Gebim*,” that is, each of the lofty powers, are challenged by the prophetic words to “exhort” the one fleeing and to teach him not to flee, but to remain “on the way” and wait for God’s mercy. And they not only “exhort” the one fleeing, but call back from her mourning the “daughter of Zion” to good works and provoke her to the salvation of penitence; and this is what the “hills in Jerusalem” refer to, concerning which in the latter part of this prophet we read, “Comfort, comfort (*consolamini, consolamini*) my people, priests, speak to the heart of Jerusalem” [[Isa 40:1](#)]. He said these things because when he was hemmed in by the truth of the matter, he had nothing else to say.

12. ([10:33–34](#)) *Behold the sovereign Lord of hosts will break the flask with terror, and the tall of stature will be cut down, and the lofty will be humbled, (34) and the thickets of the forest will be cut down with iron, and Libanus with its high ones will fall.*

Some think that this passage is still being spoken about the Assyrian: that when he has been crushed, all the surrounding nations that lie under his control are *cut down* and *humbled* and the densest *forest* is destroyed. They think that these things should be understood

<sup>119</sup> *Machmis*. The LXX lemma Jerome recorded above reads *machmas*.

<sup>220</sup> Jerome’s previous LXX lemma had *madbenah*.

<sup>221</sup> Origen?

metaphorically of the people and the rulers. *Libanus* too *falls with its high ones*, so that absolutely nothing remains of the Assyrian power. But others think that [the section] about the Messiah (*Christo*) begins here, especially since both we and the circumcision admit that the things that follow were written about him. Above he had spoken the name of the child who was to be born from a virgin, who was called Emmanuel [cf. [Isa 7:14](#)]. After he was conceived in the womb of the prophetess, he was called, “Make haste to take away the spoils, hasten to plunder” [cf. [Isa 8:3](#)]. He was also the stone of offense and rock of stumbling for the two houses of Israel [cf. [Isa 8:14](#)]. His government was on his shoulder [cf. [Isa 9:6](#)], and he was called by six terms: “Wonderful, counselor, God, mighty, father of the age to come, and prince of peace” [cf. [Isa 9:6](#)]. It was said that his empire would be multiplied and there would be no end of his peace [cf. [Isa 9:7](#)]. Now as a prologue to his advent, before it is said that he will be born from the stock of Jesse and David [cf. [Isa 11:1](#)], his passion is demonstrated by means of a comparison to a broken *flask*. For by God’s will his flesh was handed over to death, so that the *loftiness* of the Jews is destroyed and the formerly *exalted ones fall* to the earth, and *Libanus* with its cedars is *cut down*. We read about this in Zechariah: “Open your gates, O Libanus, and let fire devour your cedars; wail, O fir tree, since the cedar had fallen, for the mighty ones have been laid waste” [[Zech 11:1–2](#)]. Now the following passage as well is an indication of the fact that he is said to have been crushed and *struck* by the Father: “I will *strike* the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered” [[Zech 13:7](#); cf. [Mark 14:27](#)]; and another testimony: “Because they have persecuted the one whom you *struck*” [[Ps 69:26](#)].<sup>222</sup> The Hebrew word is *fura*, which Aquila translated κερραμυλλιον. Theodotion and Symmachus rendered it as ληνον, that is, “winepress.” This term itself signifies the Lord’s passion, according to the titles of three Psalms [cf. [Pss 8:1](#); [81:1](#); [84:1](#)]. For he himself says in Isaiah, “I alone have trampled the winepress and from the Gentiles there was no man with me” [[Isa 63:3](#)]. Now instead of “winepress,” the Septuagint translated a new meaning when it added “glorious ones.”

13. ([11:1–3a](#)) *And there will come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower will rise up out of his root; (2) and the spirit of the Lord will rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, (3) and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord has filled him.*

Up to the beginning of the vision, or of the “burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw” [[Isa 13:1](#)], this entire prophecy is about the Christ, a prophecy that we want to explain section by section. Otherwise, our combined exposition and discussion may confuse the reader’s memory. The Jews interpret the *rod* and the *flower out of the root of Jesse* to be the Lord himself, namely, because the power of his ruling is demonstrated in the *rod*, and his beauty in the *flower*. But we understand the *rod (virgam) out of Jesse* to be the holy Virgin (*virginem*) Mary, who had no shoot cleaving to herself. About her we also read above, “Behold, a virgin will conceive and bear a son” [[Isa 7:14](#)]. And we understand the *flower* as the Lord our Savior, who says in the Song of Songs, “I am the *flower* of the field and the lily of the valleys” [[Song 2:1](#)]. In place of *root*, which only the Septuagint translated, the Hebrew text has *geza*, which Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion translated as κορμυον, that is, “trunk.” And they translated *flower*,

<sup>222</sup> The NT interprets this Psalm christologically; cf. [Matt 27:34, 48](#); [Mark 15:36](#); [Luke 23:36](#); [John 19:29](#); [Rom 11:9–0](#); [Acts 1:20](#); [Rev 3:5](#); [13:8](#); [16:1](#); [17:8](#); [20:12, 15](#); [21:27](#).



which in Hebrew is expressed as *nezer*, as “bud,” to show that after the lengthy period of the Babylonian captivity,<sup>223</sup> while no one from the sprout of David possessed the glory of the ancient kingdom, Christ would rise as though *out of* the trunk of Mary and *out of* Mary. Educated Hebrews think that what all churchmen seek and do not find [cf. [Matt 7:7](#)] in the Gospel of Matthew, where it is written “Because he will be called a Nazarene” [[Matt 2:23](#)], has been taken from this passage. But it should be known that *neser* is written here with the Hebrew letter *sade*, the peculiar quality and sound of which—somewhere between *z* and *s*—the Latin language does not express. For it is a hissing sound and is brought forth by a light touch of the tongue with the teeth drawn together. The city Zion is likewise written with this letter. On the other hand, “Nazarenes,” which the Septuagint translates as “sanctified ones,” Symmachus as “separated ones,” is always written with the letter *zai*.

Upon this *flower*, therefore, which *will arise* suddenly from the trunk and *out of the root of Jesse* through the Virgin Mary, *the Spirit of the Lord will rest*, “because in him it pleased *all* the fullness of divinity to dwell bodily” [[Col 1:19](#)],<sup>224</sup> not partially, as in other saints, but in accordance with the Gospel that the Nazarenes read as having been recorded in the Hebrew language: “The *entire* font of the Holy Spirit descended *upon* him.”<sup>225</sup> “But the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” [[2 Cor 3:17](#)].<sup>226</sup> In the same Book of Matthew, we read that what is written in a subsequent passage, “Behold, my child whom I have chosen, my chosen one in whom my soul is pleased; I will put my Spirit upon him, he will bring forth judgment for the Gentiles” [[Matt 12:18](#); cf. [Isa 42:1](#)], refers to the understanding of the Savior on whom the Spirit of the Lord rested, that is, he remained with an eternal indwelling. He did not fly away and descend upon him again, but, according to the testimony of John the Baptist, he remained continually. He says,

I saw the Spirit descending as a dove from heaven and abiding on him, and I did not know him; but the one who sent me to baptize with water, he said to me: “The one upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining in him, he is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.” [[John 1:32–33](#)]

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 62 (81, 13–5).

<sup>224</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (81, 31–4).

<sup>225</sup> In [Contr. Pelag. 3.1.2](#) (NPNF2, 6.472) Jerome seems to identify the “ospel of the Nazarenes” with the “ospel according to the Hebrews.” Edgar Hennecke, [New Testament Apocrypha, vol. 1, Gospels and Related Writings](#), ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), 278–07, rejects Jerome’s identification. [Eusebius, HE 3.25](#), says that this Gospel was placed among the recognized books by some, but he placed it among the disputed books. The high honor in which it was once held owes to the fact that it was believed by the majority of Christians in the fourth century to be the Aramaic version of St. Matthew’s Gospel, referred to by Papias (cf. [Eusebius, HE 3.39](#); [6.25](#); [Irenaeus, Adv Haer 3.1.1](#); Epiphanius, *Haer.* 28.5; 29.9; 30.3, 13, 14). But it was known to have been altered by the Nazarenes and Ebionites, i.e., by the Judaizing Christians who made use of it.

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 62 (82, 2–).

Moreover, in the Gospel of which we made mention above,<sup>227</sup> we have found this written:

But it came about when the Lord had ascended from the water, the entire font of the Holy Spirit descended, and rested upon him, and said to him, “My Son, in all the prophets I was expecting you, that you would come and I would rest on you; for you are my rest, you are my firstborn Son, you who reign forever.”

He who is called the Spirit of the Lord is also the spirit of wisdom, for “all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that has been made” [cf. [John 1:3](#); [14:6](#)].<sup>228</sup> And in the Psalms it is sung, “How great are your works, O Lord. Everything you have made in wisdom” [[Ps 104:24](#)]. And the Apostle writes, “Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God” [[1 Cor 1:24](#)]. Also, one reads in the Proverbs, “God founded the earth on his own wisdom and prepared the heavens in his prudence” [[Prov 3:19](#)]. And just as the same word (*sermo*) of God is called light [cf. [John 1:4](#)] and life [cf. [John 14:6](#)] and resurrection [cf. [John 11:25](#)],<sup>229</sup> so he is called the *spirit of wisdom and of understanding, of counsel, fortitude, knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord*. It is not that he is different in terms of the differences of names, but there is one and the same font and beginning of all virtues. Apart from Christ, therefore, no one can be wise or understanding or a counselor or mighty or educated or full of the fear of God. And one should know this, that the spirit of the *Lord, of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord*, comprises the number seven. This is how the seven eyes on one stone are described in Zechariah [[Zech 3:9](#)]. This *Spirit rests* upon the *rod* and *flower* that arose from *Jesse*, and through this from the stock of David; but in a unique way the spirit of the fear of the Lord filled him for the sake of those who are in need of the fear of the Lord, since they are infants, the fear that perfect love casts outside [cf. [1 John 4:18](#)]; for the one who fears has punishment and is not perfect. This is also why the Apostle says to believers, “For you did not receive a spirit of slavery again unto fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out: ‘Abba, Father’ ” [[Rom 8:15](#)]. We also read in Malachi, “If I am a father, where is my glory? And if I am Lord, where is my fear?” [[Mal 1:6](#)]. In the Psalm there is a song about this fear: “Come, O sons, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord” [[Ps 34:11](#)].

14. ([11:3b–5](#)) *He will not judge according to the sight of the eyes, nor rebuke according to the hearing of the ears, (4) but he will judge the poor with justice, and will rebuke with equity for the meek of the earth, and he will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked; (5) and justice will be the belt of his loins, and faith the girdle of his loins.* We relate these things to the first coming of the Savior; the Jews claim that they will happen at the end of the world. On the other hand, the Septuagint translated it, “He will not judge according to glory nor rebuke according to words, but he will judge the case of the lowly and will rebuke the lowly of the earth.”

For he accepted no one’s person in the judgment [cf. [Gal 2:6](#)],<sup>330</sup> but he said to the scribes, Pharisees, and rulers, “Woe to you, hypocrites” [[Matt 23:13](#)], and, “The kingdom of God will be

<sup>227</sup> I.e., the Gospel of the Nazarenes.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 62 (82, 3–).

<sup>229</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (82, 12–8).

<sup>330</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (82, 26–3, 12).

taken away from you and given to a nation producing its fruit” [Matt 21:43]. He has not chastised “according to words” and *hearing of the ears*; for when they said, “Teacher, we know that you are truthful and you teach the way of God in truth, and it does not matter to you about anyone, for you do not look at the appearance of men” [Matt 22:16, 18], he, knowing their malice, answered, “Why do you tempt me, hypocrites?” and other things similar to these. But the *poor* “in spirit,” to whom belongs “the kingdom of God” [cf. Matt 5:3], he *judged in justice*, and *he rebuked in equity* the *meek* and “lowly” of the earth, when he said to the apostles, Are you also still foolish?” [Matt 15:16], and again, “Do you not yet know or understand?” [Mark 8:17], and specially to Peter, “O little faith, why did you doubt?” [Matt 14:31]. Or at any rate it means that for the sake of the lowly and the meek he was rebuking others who were trying to oppress them.

He has also *struck* all earthly works *with his rod*, or, as the Septuagint translated, “with the word of his mouth,” when he said in the Gospel, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” [Matt 10:34]; and *by the breath of his lips he has slain the wicked*, of whom we read in the ninth Psalm, “You have rebuked the nations, and the *wicked* perished; you have blotted out his name in the age and in the age of ages” [Ps 9:5]. Also the Apostle Paul writes, “Whom the Lord Jesus will *slay with the breath of his mouth*” [2 Thess 2:8].

Now when the *wicked* has been *struck*, the Lord is *girded* with *justice* and truth and *faith*; “for he has become for us wisdom from God and *justice* and sanctification and redemption” [1 Cor 1:30],<sup>331</sup> he who said in the Gospel, “I am the light and the way and the truth” [John 14:6; cf. 8:12], and of whom it is said in the Psalms, “Truth has risen from the earth and *justice* has looked down from the heaven” [Ps 85:11]. This is also why the Apostle exhorts the Ephesians, “Stand firm, then, having your *loins girded* with truth and having put on the breastplate of *justice*” [Eph 6:14]. But if *faith* is read instead of “truth,” the following should be said: that the Lord’s *belt*, with which Jeremiah was also *girded* [cf. Jer 13:1], is the *faith* of believers.

15. (11:6–9) *The wolf will dwell with the lamb and the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the sheep will abide together, and a little child will drive (minabit) them. (7) The calf and the bear will feed; their young ones will rest together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, (8) and the nursing infant will play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child will thrust his hand into the den of the basilisk (reguli). (9) They will not do harm and they will not kill on all my holy mountain, for the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the covering waters of the sea.*

The Jews and our own Judaizers claim that these things also will happen literally. Thus under the splendor of the Messiah, whom they think will come at the end of the world, all beasts will become gentle, and the wolf will put aside its original ferocity and feed together with the lamb, and the other things that we see presently being at odds with each other will act this way with respect to other things. We should ask them this: if everything in the current passage is accepted just as it is written, and nothing refers to the spiritual understanding, in accordance with the following words spoken by the Apostle: “Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ” [Eph 1:3],

<sup>331</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 62 (83, 25–8).

then neither do the “root, rod and flower” [cf. [Isa 11:1](#)] refer to the understanding. Moreover, the “earth struck by the word of God,” and the “wicked” who is “slain by the breath of his lips” [cf. [Isa 11:4](#)] should be understood just as written. Let them also be compelled to demonstrate how the Lord’s “loins” may be “girded” with incorporeal things, “justice” and “truth” [cf. [Isa 11:5](#)]. Moreover, we should ask them this, how is it worthy of the Lord’s majesty that a “wolf and lamb feed together” and a “leopard lie down with a goat” and a “lion eat straw” and a “little child put his hand into the hole of asps,” unless perhaps in accordance with the fables of the poets they will restore to us the golden age of Saturn in which wolves and lambs will feed together and rivers filled with honey wine will flow, and from the leaves of the trees the sweetest honey will drip and everything will be filled with springs of milk.<sup>332</sup> But if they respond that these things will happen in view of the blessedness of the times, so that men may enjoy all good things without harm coming to anyone, let them hear from us that nothing is good except virtue and nothing is evil except vice, since the Psalmist says, “Who is the man who desires life and loves to see good days? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit, turn away from evil and do good” [[Ps 34:12–13](#)]. But even among worldly philosophers, wealth, the health of the body, the abundance of all things, and the things opposite to these, such as poverty, infirmity, and scarcity, are reckoned neither as “good” nor as “evil,” but they are called “indifferent matters.”<sup>333</sup> And this is why the Stoics, who agree with our teaching in many particulars, call nothing good except moral uprightness and virtue. They call nothing evil but baseness. We have said these things briefly to convince the Judaizers among us to snore their way out of their very profound slumber.<sup>334</sup>

However that may be, the interpretation according to the vivifying spirit [cf. [2 Cor 3:6](#)] is easy. For Paul, a *wolf*, who at first persecuted the church and tore it to pieces [cf. [Acts 9:1; 22:19](#)], about whom it was said, “Benjamin is a rapacious wolf” [[Gen 49:27](#); cf. [Phil 3:5](#)], *lived* with a *lamb*, either Ananias, by whom he was baptized [[Acts 9:10–18](#)], or the apostle Peter [cf. [Gal 1:18](#)], to whom it was said, “Feed my lambs” [[John 21:15–16](#); cf. [Jer 13:23](#)]. And the *leopard*, which first did not change its spots [cf. [Jer 13:23](#)], once it was washed in the fountain of the Lord [cf. [Joel 3:18; Zech 13:1](#)], *lay down with the goat*—not the one on the left [[Matt 25:33](#)], but the one that is sacrificed at the Lord’s Passover [[Exod 12:5](#)]. It is also to be noted that the lamb and the goat will not *dwell* and *lie down* with the *wolf* and the *leopard*, but the *wolf* and the *leopard* will imitate the innocence of the *lamb* and the goat.

The *lion* too, previously most ferocious, and the *sheep* and the *calf* will *stay together*, which we observe daily in the church: the rich and the poor, the powerful and the lowly, kings and peasants, stay together and are ruled in the church by *small children*, whom we understand to be the apostles and apostolic men, men who are unskilled in speech but not in knowledge [cf. [2 Cor 11:6](#)]. When they covenanted among themselves by the teaching of the Lord, in such a way that their families also are united, then the saying will be fulfilled: *Their young will rest together*. The *lion*, moreover, will not *eat* meat but *hay*, namely because it is feeding on simple

<sup>332</sup> Cf. [Ovid, Met 1, 111–12](#).

<sup>333</sup> Cf. [Cicero, Fin 3, 49–4](#).

<sup>334</sup> Cf. [Juvenal 1.57](#). On Jerome’s intense animosity toward Christian millennialist teaching, see the introduction.

food. Observe also that it is not the *ox* that will eat meat, but the *lion will eat straw*. I think that *straw* in the Sacred Scriptures refers to the literal meaning of the words, whereas wheat refers to the inner marrow, the meaning that is found in the letter. And it frequently happens that secular men unacquainted with the mysteries feed on the literal reading of the Scriptures. The *infant* also, who is a child with respect to evil [cf. [1 Cor 14:20](#)], *places his hand in the hole of the asp* and puts to flight demons from the possessed bodies of people. But the *one who is weaned* and is not nourished on the milk of infancy, but is now feeding on solid food [cf. [Heb 5:12–14](#)], he *puts his hand in the den of the basilisk*, that is, into the dwelling place of Satan himself, and draws him out of there. This is why power was given to the apostles to tread upon serpents and scorpions and upon all the strength of the enemy [[Luke 10:19](#)].<sup>335</sup> And venomous beasts were previously unable to harm or to kill those who will have lived on God's holy mountain, which means the church, about which [mountain] it is said in the Gospel, "A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden" [[Matt 5:14](#)]. And lest we think in accordance with the error of the Hebrews that this is said about Mount Zion, the mysteries of the gospel proclamation are shown by the little line that follows: *For the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord*. This is what was said more obscurely up above: *The wolf will dwell with the lamb and the leopard will lie down with the goat*. And in accordance with his custom, the prophet's words are expanded upon at the end: *Like the covering waters of the sea*, he says. Just as the waters of the sea cover the depths of the sea, that is, the earth that has been covered by waves, so the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

Likewise the blessed Apostle Peter testifies that he saw this linking of formerly different characters in the linen object that was lowered from the sky that had four corners [cf. [Acts 10:11–12](#)]. We understand this as the four regions of the world [cf. [Isa 11:12](#)]. Thus we recognize the earth filled with the knowledge of God. In that object there were four-footed creatures and *serpents* and beasts and flying creatures of the sky. Consequently what the ark exhibits in the deluge, the church exhibits in the world.

16. ([11:10](#)) *On that day the root of Jesse, who stands as a sign of the peoples, to him the Gentiles will pray and his sepulcher will be glorious.*

Septuagint: "And on that day there will be a root of Jesse, and he that will arise to be a ruler over the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles will hope, and his rest will be honor." For "his rest" in Hebrew, *mnuatho* is recorded, which all have translated in the same way. For "honor" too the Hebrew reads *chabod*, which expresses glory clearly.

Here is the meaning: his death will be *glorious*, so that what the Savior prays in the Gospel was fulfilled: "Father, glorify me with the *glory* that I had with you before the world came to be" [[John 17:5](#)].<sup>336</sup> This was said about his nativity; it was said about the other public mysteries. He went to his death, which is called *rest*, not by the term usually used of mortals, but because in Christ there was perpetual life. But in order to make the meaning clear to the reader, instead of "rest" and "sleeping," we translated with another word, but one with the same meaning: *sepulcher*. At that time, therefore, when the gospel of Christ shines in all the world and the whole earth will have been filled with the knowledge of God [cf. [Isa 11:9](#)], like waters of the sea

<sup>335</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 62 (85, 2–3).

<sup>336</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (85, 30–1).

covering the land [cf. [Isa 11:9](#)], the root of Jesse and he who will arise from his stem will be a *sign for all peoples*, that they might see the *sign* of the Son of Man in heaven [cf. [Matt 24:30](#)], who will have horns in his hands, in which his strength will be hidden [cf. [Hab 3:4](#)]. Thus when he is lifted up, he draws all things to himself [[John 12:32](#)]. Or, as the Septuagint has translated, he will rise from the dead to be ruler over all nations, and all the Gentiles will hope in him.<sup>337</sup> Even Jacob testifies to this using mystical speech concerning the tribe of Judah: “A ruler will not fail from Judah, nor a leader from his thighs, until he comes for whom it has been laid up, and he will be the expectation of the Gentiles” [[Gen 49:10](#)].<sup>338</sup>

17. ([11:11–14](#)) *And it will be in that day, that the Lord will set his hand the second time to possess the remnant of his people, which will be left from the Assyrians, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Ethiopia, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. (12) And he will raise a sign unto the nations, and will assemble the fugitives of Israel, and will gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four regions of the earth. (13) And the jealousy of Ephraim will be taken away, and the enemies of Judah will perish; Ephraim will not envy Judah, and Judah will not fight against Ephraim. (14) And they will fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines through the sea, they together will plunder the sons of the east; both Edom and Moab and the sons of Ammon will be obedient to the command of their hand.*

*In that day*, that is, at the time of which it was also spoken above, when the root of Jesse will arise as a sign for the peoples [cf. [Isa 11:10](#)], or to be lord of the Gentiles, the Lord *will set his hand a second time*. Thus by no means should we understand this the way our Judaizers do, that when the fullness of the Gentiles will have entered, all Israel is saved at that time [cf. [Rom 11:25–26](#)], at the end of the world; but all these things pertain to the first advent.<sup>339</sup> For since he speaks only of a single *day* both here and above [cf. [Isa 11:10](#)], we cannot refer one passage to the first advent and the other to the second. Otherwise, the events that follow and those that have preceded would not refer to Christ, whom the Jews contend has not yet come, but will come in the future. After the calling of the Gentiles, therefore, who were formerly reckoned as the tail [cf. [Deut 28:13, 44](#)], Israel will be reputed as the tail, that the Lord may *set his hand a second time* and take possession of the *remnant of his people*, about whom we also read above, that not all Israel but that remnant is to be saved [cf. [Isa 10:22](#)]. They remained from the Assyrians and from Egypt and from various surrounding nations.

For at first from the Jews the twelve apostles believed in the Lord [cf. [Matt 10:2](#)]; then seventy [cf. [Luke 10:1](#)], 120 souls [[Acts 1:15](#)], five hundred to whom the Lord appeared at one time, when they were gathered together [cf. [1 Cor 15:6](#)]; then three thousand [cf. [Acts 2:41](#)] and five thousand [cf. [Acts 4:4](#)].<sup>440</sup> James too says to the Apostle Paul, who was himself a part of the

<sup>337</sup> Jerome fails to mention that St. Paul cites the LXX version of [Isa 11:10](#) in [Rom 15:12](#) (cf. [Matt 12:21](#)).

<sup>338</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 62 (85, 20–2).

<sup>339</sup> Jerome’s interpretation contradicts St. Paul and runs contrary to Origen’s interpretation as well. See J. Cohen, “[The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation: Romans 11:25–6 in Patristic and Medieval Exegesis](#),” *Harvard Theological Review* (2005): 247–1.

<sup>440</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 63 (87, 2–8, 14).



remnant [cf. [Rom 11:1](#)], “Do you see, brother, how many thousands of believing Jews there are? All these are zealous for the law” [[Acts 21:20](#)]. And in the same book we read, “Now there were Jews dwelling in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven” [[Acts 2:5](#)], who were all astonished and said,

Are these men not Galileans? How is it that we have heard each in our language in which we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia and Syria and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Egypt, and Libya and Cyrene, and strangers from Rome, Jews also, and proselytes, Cretans, and Arabs, we have heard them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. [[Acts 2:7–11](#)]

From all these nations, therefore, the remnant of Israel will be saved through the apostles.

Church history hands down the tradition that the apostles were dispersed into the whole world and preached,<sup>441</sup> so that some reached the Persians and Indians, and Ethiopia surrendered to God [cf. [Ps 68:31](#)], and beyond the rivers of Ethiopia from where gifts were brought to Christ [cf. [Zeph 3:10](#)]. And lest he should seem to be indicating only the peoples of the East, he adds the remaining things as well: *and from the islands of the sea*. Now by *islands of the sea* he is indicating the region of the West, which is enclosed by the circumference of the ocean.

Therefore *he will raise the sign* of the cross among all nations, and from the synagogues of the Jews, *he will gather peoples* of Israel first. Consequently the apostles have fulfilled the command of the Savior, who had said, “Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” [[Matt 10:6](#)]. After all, Paul too says to the unbelievers from the Jews, “It was first necessary to speak the word of God to you, but since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we are turning to the Gentiles, as the Lord has commanded us” [[Acts 13:46–47](#)]. Now he signifies *the four regions*, east and west, south and north, in order that the calling of the world may be shown through these things. At that time, Isaiah says, by no means will Ephraim and Judah be enemies, though now, while I prophesy, they are far apart from each other, separated by animosity and ill will. But according to the prophecy of Ezekiel, two rods will be united into one rod [cf. [Ezek 37:16–17](#)], and in the church of Christ those who had previously been separated will be joined, so that they sweat with common effort among the nations and *fly through the sea on the shoulders of the Philistines*, that is, they preach first to the seacoasts of Palestine, and *through the sea* by a winged course they move on to other nations. Or, according to the Septuagint translators, “And they will fly in the ships of the foreign born and will at the same time plunder the sea.” We may understand this from the example of the one Apostle Paul, who was carried by the “ships of the foreign born” through Pamphylia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, and various islands and provinces to Italy as well, and, as he himself writes, to Spain [cf. [Rom 15:24, 28](#)]. Therefore *Ephraim* and *Judah*, that is, those of the Jews who have believed in Christ from the twelve tribes, *will together plunder* the East and they will extend their hands to *Edom* and *Moab*. This is in accordance with what Christ said mystically under the persona of David: “I will extend my shoe against Edom, the foreign born will serve me” [[Ps 60:8](#)]. For at the time

<sup>441</sup> Cf. [Eusebius, HE 3.1.1; 5.10.3; Eus Is 63 \(89, 3–\)](#).

when Isaiah was prophesying, these nations were hostile to the Jewish people. On that account he says now that after the root of Jesse has risen to rule over the nations [cf. [Isa 11:10](#)] and has raised the standard of the cross for the sake of the salvation of the whole world, then even Edom and Moab and the sons of Ammon, that is to say, the whole breadth of Arabia, will surrender to the apostles, and churches of Christ will be raised up in places of idolatry.

18. ([11:15–16](#)) *And the Lord will lay waste the tongue of the sea of Egypt, and will lift up his hand over the river in the strength of his Spirit and he will strike it in the seven streams, so that they may pass through it in their shoes. (16) And there will be a way for the remnant of my people, which will be left from the Assyrians, as there was for Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.*

Just as Edom, Moab, and the sons of Ammon [cf. [Isa 11:14](#)] will surrender to the apostles, to obey the gospel proclamation, so the Lord himself, who accomplished these things in his apostles, *will lay waste* not the “sea,” according to the Septuagint, but the *tongue of the sea of Egypt*, according to the Hebrew, [the tongue] which previously was blaspheming against the Lord and presided over superstition in Egypt. This is why we read in the Psalms, “This great and spacious sea, there are reptiles there beyond numbering” [[Ps 104:25](#)]. He adds to this, “That dragon that you formed to play around with it” [[Ps 104:26](#)]. He *will lay waste*, then, or kill, that is *αναθεματισει*, as Theodotion, Aquila, and Symmachus have translated, *the tongue of the sea of Egypt*, and he will *raise his hand over the river of Egypt in the strength of his Spirit*, or by a most violent spirit, which we understand as the kingdom of the Romans.<sup>442</sup> For when Caesar Augustus was ruling, when the flower from the root arose [cf. [Isa 11:1](#)] and the first census was made in the Roman world [cf. [Luke 2:1–2](#)], first the very powerful kingdom of the Egyptians, which had continued for many ages, was destroyed by the death of Cleopatra.<sup>443</sup> The Egyptian river was *struck in its seven streams*, or in seven “valleys”; for the Nile of many waters that previously flowed in one channel and was impassible was divided and cut into seven very low valleys and streams. Thus it could be crossed with shod feet.

Now tropologically, this signifies that the nation of the Egyptians was devoted to idolatry and to the most worthless superstitions, so much so that they consecrated to the divine name hawks, owls, dogs, goats, and donkeys. It divided up the infinite power of its kingdom by means of individual judges of the Roman Empire.<sup>444</sup> Thus Thebais has one judge, Libya another, Pentapolis another, Egypt another, Alexandria another, and the various regions that the Egyptians call *votouç*. Now metaphorically the Nile is divided into parts and cut into streams for this reason, so that the word of the gospel could run in different directions without any hindrance and reach ultimately to the people of Egypt. And just as the Red Sea was dried up at the time of Moses,<sup>445</sup> so that the people escaped from Egypt, so on the other hand the rivers of Egypt will be dried up so that a remnant of the people of God, which will be saved from the

<sup>442</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 64 (91, 23–4).

<sup>443</sup> Cleopatra (70–0 BC) was daughter of the Macedonian King Ptolemy Auletes of Egypt and joint heir to the throne with her brother. She became mistress to Julius Caesar in 48, then to Antony. She killed herself after Antony’ defeat by Octavian (Augustus).

<sup>444</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 64 (91, 26–0).

<sup>445</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (90, 23–1, 5).

Assyrians and from various nations, may pass into Egypt, not fleeing from it, but capturing and trampling it under their feet. Let the wise Christian reader hold to this rule for the prophetic promises, that the things that the Jews and our own Judaizers (or rather, they are not our own)<sup>446</sup> claim will happen in a fleshly way, let us show that it has already transpired spiritually. Otherwise, according to the Apostle we may be compelled by an occasion of this sort to Judaize about fables and unsolvable questions [cf. [1 Tim 1:4](#)].

19. ([12:1–2](#)) *And you will say in that day, “I will confess to you, O Lord, for you were angry with me; your fury is turned away, and you have comforted (consolatus) me. (2) Behold, God my savior, I will act confidently and will not fear, because the Lord God is my strength and my praise, and he has become my salvation.”*

You who had previously said in the desert, when you came up out of the land of Egypt and the Red Sea was dried up, “Let us sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously magnificent” [[Exod 15:1](#)], and the rest, now that the tongue of the sea of Egypt has been struck and its river has dried up, cut up, and laid low [cf. [Isa 11:15](#)], you glorify the Lord and say, *I will confess to you, O Lord, because I who deserved your anger and fury have attained mercy; for you are my savior, that is, Jesus, and I will not have confidence in idols, nor will I fear things that are not to be feared, but you are my strength and my praise, you who have become my salvation.*<sup>447</sup> Let the most depraved heresy hear that he *has become* the Lord for those who are saved and those for whom he was not the Lord before. Consequently, we understand creation and *becoming (factura)* in the Scriptures not always as the establishment of those things that did not exist before [cf. [1 Cor 1:28](#)], but as, occasionally, grace, for those who merited that he become their God.<sup>448</sup>

20. ([12:3](#)) *You will draw waters with joy out of the Savior’s fountains.*

The one whom he above called “Emmanuel” [cf. [Isa 7:14](#)], then “take away the spoils, hasten to plunder” [cf. [Isa 8:3](#)], and other terms [cf. [Isa 9:6](#)], he now calls *Savior*, lest there appear to be another besides him whom Gabriel announced to the Virgin, saying, “And you will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people” [[Matt 1:21](#); [Luke 1:31](#)]. He also prophesies that *waters* must be *drawn out of his fountains*—not out of the waters of the rivers of Egypt, which were struck [cf. [Isa 11:15](#); cf. [Exod 7:20](#)], nor out of the waters of the rivers of Rezin [cf. [Isa 8:6](#)], but out of the fountains of Jesus, for this is what *savior* expresses in the Hebrew language. This is why Jesus himself cried out in the Gospel, “Let anyone who thirsts come to me, and let anyone who believes in me drink; as the Scripture has said, ‘Rivers of living *water* will flow from his belly.’ This,” says the evangelist, “he said of the Holy Spirit, whom those who believed in him were about to receive” [[John 7:37–39](#)].<sup>449</sup> And in another Gospel<sup>550</sup> he says, “The one who drinks from the water that I will give him will never thirst again, for the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life” [[John 4:13–14](#)]. We should

<sup>446</sup> Excessive polemic against Christian chiliasm pervades this commentary.

<sup>447</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 64 (92, 10–8); *Bas Is* 253 (564BC).

<sup>448</sup> I believe this is directed against Valentinian Gnosticism, which attributed salvation to good and evil natures and denied both human and divine freedom in the process of salvation.

<sup>449</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 64 (93, 1–0).

<sup>550</sup> A slip of the pen; the reference is found in the same Gospel.

understand the *Savior's fountains* to be the Gospel teaching, about which we read in the sixty-seventh Psalm, "In the churches bless God the Lord, from the fountains of Israel" [[Ps 68:26](#)].

21. ([12:4-5](#)) *And you will say in that day, "Confess to the Lord and call upon his name, make his works known among the people, remember that his name is high. (5) Sing to the Lord, for he has done great things; announce this in all the earth."*

The apostles and the remnant of Israel are commanding these things to those who have believed from the Gentiles, that they *confess to the Lord* alone, and *call upon his name*, after they have forsaken their idols. Let them declare all *his works* to the unbelievers, that they may know that he alone is *exalted*, to whom one must *sing* that *he has done great things*, and let his mercy be declared *in all the earth*.

22. ([12:6](#)) *"Rejoice and praise, O habitation of Zion, for great is he that is in your midst, the Holy One of Israel."*

First one should speak according to the letter. *O habitation of Zion, rejoice and praise* your God. For he who previously seemed to be your God and was confined to the small corners of the land of Judea, has now filled the whole earth with his knowledge [cf. [Isa 11:9](#)]. By rising from death, he reigns over the Gentiles, and the nations pray to him and adore him [cf. [Isa 11:10](#)], at any rate in such a way that he puts out his hand a second time to take possession of what is the remnant of his people [cf. [Isa 11:11](#)], and to assemble the refugees of Israel and gather from the four regions of the earth those of Judah who have been scattered [cf. [Isa 11:12](#)]. For a seed bed of the gospel has proceeded from the fountains of Israel through the apostles who were from the Jews.

But it is better that we interpret *Zion*, that is, "watchtower" located on the heights, of the church, of which the fiftieth Psalm also sings, "Do kindness in your good will to Zion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be rebuilt" [[Ps 51:18-19](#)], so that an acceptable sacrifice of justice to the Lord may be made in it, offerings and holocausts, and the calf that the most clement father sacrificed for his penitent son [cf. [Luke 15:23](#)].

## [THE FIFTH BOOK]

1. It has been quite a few years since I was asked by a man of sacred memory, the bishop Amabilis,<sup>11</sup> to write on the ten visions of Isaiah.<sup>22</sup> Due to time constraints, I touched upon them one by one, briefly, discussing whatever occurred to me, but dealing only with the history, which was his request. Now you are compelling me, φιλοπονωτατη<sup>33</sup> Eustochium, to write a commentary on the entire prophet, and meanwhile, by means of your prayers, we have reached Babylon [cf. [Isa 13:1](#)], which is the first of the ten previously mentioned visions. Yet it seemed redundant to me, either to reiterate the same things all over again, or to publish diverse views within a single work. Therefore, this [earlier exposition], which was once published on its own, will become the fifth book of my commentary on Isaiah. Once I have carefully worked through the book all the way to the end, I will attack the beginning of the sixth book in accordance with tropology, and while you pray the same things to the Lord, I will pursue the summit of the spiritual understanding.

To Bishop Amabilis concerning the ten visions in the prophet Isaiah:

Until now, Father Amabilis, the very pillar and name of love,<sup>44</sup> and the most lovable to me of all whom the earth has brought forth, you demanded in a letter that I explain to you in a historical exposition the ten visions in Isaiah, which are extremely obscure. I am to do so leaving aside the works of our own commentators, who, following a variety of opinions, have produced many volumes, that I might open up the Hebrew truth.<sup>55</sup> And you reminded me very often, as I

1 Amabilis, the bishop of an unknown Gallic see, was the recipient of Jerome' literal commentary on the visions of Isaiah ([Isa 13–3](#)) in 397. He is typically identified as a Pannonian by nationality on the evidence that in 397, Heraclius carried back a letter to Castricianus (Castrutius), a blind man whom Jerome identifies as a Pannonian in his letter 68 to him. Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 71.7](#) to Lucinius; M. Hale Williams, [The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 246n18; J. N. D. Kelly, [Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies](#) (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 220.

2 This refers to [Isa 13–3](#). The ten "isions" or "urdens" are: 1) [13:1](#), Babylon; 2) [14:28–9](#), Philistia; 3) [15:1](#), Moab; 4) [17:1](#), Damascus; 5) [19:1](#), Egypt; 6) [21:1](#), the deserted sea; 7) [21:11](#), Duma; 8) [21:13](#), Arabia; 9) [22:1](#), valley of vision; and 10) [23:1](#), Tyre.

3 This is the superlative form of the adjective "abor loving" or "xacting," thus "ery exacting."

4 The adjective *amabilis*, "oveable," derives from *amare*, "o love."

5 Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book*, 91–2, observes that Jerome uses the term *Hebrew truth* here to refer to material that was clearly interpretive, not textual. It refers to everything that is not part of the Greek Christian exegetical tradition. Citing Jerome, *Comm. in Zach* 2.8.526, she adds, "hese passages suggest that wherever Jerome invokes the *Hebraica veritas* in

was reconsidering and postponing for another time the very troublesome kind of explanation. But this year you sent our son Heraclius<sup>66</sup> the deacon, who called me to court with a clenched fist and demanded on the spot what had been promised. What then was I to do? Should I not approach a work on which the most erudite men exerted themselves—I speak of Origen and Eusebius Pamphilus<sup>77</sup>? One of them wanders about in the open spaces of allegory.<sup>88</sup> His native genius makes mysteries of the church by translating and interpreting all the names. The other promises a historical exposition in the title,<sup>99</sup> but meanwhile he forgets his plan and falls into the tenets of Origen. Or should I be silent and say openly that I am not familiar with that sort of exposition? And how can I convince you that I was no more able than unwilling, the former of which springs from weakness, the latter from pride. Prompted by these causes, I have preferred that you make a request of my ability rather than of my will, and I will briefly annotate what I have learned, laying down the foundations of the Scriptures. For the rest, if either you wish it, or there is time and Christ assents to our will, we must build the spiritual edifice upon these foundations, in order to point to the perfect adornment of the church by setting in place a roof. You have proposed from Isaiah the vision of Babylon [cf. [Isa 13:1](#)], Philistia [cf. [Isa 14:28–29](#)], Moab [cf. [Isa 15:1](#)], Damascus [cf. [Isa 17:1](#)], Egypt [cf. [Isa 19:1](#)], the deserted sea [cf. [Isa 21:1](#)], Edom [cf. [Isa 21:11](#)], Arabia [cf. [Isa 21:13](#)], the valley of vision [cf. [Isa 22:1](#)], and Tyre [cf. [Isa 23:1](#)]. Should I endeavor to explain these in any detail, many books would be required, and the voyage of my taskmaster would be delayed by another year. And so, as you wish, I will apply concise little sentences to each of these testimonies, not so much to set forth what I think, as to scatter in a few words things that are worth your thinking about. We are dictating these things, not writing them. The oration flows along (*currente*) while the hand of the stenographers keeps moving (*currit*). For we do not want our own statements to be lauded, but the prophet's to be understood. We do not lay claim to elegant style, but we seek the knowledge of the Scriptures. Let us begin, then, with Babylon.

2. ([13:1](#)) *The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.* The Hebrew word *messā* can be understood either as *burden* or “weight,” and wherever this word is chosen, what is said is full of threats.<sup>110</sup> This is why I am surprised that the Septuagint translators wanted to record

a context that does not limit the phrase to a narrowly textual meaning, we ought to consider the possibility that he was thinking not of the Hebrew text alone but of the entire arena of scriptural interpretation in which he believed the Jews to be specially expert.”

6 Heraclius, a deacon of Pannonia, was the bearer of letters to St. Jerome, then at Bethlehem. In 397 he was sent by Castrutius, who had intended to go to Bethlehem, but through old age and blindness could get no further than Cissa. He was also sent by Amabilis, who urged Jerome many times by letters to interpret for him the visions of Isaiah. Receiving no reply, Amabilis enforced his request by the personal agency of Heraclius.

7 Lit., Pamphilus' Eusebius. Eusebius bishop of Caesarea adopted the epithet “amphilus” after his priest-friend was martyred in 310.

8 This would refer to Origen.

9 See bk. [18](#), n. 2.

<sup>110</sup> According to E. J. Young, [The Book of Isaiah](#), 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965–2), [1:408](#)n1, the threatening element is not necessarily present when this word is used.



“vision” in the context of this sad affair; but I will say more about this elsewhere. Now let us investigate what we have begun.

Babylon was the metropolis of the Chaldeans, whose King Nebuchadnezzar conquered all the nations down to Ethiopia and, among the others, laid waste to Judea as well. After a prolonged siege he captured Jerusalem in the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, whom he led as a captive to Antioch, which was called Riblah at the time [cf. [2 Kgs 25:1–7](#)]. And there, when Zedekiah’s sons were killed in the presence of their father, he commanded his eyes to be put out and he sent him blinded in a cage and dragged him to Babylon like a wild beast. Consequently, the prophecy was fulfilled that sang, “You will enter Babylon and you will not see it” [[Jer 34:3](#)]. Therefore, [here] as a consolation to the Jewish people,<sup>111</sup> the demise of Babylon is being predicted, that just as Nineveh the metropolis of the Assyrians, whose kings Pul [cf. [2 Kgs 15:19](#)], Tiglath-Pileser [cf. [2 Kgs 15:29](#)], Shalmaneser [cf. [2 Kgs 17:3](#); [18:9](#)], and Sennacherib [cf. [2 Kgs 18:13](#)] had captured the ten tribes, was overthrown while Chaldea was wreaking its destruction, so likewise the city of Babylon, which will become haughty against God, is overthrown by the violence of the Medes and Persians.

3. ([13:2a](#)) *Upon the gloomy mountain lift up a standard, exalt the voice, raise the hand.*

We should understand<sup>112</sup> the *gloomy*, or dark, *mountain*, which in Hebrew is expressed as *nesphe*, as referring to Babylon on account of its pride. Those are the dark *mountains* that forebode grief and gloom, of which even Jeremiah says, “Give glory to the Lord your God, before your feet stumble on the dark mountains” [[Jer 13:16](#)]. Moreover, it is commanded either to angels or any servants that the captivity of Babylon is declared to be coming by God’s command [cf. [Isa 13:3a](#)] and by the *raised hand* of messengers.<sup>113</sup>

4. ([13:2b–3](#)) *And let the rulers go into the gates. (3) I have commanded my sanctified ones, and have called my strong ones in my wrath, those who rejoice in my glory.*

Eusebius<sup>114</sup> interprets the *rulers* and “giants,” in accordance with the Septuagint translators as referring to the angelic powers and wicked demons who were sent to overthrow Babylon. But we are investigating the progression of history and say that they are the Medes, about whom he testifies quite openly in what follows, saying, “Behold, I will raise up the Medes against them, who do not seek silver and do not desire gold” [[Isa 13:17](#)]. It is not surprising if he calls the Medes *sanctified* for the overthrow of Babylon, since through Jeremiah himself he calls Nebuchadnezzar his “servant” [cf. [Jer 25:9](#); [27:6](#); [43:10](#)] and “dove” [cf. [Jer 25:38](#); [46:16](#); [50:16](#)]. For he was *servicing* God’s command by destroying the transgressing Jerusalem. Moreover, what he says, *my strong ones* and *those who rejoice in my glory*, shows that they did not overthrow the power of so lofty a kingdom by their own strength, but by the *wrath* of God.

5. ([13:4–5](#)) *The voice of a multitude in the mountains, as it were of crowds of people, the voice of the sound of kings, of nations gathered together. The Lord of hosts has given charge to the troops of war, (5) to those coming from a land far off, from the end of heaven, the Lord and the vessels of his fury, to destroy the whole land (omnem terram).*

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 255 (586C).

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 256 (569B).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 256 (569A).

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 65 (96, 18–2; 95, 12–4); *Bas Is* 258 (572C–73A).

The attack of the Medes and Persians is being described, that with the Lord at the head of their army, aided by many auxiliary troops gathered together with them, they are coming to devastate Babylon, *to destroy the whole land*, not that they will devastate the whole world (*totum orbem*), but the *whole land* Babylon and of the Chaldeans. For it is an idiom of Holy Scripture to signify the *whole land* of that province of which one is speaking. Some fail to understand this and refer this to the overthrow of all the lands [of the world].

6. (13:6) *Howl, because the day of the Lord is near; it will come as a destruction from the Lord.*

He makes an apostrophe<sup>115</sup> to the people of the Chaldeans, that the coming evils should be greeted with tears, and they may not be in doubt about the ruin of the city, when the Lord comes as a destroyer.

7. (13:7) *Therefore all hands will be weakened, and every human heart will melt (8) and will be broken. Writhing and pain will take hold; they will be in pain as a woman in labor. Everyone will be amazed at his neighbor; their countenances will be as faces burnt.*

This does not require an explanation, but briefly what is being revealed is that such a great weight of evils is pressing down that the *hands* of the fighters of Babylon are *weakened*, their *heart* languishes with fear, the *pain of women in labor* causes their insides to *writhe*, and *everyone* seeks for another's help, wearing a *countenance* that is ghastly and pale; for it is natural for us to think that others are wiser when evils are imminent.

8. (13:9) *Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel and full of indignation, wrath, and fury, to make the land a desolation, and to destroy its sinners out of it.*

He calls the *day cruel*, not by its own merit, but by that of the people. For that which slays those who are cruel is not cruel, but it *seems* to be *cruel* to those who experience it. For even a thief hung on gallows thinks that the judge is *cruel*. And likewise, the *desolation* and devastation of the land of Babylon is being announced, and the cause of the devastation is being explained, that all these things are happening because of its inhabitants.

9. (13:10) *For the stars of heaven and their brightness will not display their light, the sun has been darkened in its rising, and the moon will not shine with her light.* The Septuagint translated the Hebrew word *chsile* "Orion." The Hebrew man whose teaching I enjoyed translated it "Arcturus."<sup>116</sup> We have used the general expression *stars*, following Symmachus.

Now the meaning is that when the cruel day of the Lord comes [cf. [Isa 13:9](#)], and his fury lays everything waste, all things will grow dark for mortals, as a consequence of the extent of their fear, and the very sun, moon, and twinkling stars would appear to deny their own brightness [cf. [Isa 50:3](#)]. For this reason even the sky is clothed with sackcloth, namely because darkness covers everything, and with evils bearing down, men think nothing else but what the mind forces them to see.

10. (13:11) *And I will visit upon the evils of the world, and against the wicked for their iniquity, and I will make the pride of the infidels cease, and I will bring down the arrogance of the mighty.*

Both on the basis of this passage and of the one higher up, where it is written that the sun

<sup>115</sup> See n. at [1.50](#).

<sup>116</sup> That is, the brightest star in the constellation Boötes.

darkens in its rising and the moon is filled with darkness and the stars withdraw their light and the iniquity of the whole world is visited [cf. [Isa 13:10](#)], some think the prediction does not concern the ruin of Babylon but the consummation of the world, especially since according to the things above, Babylon must be understood also as the “world,” which is expressed in Hebrew as *thebel* and in Greek as ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ. For in our language ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ expresses “inhabited,” and Babylon is called “inhabited” on account of its huge number of people. Thus where previously there had been an innumerable throng of people, there is found destruction and a dwelling place for wild beasts.

11. ([13:12](#)) *A man will be more precious than gold, and a human being than the finest of gold.*

The reason God visits the ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ [cf. [Isa 13:11](#)], that is, the evils of Babylon, is clear, that it may be reduced to a desolation, deserted of its inhabitants. Now all that is rare is called *precious*, just as above we read according to history that on account of the scarcity of men, seven women lay hold of one man, saying, “We will eat our bread and be covered with our clothing, only let your name be invoked over us; take away our reproach” [[Isa 4:1](#)]. Also, in the Book of Samuel, the following is contained: “The word of the Lord was *precious* in those days” [[1 Sam 3:1](#)], that is, rare. Note that in the Hebrew *phaz* is written for the general term *gold*, and *Ophir* for *finest gold*.

12. ([13:13](#)) *For this, I will trouble the heaven, and the earth will be moved out of her place, because of the indignation of the Lord of hosts and because of the day of the wrath of his fury.*

We should either understand this in the same sense in which above we explained the stars, sun, moon, and world, or we should understand it hyperbolically, that at the indignation of the Lord both the heaven is saddened and the earth is moved; all the elements too recognize the Creator’s wrath.

13. ([13:14a](#)) *And it will be as a doe fleeing, and as a sheep, and there will be none to gather them together.*

He means the Babylonian and Chaldean, that he is so panicked by the invasion of Medes and Persians that he *flees* like a *doe* at the roar of a lion and like a *sheep* at the howl of a wolf. He has no defender, or ruler whose command he may follow.

14. ([13:14b](#)) *Everyone will turn to his own people, and each will flee to his own land.*

After Babylon is captured and the enemy’s army has passed through its gates, all the auxiliary troops and squadrons from various nations, who had previously defended the city, will return to their own provinces.

15. ([13:15](#)) *Everyone that will be found will be slain, and whoever comes to their aid will fall by the sword.*

The one who has not escaped will be struck by the edge of the sword; but whoever wants to resist or turn back will bring so little profit to the captured city that he himself will also be shedding his own blood.

16. ([13:16](#)) *They will dash their infants before their eyes; their houses will be pillaged, and their wives will be violated.*

This is what David prophesies by the Spirit [cf. [Matt 22:43](#)]: “O wretched daughter of Babylon, blessed is he who will repay you your payment which you have repaid us. Blessed is he

who will take and dash your little ones against the rock!" [Ps 137:8–9]. The devastation of the city and the savageness of the victors will be so great that it does not spare those who are of the innocent age of life. All the wealth of their homes is *pillaged*, and the chastity of *wives* is *violated* in the sight of the husband.

17. (13:17) *Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, who do not seek silver, nor desire gold.*

What was concealed is out in the open: by no means are the “mighty ones” and the “giants” [cf. Isa 13:3] to be understood as angels and demons,<sup>117</sup> but they are the nation of the Medes, whose first ruler Darius destroyed the empire of the Babylonians, when Belshazzar (*Balthasar*), the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar and son of Evilmerodach [cf. 2 Kgs 25:27–30; Jer 52:31], was slain [cf. Dan 5:30–31].<sup>118</sup> But he writes that the cruelty of the Medes and Persians is so great that because of their passion for shedding blood, they treat gold and silver with contempt, and they regard wealth that is offered as dirt.

18. (13:18) *but with their arrows they will kill the children, and will have no pity upon the nursing infants of the womb, and their eye will not spare their sons.*

Children will be killed and their wounds will be the length of their bodies; pregnant women will have their wombs cut open, their infants torn out; and the cruel victor will kill babies pressed to their mother’s breast.

19. (13:19) *And that Babylon, glorious among kingdoms, the famous pride of the Chaldeans, will be even as God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. (20) It will no more be inhabited unto the end, and it will not be founded unto generation and generation;*

We have heard “Medes” [Isa 13:17], we have heard *Babylon*, we have heard *the famous pride of the Chaldeans*; we do not want to understand what was, and we are seeking to hear what was not.<sup>119</sup> And we say this not in order to condemn tropological interpretation, but in order to say that the spiritual interpretation needs to follow the progression of history, because very many ignorantly wander about in the Scriptures in madness and error. The prophecy of Babylon is fulfilled, therefore, up to the present day, and just as *God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah* [cf. Gen 19:24], so also that city has been overthrown and is uninhabited forever. For in its place they made Seleucia and Ctesiphon *famous* cities of the Persians.

20. (13:20c–22) *neither will the Arabian pitch his tents there, nor will shepherds rest there, (21) but there will be wild beasts there, and their houses will be filled with serpents, and ostriches will dwell there, and the hairy ones will dance there, (22) and owls will answer in its*

<sup>117</sup> This was Eusebius’ interpretation, as he explains in 13.2b– above.

<sup>118</sup> In his *Commentary on Daniel* 5.1, Jerome explains that Belshazzar was not the son of Nebuchadnezzar, as readers commonly imagine; but according to Berosus, who wrote the history of the Chaldeans, and also Josephus, who follows Berosus, after Nebuchadnezzar’ reign of forty-three years, a son named Evil-merodach succeeded to his throne. Cf. Jer 52:31. Josephus likewise reports, Jerome continues, that after the death of Evil-merodach, his son [actually his brother-in-law] Neriglissar succeeded to his father’ throne; after whom in turn came his son Labosordach. Upon the latter’ death, his son, Belshazzar, obtained the kingdom. G. Archer notes that Jerome is not aware of Belshazzar’ father, Nabonidus.

<sup>119</sup> I believe that Jerome is still reproaching Eusebius’ symbolic interpretation of this passage.

*shrines, and sirens in the temples of pleasure.*

Babylon will be devastated and deserted to such an extent that it will not even be usable for pasturing herds and livestock. For the *Arabian* and the Saracen will not *pitch tents there, nor will shepherds*, weary from their labor of tracking their flocks, *rest*, but in the midst of the broken-down walls and narrow places of the ancient ruins, *siim* will dwell, which the Septuagint alone translated “wild beasts.”<sup>220</sup> The others [translated it] by the very term that is written in Hebrew, meaning that kinds of demons or phantasms are to be understood. *And the houses will be filled*, he says, as we have expressed it, *with serpents*; as Aquila translated, “with monsters (*typhonibus*).”<sup>221</sup> Symmachus wrote, *ohim*, expressing the Hebrew word itself. But the Septuagint and Theodotion translated it, “howls” or “sounds.” Moreover, they understand what follows, *Hairy ones will dance there*, either as “incubuses,” “satyrs,” or certain “wildmen,” which some call silly “fauns,”<sup>222</sup> or a kind of demon. For *owls* too,<sup>223</sup> everyone translated by means of the Hebrew word itself, *hihim*; only the Septuagint translated it “donkey-centaurs.” Now “sirens” are called *thennim*, which we will interpret either as demons, or as some kind of monster, or possibly as great serpents, which have crests and fly. By means of all of this, the signs of devastation and desolation are being shown, because the depopulating of the once extremely powerful city is so great that, owing to the multitude of demons and wild beasts, not one shepherd, that is, a seeker of the desert, dares to enter into it. We have learned from a certain Elamite<sup>224</sup> brother, who came from those regions [and is now living as a monk in Jerusalem, that there are royal hunting shows in Babylon and that wild beasts of every sort are confined within the perimeter of its walls only].<sup>225</sup>

21. (14:1a) *It is near, so that her time is coming, and her days will not be prolonged.*

He is saying that the *time* is approaching when it must be captured by the enemy. For after the captivity of Jerusalem, with not much time in between, it was devastated by the Medes and Persians.

22. (14:1b) *For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose out of Israel, and will make them rest upon their own ground.*

Zephaniah speaks in greater detail about this: “Give praise, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel, be glad and rejoice with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem; for the Lord has taken away your judgment, he has turned away your enemies” [Zeph 3:14–15]. Now he is signifying the time when Cyrus king of the Persians permitted the captive people to return to Jerusalem.<sup>226</sup> Read the books of Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah, when the altar, temple, and walls of the city were built during the time of Zerubbabel, Jeshua the high priest, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 67 (100, 22–4).

<sup>221</sup> Typhoeus, a giant struck by lightning by Jupiter and buried under Mt. Aetna.

<sup>222</sup> Lit., “hose associated with figs.” *L & S* suggests that Jerome has called them this on account of their rank luxuriance.

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 274 (601A).

<sup>224</sup> Elam was the ancient kingdom of southwest Asia at the head of the Persian Gulf and east of Babylon.

<sup>225</sup> The bracketed text is missing from the AGLB edition. I supplied it from the CCSL edition.

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 68 (100, 33–4).

23. ([14:1c-2](#)) *And the stranger will be joined with them, and will adhere to the house of Jacob. (2) And the people will take them, and bring them into their place, and the house of Israel will possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids; and they will take captive those who had taken them captive, and will subdue their oppressors.*

We surmise that many from various nations came with the Jewish people to Jerusalem, believing in the God of Israel, and abandoning their deceitful idols. Now there is no doubt that they were restored by means of the king's letter, and that they received gifts and expenses for the temple [cf. [Ezra 1:3-5](#); [Hag 1:2-14](#); [Zech 1:16](#)]. The understanding seems to be constrained, how on this ground [cf. [Isa 14:1b](#)] *Israel possessed their former victors in the land of the Lord, and how they subdued their oppressors and held them for slaves and maidservants, unless perhaps we understand it as synecdoche, the whole from the part:*<sup>227</sup> that afterward they had such great blessedness that from the various nations around them as well they acquired for themselves families of slaves and maidservants. It can also be understood in the times of Ahasuerus (*Asueri*) [cf. [Esth 1:1](#)], when Israel slaughtered the enemy's army after Holofernes had been killed [cf. [Jdt 13:14](#); [15:5-7](#)].<sup>228</sup> Now the reason I am sticking to the letter and eating the dust (*terram*), in the manner of the serpent [cf. [Gen 3:14](#)], is due to your will, who wanted to hear only a historical interpretation.<sup>229</sup>

24. ([14:3-4a](#)) *And it will come to pass in that day, that when God has given you rest from your labor, and from your vexation, and from the hard bondage with which you served before, (4) you will take up this parable against the king of Babylon, and you will say,*

The words are directed to Israel, that after they have returned to Jerusalem and have shaken off the yoke of bondage, they will remember Nebuchadnezzar's former power and the summit of Babylon, and they bewail him with a miserable voice, who has come to such a great calamity that he seems worthy of pity even by his enemies.

25. ([14:4b-7](#)) *How has the oppressor stopped, the tribute ceased? (5) The Lord broke the staff of the wicked ones, the rod of the rulers, (6) that struck the people in wrath with an incurable wound, that brought nations under in fury, that persecuted in a cruel manner. (7) The whole earth has become quiet and still; it is glad and has rejoiced.*

This voice is of Israel lamenting and marveling over how the former lord of the lands and the victor, the one who plundered everything by means of tribute, has been crushed and reduced to nothing. How has he *become quiet* and been laid low, that one, I say, who was the *rod of the wicked ones*, who was a scepter and a furious royal *staff* who was striking everyone, whose *wound* was not able to be endured, who even *cruelly persecuted* those who fled? How has *the whole earth* fallen silent at his ruin, emitting only the sound of eager rejoicing?

26. ([14:8](#)) *The fir trees also have rejoiced over you, and the cedars of Libanus: "Since you have slept, none have come up to cut us down."*

By *fir trees* and *cedars of Libanus*, understand the rulers of the nations, who were cut down

<sup>227</sup> Cf. [Quintilian, 8.6.19-0](#).

<sup>228</sup> Jerome assumes the historical nature of the Book of Judith. For a modern defense of the same, see C. Schedl, [A History of the Old Testament](#), 5 vols. (Staten Island: Alba House, 1973), 5:87-17.

<sup>229</sup> Jerome is addressing Bishop Amabilis here. See the preface to book [5](#).



by the persecution of Nebuchadnezzar. Even they break forth in rejoicing and say, “Since you were brought down to hell, no one else could be found to cut down the great and the powerful.”

27. (14:9) *Hell below was in an uproar to meet you at your coming; it stirred up the giants for you. All the rulers of the earth rose up from their thrones, all the rulers of nations. (10) All will answer and say to you,*

These things should be read  $\epsilon\mu\phi\alpha\tau\iota\kappa\omega\varsigma$ <sup>330</sup> (emphatically) and melodramatically. It is not that these things have happened, but that they could happen, unless we happen to believe that the souls of kings whom the Babylonian king had killed met him and scoffed at him. For it is a relief from evils when you see your enemies suffering the same things.

28. (14:10b–11) *“You also were wounded as we were, you have become like unto us.” (11) Your pride has been dragged down to hell, your corpse has fallen down, under you the moth will be strewed, and vermin will be your covering.*

The words of the mighty and of the rulers of the earth, whom above he called cedars and fir trees [cf. [Isa 14:8](#)], are directed at the Babylonian king, who is in hell. “We no longer grieve that we were cut down, since you too have fallen by the same axe. All your power and pride that was lifted up into heaven has been dragged down to the earth. Will then even a *moth* put up with your *corpse* and will a multitude of swarming *vermin* cover it? By means of a human death, you will feel your own worthlessness, you who laid claim to the power of God for yourself.”

29. (14:12–14) *How have you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, you who were rising in the morning? You have fallen to the earth, you who were wounding the nations, (13) you who were saying in your heart, “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north, (14) I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”*

In order that this might be understood more easily, we translated this phrase as follows: *How have you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, you who were rising in the morning?* A literal translation from the Hebrew would read, “How have you fallen from heaven? Howl, son of the dawn.” Now *Lucifer* is signified with other words, and he who was once so glorious that he was compared to the gleam of the morning star is told that he must weep and mourn. He is saying, just as the morning star scatters the darkness, glowing and shining with a golden hue, so also your stepping forth in public seemed like a shining star. But you, the one who wounded the nations and spoke with arrogance, *fell to the earth*. You said, “I have obtained such great power that heaven stands still for me, and the stars above ought to lie under my feet”—although the Jews want themselves to be understood as the *heaven* and *stars of God*, inasmuch as it continues, *I will sit in the mountain of the covenant*, that is, in the temple, where the laws of God are stored, *and on the sides of the north*, that is, in Jerusalem; for it is written, “The mountains of Zion, the sides of the north” [[Ps 48:2](#)]. Nor was his pride satisfied with his desire for the heavens, until it broke forth with such madness that he claimed for himself likeness to God.

<sup>330</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, [An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon](#), founded upon the seventh edition of Liddell and Scott’ unabridged [Greek English Lexicon](#) (Oxford: OUP, 1997), [550](#): “orcibly, expressively.”

30. (14:15) *Nevertheless, you will be dragged down to hell, into the depth of the pit.*

He who had arrogantly said, “I will ascend into heaven, I will be like the Most High” [Isa 14:13–14],<sup>331</sup> *will be dragged down* not only *to hell*, but to the deepest hell. For this is what *depth of the pit* signifies. In the Gospel we read this as, “Outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth” [cf. Matt 8:12].<sup>332</sup>

31. (14:16–17) *Those who see you will turn toward you and behold you—understand “saying”: “Is this the man who troubled the earth, who shook kingdoms, (17) who made the world a desert and destroyed its cities, who did not open the prison for those in chains?”*

The voice here as well is of those scoffing and marveling over how the devastator of everything has himself been devastated. Now in the words, he *did not open the prison for those in chains*, the extent of his great cruelty and wickedness is expressed: that he even kept captives in prison, and chains were not enough for these wretches, unless they were also surrounded by the horror of darkness.

32. (14:18–20a) *All the kings of the nations have all of them slept in glory, a man in his own house. (19) But you have been cast out of your grave, as a useless branch defiled and wrapped up; those who were killed by the sword and have gone down to the bottom of the pit, as a rotten corpse, (20a) you will not keep company with them, even in burial.*

The Hebrews tell the following story.<sup>333</sup> Evil-merodach [cf. 2 Kgs 25:27–30; Jer 52:31], who had reigned earlier while his father Nebuchadnezzar was living for seven years among wild beasts [cf. Dan 4:32], after that one was restored in his kingdom, was in chains with Jehoiachin (*Joachim*), king of Judah, until the death of his father. When Nebuchadnezzar died, he again succeeded in the kingdom but was not accepted by the princes. They were afraid that he who was said to be deceased was still alive. In order to offer proof that his father was dead, he opened the *grave* and dragged out the *corpse* with a grappling iron and ropes.

And the meaning is this: when all have been buried who were *killed* by you, you alone will lie unburied. But some interpret this passage as follows: all souls in hell will take some rest, and you alone will be tied up in utter darkness; for you will be covered with everyone’s blood, and the blood of all will overwhelm you as though you have been wrapped with the blood of the dead.<sup>334</sup> Symmachus translated this passage as follows: “Even with *those who are killed* in battle, you will not deserve *to keep company* in burial.” Now for what we have expressed as *as a useless branch*, and which reads in Hebrew as *chaneser netaph*, Aquila translated, “as defiled blood (*sanies*).” Now *neser* is properly called “little twig,” which grows at the roots of a tree and is cut off by farmers *as useless*. We can understand “blood” and putrid matter as the same thing. At the same time we learn that hell is under the earth, since the Scripture says, *down to*

<sup>331</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 68 (102, 30–1; 103, 12–6).

<sup>332</sup> For Jerome’ understanding of hell, see J. P. O’onnell, [The Eschatology of St. Jerome](#), *Dissertationes ad Lauream* 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), chap. 8. On this passage, O’onnell (142) says that here Jerome identifies the “eepest hell” (*infernum ultimum*) with the hell of the damned in the New Testament, “ut adds little to our knowledge of the nature of that place.”

<sup>333</sup> See n. at [5.17](#).

<sup>334</sup> Jerome uses three different words for blood in this sentence: *sanguis, cruor, sanies*.

*the bottom of the pit.*<sup>335</sup>

33. (14:20b) *For you have destroyed your land, you have killed your people.*

There is no doubt about what he is saying according to the Septuagint translators, who said, “Because you have destroyed *my* land, and you have killed *my* people.” For Nebuchadnezzar killed and destroyed the Judean land and its people Israel.<sup>336</sup> The understanding according to the Hebrew is difficult: How did he destroy *his own* land and kill *his own* people? Possibly it should be taken in this sense: those whom God had given to you for chastisement, you utterly destroyed. Or another possibility is, you utterly destroyed the ancient kingdom of the Assyrians in your great arrogance, you who raised your neck against God; for if you had acted humbly and known your limitations, the Assyrian and the Babylonian would still be reigning. Or, it can be understood in this way: you were so cruel in respect to those outside, that in your madness you even oppressed people who were your own subjects.

34. (14:20c–21) *The seed of the wicked will not be named for ever. (21) Prepare his children for slaughter for the iniquity of their fathers; they will not rise up, nor inherit the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.*

All the histories agree that when Belshazzar (*Balthasar*), the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, was killed [cf. [Dan 5:30](#)], and Darius succeeded in the kingdom of the Chaldeans [cf. [Dan 5:31](#)], from then on no one from the stock of Nebuchadnezzar reigned. The Scripture predicts this, therefore, that Babylon would come to such a great devastation that no one would remain even from the royal seed, but on account of the father’s impiety all the offspring would be blotted out. Now for what we translated in the last part of the sentence as *nor will they fill the face of the world with cities*, in Hebrew *arim* is written for *cities*, which we can also translate “adversaries.” Accordingly the sense would be, no adversary from your seed who desires to restore the kingdom will be raised up. According to the Septuagint translators, it says, “Evil seed, prepare your children to be killed for the sins of your father.” What meaning this has, I am unable to know.

35. (14:22–23) *And I will rise up against them, says the Lord of hosts, and I will destroy the name of Babylon, and the remains, and the bud, and the offspring, says the Lord. (23) And I will make it a possession for the hedgehog (ericius) and pools of waters, and I will sweep it and wear it out with a broom, says the Lord of hosts.*

Herodotus,<sup>337</sup> and many others who have composed histories in Greek, report that Babylon was extremely powerful. Situated on a plain, it formed a square, and its walls from corner to corner comprised sixteen thousand paces, that is, the total circumference was sixty-four

<sup>335</sup> O’onnell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, 144, notes that Jerome usually speaks of hell as below the earth, as here, but “e can interpret these expressions in the light of [[Commentary on Isaiah 7:10–1](#)] in which hell is said to be the heart of the earth. For Jerome taught that the earth is spherical in shape.”

<sup>336</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 68 (103, 24–04, 9); *Bas Is* 279 (609C).

<sup>337</sup> Cf. [Herodotus, Historiae, 1.178](#).

thousand paces.<sup>338</sup> But the citadel, that is, the *Capitolium*,<sup>339</sup> of that city is a tower that was built on a height after the flood and is said to occupy three thousand paces. It gradually narrows from its width into the corners, so that the projecting weight is easily supported by the wider parts. They describe marble temples there, golden statues, streets glittering with stones and gold, and many other things that seem nearly to surpass belief. We have narrated all this to show that all power is dust before the wrath of God and is compared to embers and ash. If it were permitted to us to enter the barbarous nations and see the last traces of such a great city, we would see the *possession of the hedgehog* and *pools of water*, and that what is now being sung by the voice of Isaiah has truly been fulfilled, *I will sweep it and wear it out with a broom*; for apart from the walls of baked brick, which after a large number of years are being set up again in order to shut in wild beasts,<sup>440</sup> the entire space in the middle is a desolation.

36. ([14:24–25](#)) *The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely (Si non) as I have thought, so shall it be; and as I have purposed with my mind, (25) so shall it fall out, that I will crush the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot, and his yoke will be taken away from them, and his burden will be taken off their shoulder.*

He returns to the present situation, that is, to Sennacherib king of the Assyrians, who laid waste to Samaria and Judea and destroyed everything in the surrounding area except for Jerusalem. He joins things that are near with things that are coming much later in the future, so that the imminent fear is removed, because the hearers could say, “We are enduring a siege at present; he promises things that will come after many centuries.” Therefore, the progression of the prophecy is, although after very many years Babylon must be destroyed and the entire stock of the Assyrians and the seed plot of Chaldea must be utterly wiped out, nevertheless that you should not fear the captivity that is near, *the Lord swears*, whom one must believe in even when he does not swear, because his calculations are not deceived, and what he has conceived in his mind does not become null and void. But he says this with human affections, namely that he is not deceived who is not able to be deceived. He says, *I will crush the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot*. For in a single night 185,000 of the Assyrian army were annihilated by the destroying angel [cf. [2 Kgs 19:35](#); [Isa 37:36](#)]. *And his yoke*, and the burdensome empire that was threatening everyone, *will be taken away*, from those who were being besieged in Jerusalem. And the weight with which they were being oppressed will instead be forced back against him. For when the king of the Assyrians was fleeing into his own land, Hezekiah came forth free with the remnant of the people.

37. ([14:26–27](#)) *This is the counsel that I have purposed upon all the earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all nations. (27) For the Lord of hosts has decreed, and who can disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who will turn it away?*

<sup>338</sup> Herodotus does not use these units of measure, as P. Courcelle, [Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources](#) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 80, has pointed out.

<sup>339</sup> The *Capitolium* refers first to the temple of Jupiter in Rome on the summit of *Mons Tarpeius*; secondly, it refers to the Capitoline Hill (including temple and citadel); and by extension it refers to the citadel of any city.

<sup>440</sup> See above at [5.20](#).

Some think<sup>441</sup> that in this passage there is a general prophecy against the whole world, and that the destruction of the city of Babylon and Assyria is a type of consummation of the world. We do not contradict them, provided that we recognize here that the whole land of the Assyrians is being indicated properly, and all the nations allied with the Assyrian king have been shown. Now whatever has been *decreed* by the Lord is hindered by no one's power,<sup>442</sup> and no one can coerce his *hand*, which is both *stretched out* and ready to strike.

38. (14:28) *In the year that King Ahaz died, this burden was made.*

In the heading of the prophet we read that four kings of Judea were set forth: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah [cf. [Isa 1:1](#)]. Each succeeded the other in order and by descent. Of these we read above that Uzziah died,<sup>443</sup> when Isaiah relates, "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up" [[Isa 6:1](#)]. From this we understand that both the vision of the Lord sitting and the things that are commanded to the prophet, all the way down to that passage where it is written, "As a terebinth and as an oak that spreads forth its branches, his offspring will be a holy seed" [[Isa 6:13](#)], were prophesied during the reign of King Jotham. Ahaz, the son of Jotham son of Uzziah king of Judah, succeeds as the third [cf. [Isa 7:1](#)]. During his reign Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel go up against Jerusalem to wage war against it, and the rest that the Scripture relates. Therefore, we recognize that everything that is recorded down to the present passage that we are now endeavoring to explain was predicted during the reign of Ahaz. When he died Hezekiah succeeds as the fourth, that is, the last. The entire book down to the end is composed during his reign.<sup>444</sup>

39. (14:29) *Do not rejoice, Philistia, all of you, that the rod of him that struck you is broken in pieces; for out of the root of the serpent will come forth a basilisk, and his seed will swallow the bird.*

We say what is natural: when the king of nations in conflict has died, the enemies always rejoice, as they await civil wars, seditions, and inexperience in ruling to arise out of the new state of affairs. When the sinful Ahaz died, then, who had walked in the ways of the kings of Israel [cf. [2 Kgs 16:3](#)] and had been joined to them by family ties, we understand that the Philistines in like manner had rejoiced and had scoffed at Israel, that when the old king had perished they submitted to the young Hezekiah. Now the Philistines, as we said above,<sup>445</sup> signifies Palestinians,<sup>446</sup> whom the common edition (*vulgata editio*)<sup>447</sup> writes as "foreign born," since this term belongs not to one nation but to all outside nations. *Do not rejoice, O Philistia,*

<sup>441</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 68 (105, 24–5).

<sup>442</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 285 (617D–20A).

<sup>443</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 286 (620C–).

<sup>444</sup> E. J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, [1:450](#), responds to Jerome's suggestion: "erome thinks that the message came during the first year of Hezekiah's reign, but the point of importance is not whether it was seen before or after the death, but that the year in which it was seen was the year of Ahaz's death."

<sup>445</sup> Cf. 2.3; 4.2, 17.

<sup>446</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 69 (105, 33–5); *Bas Is* 286 (621B).

<sup>447</sup> I.e., the Old Latin.

he says, do not scoff at my people, that *the rod of him that struck you, Ahaz, is broken in pieces*, that the staff that used to strike you seems to have been crushed to death, that the *serpent* has been killed. For in place of this one, Hezekiah will be born, a more harmful *basilisk*, which the Greeks call the “basiliskos,” which kills you by its stare<sup>448</sup> and slays by the breath of its mouth [cf. [2 Thess 2:8](#)]. For just as no bird can pass over the stare of the *basilisk* without injury, but even though it is far away, it will be *swallowed* by its mouth, so also you will completely perish at the stare of Hezekiah. And he has nicely preserved the metaphor; for since he had named it *serpent* and *basilisk*, he says that birds are devoured by its mouth and breath. But to show that none of the kings of Judah struck the Philistines in the way that Hezekiah ravaged them, listen to the Book of Kings: “He struck the Philistines as far as Gaza and its borders, from the tower of guards as far as the fortified cities” [[2 Kgs 18:8](#)].<sup>449</sup> Now what we translated as *swallow the bird*, and is written in Hebrew as *saraph mopheth*, can be translated “flying serpent.” Thus the sense would be, *Out of the root of the serpent will come forth a basilisk*, and its fruit, that is, of the basilisk, is a “flying serpent,” so that you may understand a flying dragon.

40. ([14:30a–b](#)) *And the firstborn of the poor will be fed, and the poor will rest with confidence.*

When the basilisk has struck you and the flying dragon has devastated your borders [cf. [Isa 14:29](#); [2 Kgs 18:8](#)], you will not plot against Judah and frighten my poor little people by your deceit, but overwhelmed by your own distress, you will weep over your disaster. Now the humble and the *poor* who trust not in their wealth and power but in my name *will rest* in a secure peace and will dread no enemy’s attack.

41. ([14:30c–d](#)) *And I will make your root perish with famine, and I will kill your remnant.*

He is speaking entirely by means of figures.<sup>550</sup> Now the sense is that the *root* of Philistia is dried up, while God’s people “rest with confidence” and the entire remnant is consumed.

42. ([14:31](#)) *Howl, O gate; cry, O city: all Philistia is thrown down; for a smoke will come from the north, and there is none who escapes his column.*

He is calling those who are in the gate, *gate*, and the inhabitants of the city, *city*.<sup>551</sup> The words are directed to the cities of the Philistines (*palestinorum*), that they ought to *howl* and mourn when Sennacherib comes and devastates everything like a torrent.<sup>552</sup> For during the reign of King Hezekiah, the Assyrian came and laid waste to the Philistines among the other nations. Jeremiah says to them, “Behold, waters are rising from the north, and they will be like an overflowing torrent, and they will cover the land and its fullness, the city and its inhabitants” [[Jer 47:2](#)]. For the Assyrian came from the north, and those who came forth from Nineveh from his flames subjugated other nations. At that time when these things were being sung, *smoke* rose on high, that is, a rumor was spread sequentially among the people of all nations that the Phoenicians and Philistines (*Palestinos*) were going to be devastated.

43. ([14:32](#)) *And what will be answered to the messengers (nuntii) of the nation? That the*

<sup>448</sup> Cf. Pliny 8.21.33, 78ff.

<sup>449</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 69 (106, 24–5).

<sup>550</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 287 (624A).

<sup>551</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 289 (625A).

<sup>552</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 69 (107, 15–8, 23–5).



*Lord founded Zion, and the poor of his people will hope in him.*

Because he had said, “There is *none* who will escape his column” [[Isa 14:31](#)], it seemed that even Judah was included in a universal sentence of judgment. If, he says, the messengers (*angeli*) of the nation of Assyria ask why Judah alone escaped, *answer* them that *the Lord founded Zion* and he will protect the lowly people by his power. For “angels” the Septuagint translated “kings.” They were misled by the error of a single letter, *aleph*.

44. ([15:1–2b](#)) *The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar has been devastated, Moab is silent; because the wall has been destroyed in the night, Moab is silent. (2) The house has gone up, and Dibon to the high places to mourn; over Nebo, and over Medeba, Moab has howled.*

Let it suffice that we have spoken once about the *burden* and “weight.”<sup>553</sup> I give only this brief warning, that grievous things always follow a *burden*, but a “vision” is followed either by joyful things immediately or joyful things after the end of the grievous things.

*Moab* is a province of the Arabians [cf. [Deut 23:4](#)]<sup>554</sup> where Balak son of Beor lived, who hired the soothsayer Balaam from Mesopotamia to curse Israel [cf. [Num 22:1–6](#)]. It is also the place where the people were initiated into the rites of Baal-phegor [cf. [Num 25:3](#)]. The city of *Ar* is the metropolis of this province. Today it is named from a composite Hebrew and Greek word, Areopolis, not—as the majority think—because it is the city  $\alpha\rho\epsilon\omega\varsigma$ , that is “of Mars.” But *Ar* is also translated  $\alpha\nu\tau\iota\delta\iota\kappa\omicron\varsigma$ , that is, “adversary.”

Now Jeremiah attests to the extent of its power when he says, “There is no more rejoicing in Moab” [[Jer 48:2](#)]; and again, “You trusted in your fortifications and in your treasures” [[Jer 48:7](#)]; and again, “Moab was fertile from his youth and rested in his dregs, and was not poured out from vessel to vessel and did not go into the deportation. Therefore his taste remained in him and his scent is not changed” [[Jer 48:11](#)]. In another passage he says, “How is the strong staff broken, the beautiful rod?” [[Jer 48:17](#)]. And after a little bit: “We have heard the pride of Moab, he is exceedingly proud. I know his haughtiness and arrogance and pride and the loftiness of his heart, says the Lord, and his boasting” [[Jer 48:29–30](#)].

Therefore, just as the prophet has made predictions against Babylon and the Philistines because they oppressed the Jewish people,<sup>555</sup> so now he predicts a devastation of the Moabites, that is, of Arabia, by the Assyrian and Babylonian. For they were devastated by both nations, both at the time when Sennacherib took Israel captive, and when Nebuchadnezzar overthrew Jerusalem. For Moab had scoffed at both enemies, Ephraim and Judah, since Jeremiah says, “Moab will dash his hand in his own vomit, and he himself will be in derision as well; for Israel was a derision to you, as though you had found him among thieves” [[Jer 48:26–27](#)]. On account of your words, then, that you spoke against him, you will be taken captive.

Now as for what he says, *In the night Ar has been devastated, Moab is silent*, this is a suitable beginning of the invective, that he who was conceived at *night* by an incestuous act of his father [cf. [Gen 19:33–37](#)] was *devastated* in the darkness; unless perhaps we understand *night* as the extent of his error, and that one should believe that because Moab was trusting in itself, in its *walls*, it was overcome by treachery and military mines. When I was young I heard of a certain

<sup>553</sup> See bk. 5, n. 2 (#2).

<sup>554</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 292 (629C).

<sup>555</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 70 (108, 4).

Areopolis—but also every city is a witness to this: on the same night this city’s walls fell during an earthquake, when the seas transgressed the shore of the whole world.

*The house has gone up, and Dibon to the high places to mourn; over Nebo, and over Medeba, Moab has howled.* I hope it is not annoying to you that I am treading down the road of history, for you are the one who wanted me to do this.<sup>556</sup> Now “royal” is supplied in thought before *house*, and “the city of” before *Dibon has gone up*, to the idols that were located on its heights. The whole province *howled over Nebo and over Medeba*, which were well-known cities. For the idol Chemosh had been consecrated in Nebo [cf. [Num 21:29](#); [1 Kgs 11:7](#), [33](#)], which is called by another name, Baal-phegor [cf. [Num 25:3](#)].

45. [\(15:2c\)](#) *On all their heads [will be] baldness, and every beard will be shaven.*

In antiquity shaving the head and beard was a sign of mourning. By this means, then, the extent of one’s grief is shown, since Jeremiah cries out the same things against Moab: “Every head will be bald and every beard will be shaven, all hands will be tied together, and upon every back there will be haircloth” [[Jer 48:37](#)].

46. [\(15:3\)](#) *In their streets they are girded with sackcloth, on the tops of their houses, and in their streets everyone howls [and] comes down weeping.*

Tears will not be private, public laments will express public mourning. Neither matrons nor maidens nor the tender age of children nor the exhausted paces of the elderly will be kept in their homes. The final captivity will not know shame and weakness.

47. [\(15:4a\)](#) *Heshbon (Esebon) has cried out, and Elealeh.*

These are names of cities in the Moabite province of which *Heshbon* was once a city of the king of the Amorites. Jeremiah likewise says of it, “A fire has gone forth from Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon (*Seon*)” [[Jer 48:45](#)]. Now *Heshbon* means “devising,”<sup>557</sup> and this is why Jeremiah alludes to the name and says, “Against Heshbon they have *devised* evils” [[Jer 48:2](#)].

48. [\(15:4a\)](#) *Their voice has been heard as far as Jahaz (Jasa).*

The city of *Jasa* overlooks the Dead Sea where the province of the Moabites has its border. This reveals, then, that the howling of the province will resound as far as its extreme limits. This is also why Jeremiah says, “From the cry of Heshbon, as far as Elealeh and Jasa, they have uttered their voice” [[Jer 48:34](#)].

49. [\(15:4b\)](#) *For this will the unencumbered men of Moab howl; his soul will howl to itself.*

The Hebrew word is *eluse*, which Aquila translated  $\epsilon\xi\omega\mu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ , that is, *unencumbered* and with bare shoulders. Symmachus translated it “girded.” Some think that it does not refer to men but to the name of a city, which today is called Elusa and is situated in a region of Moab. But we can say this too, that all the bravery of its fighters will collapse and the whole land will resound with mutual weeping. But if *eluse* is understood as “with bare shoulders,” as Aquila thought, the following meaning suggests itself to us, that they will all uncover their chests in order to strike them in mourning.

50. [\(15:5a\)](#) *My heart will cry to Moab.*

The prophet speaks with the emotions of one who is grieving, either because enemies upon

<sup>556</sup> He is addressing Amabilis. See preface to book .

<sup>557</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 296 (637A).

whom so many evils are coming are God's creatures too, or because they are about to be crushed by such great calamities that they become pitiful even to their enemies. Jeremiah says the same thing: "Therefore my heart will resound for Moab like a flute" [[Jer 48:36](#)].

51. (15:5a) *His bars<sup>558</sup> will flee as far as Zoar (Segor), a heifer of three years old.* And Jeremiah says, "From Zoar (Segor) as far as Horonaim (Oronaim), as a heifer of three years old."

We have spoken about this both in the book on *Hebrew Questions*,<sup>559</sup> and now we note briefly that it is the fifth city that was partially saved by the prayers of Lot [cf. [Gen 19:20](#)] after Sodom, Gomorrah, Adamah, and Zeboiim [cf. [Deut 29:23](#)]. It is called Bala, that is, "sorted out," according to Hebrew tradition, because it was leveled by a third earthquake.<sup>660</sup> Today it is called Zoara in the Syrian language, *Segor* in Hebrew, both of which mean "little." We can understand a *heifer of three years old* as the age of maturity. For what the thirtieth year is to men, so to cattle and beasts of burden the third year is the strongest. And we should understand *bars* as limits and strength, because *Segor* is situated on the border of the Moabites, separating them from the land of the Philistines.

52. (15:5b) *For by the ascent of Luhith they will go up weeping.* Jeremiah also says, "By the ascent of Luhith the mourner will go up to weep" [[Jer 48:5](#)].

Now we understand that there is a sloping road that leads to the Assyrians and this is a symbol of captivity.

53. (15:5c) *And in the way of Horonaim (Oronaim) they will raise a cry of contrition.* Again Jeremiah says, "A voice of crying from Horonaim, waste and great contrition" [[Jer 48:3](#)].

It would take too long for me to speak about the details, since it is clear that these are names either of cities in Moab or of places that they are leaving behind in their deportation.

54. (15:6a) *For the waters of Nimrim (Nemrim) will be desolate.*

This is a town on the Dead Sea with salty water, and on that account it is sterile. But whether he has alluded to the name or to what had not been the case previously, it comes about after the devastation that its waters as well were turned to bitterness.

55. (15:6b) *For the grass has withered, the sprout has faded, all the greenness has perished.*

It is not, as some think, that all the *grass has withered* away on account of the sterile waters of Nimrim, but the Scripture is speaking metaphorically. And the sense is this: in all of Moab the waters of Nimrim will be salty and bitter, and just as no *grass* sprouts there, so the drought will reach the entire province, that is, from Zoar (*Segor*) to Horonaim (*Oronaim*), from border to border. Jeremiah says the same thing: "The waters of Nimrim will be very bad" [[Jer 48:34](#)].

56. (15:7) *According to the extent of their work [is] their visitation also; they will lead them to the torrent of the willows.* For *willows* we read *arabim* in Hebrew, which can both be understood as "Arabians,"<sup>661</sup> and can be read as *orbim*, that is, a villa situated on their border, whose neighbors, the majority say, offered food to Elijah on Mount Horeb [cf. [1 Kgs 17:4–6](#)]. On account of its ambiguity this name is also translated as "ravens," "the west," and "level places."

Now the sense is this: the *visitation* will be in accordance with the *extent* of the disease.

<sup>558</sup> That is, the bolts or levers on large doors and gates.

<sup>559</sup> Cf. Jerome, *Interpr. Hebr. Nom.* 17, 3–6; cf. *Bas Is* 297 (604A).

<sup>660</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 297 (604A)

<sup>661</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 70 (108, 6–); *Bas Is* 299 (641C).

Understand *visitation* here not as the remedy but as the wound: “I will *visit* their iniquities with a rod and their sins with blows” [[Ps 89:32](#)].<sup>662</sup> Understand *the torrent of the willows* as Babylonian rivers, of which David sings, “On the willows we hung our instruments in its midst” [[Ps 137:2](#)]; or understand it of the valley of Arabia through which one makes one’s way to the Assyrians.

57. ([15:8](#)) *For the cry has gone round about the border of Moab, its howling unto Eglaim (Gallim), and its cry as far as the well of Beer-elim (Elim).* Jeremiah writes of nearly all these same things.

They are cities and places of the Moabites in which a *cry* and a *howling* of the captive people is being described.

58. ([15:9a](#)) *For the waters of Dimon are filled with blood.*

Where previously there had been excess on account of the irrigated fields and continuously flowing springs, there streams of blood will flow on account of the numbers of dead.

59. ([15:9b–c](#)) *For I will bring more upon Dibon: the lion upon those who will flee from Moab and upon the remnant of the land.* Lest anyone think this is a copyist’s mistake and cause an error by wanting to correct it, the same city is spelled both with the letters *m* and *b*. Dimon is interpreted as “silence,” whereas Dibon means “flowing.” Up to the present day this town is spoken indifferently as both Dimon and Dibon, either name being used, on account of the water that flows quietly.

Now as for what he says, *I will bring more upon Dibon*, and what it was he seemed to ask a question about, he has shown in the following brief line, saying, *The lion upon those who will flee from Moab and upon the remnant of the land.* Accordingly even those who have fallen in flight are devoured by wild beasts—although we can also understand *lion* metaphorically of the king of the enemy, so that no one can escape from his power, which is like a roar.

60. ([16:1](#)) *Send forth the lamb, the ruler of the earth, from the rock of the desert to the mount of the daughter of Zion.*

What we are translating is not history but prophecy. Now every prophecy is enveloped in enigmas and abrupt statements; while it is speaking of one thing, it moves on to another. Otherwise, if Scripture were to preserve order, it would not be a prediction but a narrative. And the meaning is this: O Moab, in whom the lion is about to wreak havoc [cf. [Isa 15:9](#)], and from where not even a remnant can be saved, take consolation; the immaculate [cf. [1 Pet 1:19](#)] *Lamb* who takes away the sins of the world [cf. [John 1:29](#)], he who will hold dominion in the world, will come forth from you. *From the rock of the desert*—that is, from Ruth, who was widowed when her husband died [cf. [Ruth 1:4–5](#)]*—*Obed was begotten from Boaz and Jesse from Obed and David from Jesse [cf. [Ruth 4:17](#)] and Christ from David [cf. [Matt 1:5–6](#), [16](#)]. Now we will interpret *the mount of the daughter of Zion* to be either the city of Jerusalem itself or, according to a holy understanding, the church, which is established at the summit of the virtues.

61. ([16:2](#)) *And it will come to pass, that as a bird fleeing away, and as young ones flying out of the nest, so will the daughters of Moab be in the passage of Arnon.*

He returns to the order that he had assumed. He says, When I bring the very savage lion upon those who have fled from Moab and upon the remnant of the land [cf. [Isa 15:9](#)], a lion

<sup>662</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 299 (641D).

that crushes their limbs and bones, then they will *fly away* in a panic, and all the *daughters*, that is, villas and cities of the province of Moab, will move to the *passage of Arnon*, which is the border of the Amorites and Moabites. Now by recording *passage*, even here he is signifying the captivity.

62. ([16:3–4](#)) *Take counsel, gather a council, make your shadow as the night in the midday, hide those who flee, and do not betray those who wander about. (4) My fugitives will dwell with you, O Moab; be a hiding place to them from the face of the destroyer, for the dust is at an end, the wretched man has been finished, he has failed, who trod the earth under foot. For wretched man* the Hebrew reads *sod*, which can also be understood as *destroyer*.

Now he is speaking to Moab, that it may find a *counsel* of salvation, and having assembled the elders together, *gather* a salutary *council*. He says, Do you want to be saved and earn the mercy of God? *Be as the night* and a shadow in the clear light and in the open flight of my people; receive *those who flee* and *do not betray those wandering about*. And he immediately adds the reason he has said this: *My fugitives will dwell with you*. For when Jerusalem has been devastated along with all of Judea, which borders on Moab, my people will emigrate to you. Therefore *be* their *hiding place*, do not be afraid of the destroyer's attack, since it will quickly pass like dust, and the ravager of the whole *earth* who *trod* it and subjected it under his own feet will disappear like a blowing breeze.

Some wrongly interpret this passage of the antichrist, so that they think that at that time the saints will go to the Arabians on account of their nearness to the city of Jerusalem, and that they are now being commanded not to betray those who flee to themselves.

63. ([16:5](#)) *And a throne will be prepared in mercy, and he will sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment and quickly rendering what is just.*

The Hebrews interpret this passage as follows: when the Assyrian has been put to flight, the just man Hezekiah will reign in Judea and will retain the *throne* of David, judging in truth, with the people of God subjected to himself. Others understand it of Christ: when the "dust" [cf. [Isa 16:4](#)] of the antichrist has been brought to an end and the "destroyer who trod the" whole "earth under foot" [cf. [Isa 16:4](#)] has been taken out of the way, Christ the king will come, who *will sit in the tabernacle of David* and on the Day of Judgment *will render* to everyone for his deeds [cf. [Matt 16:27](#); [Rom 2:6](#); [2 Cor 5:10](#)]. There is no doubt that this section is a prediction of Christ. But we can also understand the same things with respect to the first advent, and demonstrate that, *in the tabernacle* of the church, the memorials of the churches that spring up in the whole land of Moab testify to the empire of Christ.

64. ([16:6–7](#)) *We have heard of the pride of Moab, he is exceeding proud; his pride and his arrogance and his indignation is more than his strength. (7) Therefore Moab will howl to Moab, everyone will howl; speak of his blows to those who rejoice upon the walls of baked brick.*

Once again he returns to the present and convicts *Moab of pride*, that he is far more elated than *his strength* called for; and on account of this *pride*, *Moab will howl to Moab*, that is, the people [of Moab will howl] to the city, or, the metropolis to the province; and the whole earth will resound with howls over the walls of baked brick, of which Jeremiah also says, "Therefore I will howl over Moab, and I will cry out to all Moab, to the men of the brick wall who are mourning" [[Jer 48:31](#)]. Now by these things he is showing both the power of their original

happiness and the *blows* of their sudden overthrow.

65. ([16:8a](#)) *For the suburbs of Heshbon (Esebon) are deserted, the vineyard of Sibmah (Sabama).*

The distance between Heshbon and Sibmah is scarcely fifty paces, and by the metaphor of *vineyard* he is indicating the devastation of the whole province.

66. ([16:8b](#)) *The lords of the nations have cut off its branches.*

He preserves the metaphor with which he had begun, showing that the kings of the nations who had devastated Moab ravaged all the hamlets and strongholds.

67. ([16:8b–c](#)) *They have reached as far as Jazer, they have wandered in the desert, its shoots have been left, they have gone over the sea.*

Understand the *branches* and *shoots* as its people and refugees, and the crossing of the *sea* as the captivity to Babylon, of which afterward we will read, “the burden of the deserted sea” [[Isa 21:1](#)].

68. ([16:9a–b](#)) *Therefore I will lament with weeping Jazer the vineyard of Sibmah (Sabama). I will water you with my tears, O Heshbon (Esebon) and Elealeh.*

This is the voice of the prophet mourning. By the extent of his tears he testifies to the extent of the devastation. He is weeping over *the vineyard of Jazer* and over the fact that *Sibmah, Heshbon, and Elealeh*, very powerful cities at one time, have been cut down by the pruning Assyrian.

69. ([16:9c](#)) *For the voice of the treaders has rushed in upon your vintage and upon your harvest.*

Understand the *treaders* gathering grapes and the “gladness” [cf. [Isa 16:10a](#)] of *vintage* as the armies of the enemy, and that at the very time of “gladness,” the time of captivity has arrived.

70. ([16:10a](#)) *And gladness and joy will be taken away from Carmel.*

It is a scriptural idiom to compare the ever fruitful and wooded Mount *Carmel*, which overlooks Ptolemais [cf. [Acts 17:21](#)], and on which Elijah prayed [cf. [1 Kgs 18:42](#)], to fertility and abundance, and by this means to signify that all the gladness and fertility must be removed from cities that were once very rich.

71. ([16:10b](#)) *And there will be no rejoicing nor shouting in the vineyards.* The grape picker from the previous verse needs to be supplied in thought, that is, the farmer of the Moabite province. After all, he immediately adds, ([10c](#)) *He will not tread out wine in the press who had been accustomed to tread it out; I have taken away the voice of the treaders.* The grape picker will not joyfully sing out the call<sup>663</sup> over the vintage, but wherever there is the enemy’s destruction, also a shout of the victors will arise.

72. ([16:11](#)) *Therefore my heart (venter) will sound like a harp for Moab, and my inward parts for the wall of baked brick.*

To keep anyone from thinking that the prophet’s lament was a sign of his joy by which he was rejoicing that the enemies of the people of Israel were captured, he says out of emotion and from the deepest grief of heart that he was mourning that the once most powerful city has

<sup>663</sup> *Celeuma* refers to “command or call given by the chief oarsman, which gave the time to the rowers” (L & S).



been demolished.

73. ([16:12](#)) *And it will come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is wearied on his high places, that he will go in to his sanctuaries to pray, and will not be able.*

The ultimate misery is not to have support from those whom one has always implored. Stripped of your strength, he says, and with all your champion fighters killed, you will go to the idols, you will implore the shrines, and you will not find help in them. A common devastation will come upon both them and you.

74. ([16:13](#)) *This is the word that the Lord spoke to Moab from that time.*

From what time, do you think? Namely, from that time when Moab was established, and the Lord says, “Moabites and Ammonites will not enter into the church of God” [[Deut 23:3](#)]. Or we may understand *that time* as the time of old, because once by a divine verdict those things were decreed. It is not that the foreknowledge of God offered the cause of the devastation, but that the coming devastation was foreknown by the majesty of God.

75. ([16:14](#)) *And now the Lord has spoken, saying, In three years, as the years of a hireling, the glory of Moab will be taken away for all the multitude of the people, and it will be left small and feeble, not many.*

As we said above,<sup>664</sup> this prophecy is directed against the Moabites after the death of Ahaz, while Hezekiah was reigning, under whom ten tribes were led into captivity by Sennacherib king of the Assyrians [cf. [2 Kgs 18:11–13](#)]. And so, just as the *hireling* longs for the sun to set and waits day and night for the work to end, to receive the appointed wage, so after *three years* both *Moab* will be blotted out by the coming Assyrian, and scarcely a few *will be left* on earth, who inhabit demolished cities and cultivate deserted fields. This can also be a prediction of the Babylonian captivity, that after the capture of Jerusalem and the passage of *three years*, *Moab* must be devastated by the Chaldeans; or because no rest should be given to them within the space of *three years*.

76. ([17:1–3](#)) *The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus will cease to be a city, and will be as a heap of stones in a ruin. (2) The cities of Aroer will be left for flocks, and they will rest there, and there will be none to make them afraid. (3) And aid will cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria will be as the glory of the children of Israel, says the Lord of hosts.*

After Babylon [cf. [Isa 13:1](#)], the Philistines [cf. [Isa 14:29](#)], and Moab [cf. [Isa 15:1](#)], the word turns to Damascus, that is, Aram, which both was itself also a regal city at one time, and occupied the first place in all of Syria. Antioch, Laodicea, and Apamia were not yet flourishing. We know that the latter cities were enlarged after the coming of Alexander and the empire of the Macedonians. Because, therefore, Damascus was constantly offering help to the ten tribes against Judah, as the history of Kings and Chronicles narrates [cf. [2 Kgs 16:10–11](#); [2 Chr 24:23](#)],<sup>665</sup> he indicates that to them as well devastation from the Assyrians is drawing near, since the king of the Assyrians says, “I have captured Arabia, Damascus, and Samaria; as I have captured them, therefore, and all kingdoms, I will also capture you” [[Isa 10:9–10](#)]. In the Book of Kings, we read, “The king of the Assyrians went up to Damascus and captured it and transferred

<sup>664</sup> Cf. [14.29](#).

<sup>665</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 72 (113, 4–1).

it to Kir (*Cyrenen*), and he killed Rezin (*Rasin*)” [2 Kgs 16:9], who was king of Damascus. All of this was experienced while Hezekiah ruled Jerusalem.

*Behold Damascus will cease to be a city*, he says, already the captivity is near, already the Assyrian has set his army in motion, *and will be as a heap of stones in a ruin*. Thus only broken-down walls and vestiges of your former power will be displayed in the extensive ruins. *The cities of Aroer will be left for flocks*. Aroer means “tamarisk,” which properly is a tree that grows in the desert and in salty soil. Consequently, its devastation is being shown. *They*, understand “the flocks,” *will rest there, and there will be none to make them afraid*. For the desolation will be so extensive that no soldier in ambush need be feared. *And aid will cease from Ephraim*: the ten tribes will not have reinforcements in these things against Judah, *and the kingdom*, (from the context [ἄπο κοινοῦ] supply “will cease”) *from Damascus*. But when he says that the *kingdom will cease* and grow quiet, he is indicating that the devastation is not everlasting, but he is taking away its current power, by which it was previously ruling in all of Syria. *And the remnant of Syria will be as the glory of the children of Israel*. He is saying, just as the ten tribes have been wiped out by the ravaging Assyrian, and all their *glory* has been led into captivity, so the few who remained in Damascus will follow suit and have the *glory* of an allied nation. Understand *glory* as said ironically for “shame.” But all this will happen because *the Lord has spoken*, whose words cannot be nullified.

Some<sup>666</sup> think that this is the same prophecy that we read in Jeremiah: “Damascus is undone, she is put to flight, trembling has seized her, anguish and sorrows have taken her as a woman in labor” [Jer 49:24]; and again: “I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus and it will devour the walls of Benhadad (*Benadab*)” [Jer 49:27]. But one should know that Jeremiah is describing the *Babylonian* captivity of the city of Damascus, that is, the captivity of the few whom the king of the Assyrians had left in it; but Isaiah is declaring the approaching captivity of the *Assyrians*. Others<sup>667</sup> think that this is a prediction of the *Roman* captivity, when both the Jewish people and Damascus, where Aretas was in command [cf. 2 Cor 11:32], were captured. They endured a similar servitude. Accordingly these interpreters apply everything that was written about this to the time of Christ and to the mysteries of the apostles.

77. (17:4) *And it will come to pass in that day, that the glory of Jacob will be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh will grow lean.*

He is saying, when Damascus has been captured and the city ceases to exist [cf. Isa 17:1], and such “glory” has crowned it of the kind that also crowned Israel [cf. Isa 17:3], that is, the ten tribes: at that time all help as well as the fattest *flesh* and refuge will make Jacob *lean*, for he will not have those with whom he had been joined who are laying waste to Jerusalem. We read above that “Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel went up to Jerusalem to wage war against it” [Isa 7:1]; and it was declared to the house of David, “Syria has rested upon Ephraim” [Isa 7:2], of whom the prophet says to Ahaz, “Fear not, and let not your heart be afraid of the two tails of these firebrands, smoking with the wrath of the fury of Rezin and of Syria and of the son of Remaliah, because evil Syria has taken counsel against you, Ephraim and

<sup>666</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (113, 11–0).

<sup>667</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (114, 7–3.35–15, 6).

the son of Remaliah” [[Isa 7:4–5](#)].<sup>668</sup>

78. ([17:5–6](#)) *And it will be as when one gathers in the harvest that which remains, and his arm will pick the ears of corn, and it will be as he that seeks ears of corn in the valley of Rephaim. (6) And its fruit will be left upon it as a cluster of grapes, and as the shaking of the olive tree, of two or three olives at the top of a bough, or of four or five at the top, says the Lord the God of Israel.*

Those who understand this devastation of Damascus as having been fulfilled under the Roman Empire claim that these things apply to the apostles, that just as a few *ears of corn* and *olives* are accustomed to remain in a field or on a tree, so a remnant of Israel will be saved [cf. [Rom 9:27](#); [11:5](#)]<sup>669</sup>—especially since it follows, “In that day man will bow down to his Maker, and his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel” [[Isa 10:22](#); [17:7](#)], that is, to Christ. They interpret the *two* olives, plus *three*, plus *four*, plus *five*, as adding up to the number of the fourteen apostles, that is, the twelve who were chosen, plus James, the thirteenth, who was called the brother of Christ [cf. [Gal 1:19](#)],<sup>669</sup> plus the Apostle Paul, the “vessel of election” [[Acts 9:15](#)].

But those<sup>770</sup> who think that the things that have been said were fulfilled in the times of the Assyrians explain it as follows. During the Assyrian captivity Damascus was not entirely blotted out, but when some were transferred to Kir (*Cyrenen*) [cf. [2 Kgs 16:9](#)], another portion of farmers was released into the land. The city itself was destroyed later during the Babylonian devastation, until it was again restored under the Macedonians and Ptolemies, and it was indeed a city at the time of the advent of Christ, but it did not possess as much power as it had previously. And the meaning is this: so few will remain in Damascus, just as *the ears of corn* are few that harvesters are accustomed to leave behind, *ears* that poor people are accustomed to *pick* in the very wide and potent valley of Rephaim; or as the few *olives* on an olive tree, which escaped the notice of the picker.

79. ([17:7–8](#)) *In that day man will bow down to his Maker, and his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel. (8) And he will not bow down to the altars which his hands made and which his fingers have wrought, and he will not look to groves and temples.*

They think that this was fulfilled at the time of Christ, when the everlasting empire of the Savior succeeded the destroyed kingdom of Damascus, and the error of idolatry was destroyed. The intention of these interpreters is pious, to be sure, but it does not preserve the historical order. Now we say that when Damascus was overthrown and the ten tribes were led to the Assyrians, a remnant of tribes that were from Israel were converted to the worship of God by the letters of Hezekiah, and they came to the temple of Jerusalem, just as the history of Chronicles relates [cf. [2 Chr 30:1–13](#)].

Once Damascus has been obliterated, then, men *will turn to their Maker*, that is, to the God who created them, and their *eyes will look* not to the idols that they had made in Bethel and in Dan [cf. [1 Kgs 12:29](#)], but to God. They will despise the temples and altars *which their fingers had wrought*.

80. ([17:9](#)) *In that day his strong cities will be abandoned, as the ploughs and the corn, which*

<sup>668</sup> Notice the textual variations from the original lemma.

<sup>669</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 72 (116, 19–0).

<sup>770</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (113, 35–14, 3, 21–0).

*were abandoned before the face of the children of Israel, and it will be deserted.*

This is not spoken against Damascus, but against the ten tribes that were called Israel. Thus just as at the arrival of the people of God out of Egypt, all the nations that were inhabiting the promised land suddenly trembled with fear [cf. [Josh 2:9–11](#)], left their plows and heaps of crops in the middle of their work, and sought safety on foot, so too the land of Israel must remain deserted for a long time. This is why I am surprised that Aquila wanted to translate “potsherd and *emir*,” instead of *plows* and heaps of crops; Symmachus rendered it, “forest and *amir*”; the Septuagint, “Amorites and the Evaeans.” Theodotion alone recorded the Hebrew words *ars* and *emir*, which read more correctly in Hebrew as *hores* and *amir*, that is, “plowshares” and “heaps of crops.”

81. ([17:10a–b](#)) *Because you have forgotten God your savior, and have not remembered your strong helper.*

You will endure these things, O Israel, he says, because you have forsaken God your savior, who liberated you from Egypt, who subjected hostile nations to you, and you have not remembered your helper.

82. ([17:10c–d](#)) *Therefore you will plant a faithful plant, and will sow another’s sprout.*

This needs to be read in a rather restrained manner and with irony. He is saying, *Because you have forgotten God your savior and have not remembered your strong helper* [[Isa 17:10a](#)], should you then *plant a faithful plant*, and not instead *sow another’s seed*, which an enemy uproots? Or at least as follows: the reason you established my children in the land, who were born from the stock of my people, is so that you may make them someone else’s and very evil.

83. ([17:11](#)) *In the day of your planting, the wild grape, and in the morning, your seed will flourish; the harvest has been taken away in the day of inheritance, and you will grieve severely.*

He is saying, You will receive this harvest of your works [cf. [Isa 5:2](#)]: your vine (*sorech*) has degenerated into *the wild grape*; your seed promises hope in the sprout, but when it comes to maturity, it will be reaped by someone else, and then *you will grieve severely*, when you lose the things you hoped for and nearly already held.

84. ([17:12–14](#)) *Woe to the multitude of many people, like the multitude of the roaring sea, and the tumult of crowds, like the noise of many waters! (13) Peoples will make a noise like the noise of waters overflowing, but he will rebuke him, and he will flee far off, and he will be carried away as the dust of the mountains before the face of the wind, and as a whirlwind before a tempest. (14) In the time of the evening, behold there will be trouble; in the morning, and he will not be. This is the portion of those who have laid us waste, and the lot of those who have plundered us.*

Those who believe that the captivity of Damascus discussed above was carried out by the Romans also refer what is written here to the time of Christ and the apostles: “Man will bow to his Maker, and his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel” [[Isa 17:7](#)]. They further think that what follows, namely, “You will plant a faithful plant, and you will sow another’s seed, in the day of your planting the wild grape” [[Isa 17:10–11](#)], and so on, applies to the infidelity of the Jews. And this section that we just explained they interpret as concerned with the pagans who persecute the church. And that which follows, *He will rebuke him, and he will flee far away*, they understand by means of a tropological interpretation of the devil: it points to the destruction of

persecutors and demons.

But we are following the progression that was begun, and we are covering the historical foundation with a historical roof.<sup>771</sup> He is saying, Woe to all the nations who wage war against my people, whose attack was violent enough to be compared with the waves *of the sea*. But when raging warriors come and inundate my land, then their prince Sennacherib *will flee* from God, having been rebuked; and he is scattered *like dust seized by the wind*. As the top of a *whirlwind* revolves in a *tempest*, so will he be struck by an angel when he approaches Jerusalem to besiege it. He will come *in the morning* and see his powerful army destroyed. And *this will be the portion of those who have laid us waste*. The prophet says this either under the persona of the people, or as one who is uniting himself to his nation. Later on we read, “And the angel of the Lord went out, and struck in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand, and they arose in the morning, and behold they were all dead corpses. And Sennacherib the king of the Assyrians went away and departed and returned and dwelt in Nineveh” [[Isa 37:36–37](#); [2 Kgs 19:35–36](#)].

85. ([18:1](#)) *Woe to the land, the cymbal of wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia*. The Hebrew word *sel*, which Symmachus translated “sound,” Theodotion “ships,” and we rendered *cymbal*, Aquila twice translated “shadow.” But one should know that *sel* means “shadow,” but here the same syllable is repeated.

From this we can understand the statement *Woe to the land* that promises help under the shadow *of its wings*, and though the Scripture says, “He who dwells in the help of the Most High will sojourn under the shelter of the God of heaven” [[Ps 91:1](#)], in Hebrew this is written as “Will sojourn under the shadow of the Almighty” [[Ps 91:1](#)]. This land boasts that it possesses the very likeness of God, and when beset with dangers it promises refuge to others. Now this signifies either the Egyptian city No, which is now called Alexandria,<sup>772</sup> or Egypt, on which Jerusalem always leaned as upon a shaking reed that breaks and pierces the hand of the one leaning on it [cf. [2 Kgs 18:21](#); [Isa 36:6](#)].

And the progression here is very nice, that just as in the first vision the prophetic words threatened Damascus [cf. [Isa 17:1](#)] because the ten tribes looked to it for support, not asking for the Lord’s mercy, so even now devastation is declared to Egypt on account of whose support the invocation of God was neglected. For this is *the land which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia*, that is, beyond the streams of the Nile river, which no one doubts flows from Ethiopia into Egypt. Egypt can be called *cymbal of wings* on account of the swiftness of its crops; for the swift and

<sup>771</sup> Jerome uses this image frequently; cf. *Com in Mt*, pref 5; [In Is 1.5](#); *In Amos* 3.9.6.

<sup>772</sup> Cf. Jerome, *In Ezek* 30:14; *In Naum* 3:12. In the latter passage Jerome reports that a Hebrew informed him of the interpretation that the city of No refers to the place that was later named Alexandria. The No-Amon of [Nah 3:12](#) is today most often identified with the populous city of Thebes, which was the chief city of Egypt from 2000 BC until it was captured and brutally destroyed by the Assyrians in 663 BC. Interestingly, J. Van Doorslaer, “[No-Amon](#),” *CBQ* 11 (1949): 280–5, has made a case for Alexandria as No-Amon, partly based on Jerome’s arguments and partly on linguistic-historical grounds. My student, Sr. Albert Maria Surmansky, O.P., has completed a translation of *St. Jerome’s Commentary on Nahum* as her MA thesis at Ave Maria University (2011).

rapid flight of birds produces the sound of a *cymbal*.

From the fact that it follows, “He who sends ambassadors by the sea, and in vessels of papyrus upon the waters” [[Isa 18:2](#)], some understand this of the Roman Empire and relate the whole history to the time of Vespasian and Titus by whom Jerusalem was overthrown. But this does not agree with our faith, that the Lord would threaten the Roman Empire by means of which he will overthrow an impious nation, and, on the other hand, would say that gifts must be brought to Mount Zion [cf. [Isa 18:7](#)], unless perhaps we understand these things spiritually as well as with reference to the church.

86. ([18:2](#)) *He who sends ambassadors by the sea, and in vessels of papyrus upon the waters: Go, you swift angels, to a nation rent and torn in pieces, to a terrible people, after which there is no other; to a nation expecting, expecting and trampled upon, whose land the rivers have spoiled.*

Among the Hebrews “Egypt,” “Egyptian,” and “Egyptians” are designated with one word, *Mesraim*. This needed to be said lest anyone should cling to the word, when he finds the masculine used instead of the feminine gender, that is, [the Egyptian] man instead of the [Egyptian] land. For even now it is said, “*He* who sends ambassadors by the sea,” that is, *Mesraim* itself, the Egyptian *himself*. For *ambassadors* were sent to Jerusalem from Alexandria, which, as we have said, at that time was called No,<sup>773</sup> and *in vessels of papyrus*, that is, in letters or ships. They promised to help them and said, “*Go, swiftly, to the Jewish nation rent and torn in pieces* by the attack of the Assyrians, *to a formerly terrible people*, who enjoyed God’s empire, with whose power *no other* should be compared, *to a nation that expects help and nonetheless is trampled upon* by everyone, *whose land the rivers*, that is the various kings, have plundered.”

Others, however, think that the apostrophe<sup>774</sup> is directed to the Lord, and the sense is this: O God, *who sends* the prophets *on the sea* of this world, and who warns the people by means of letters that sail around, as it were, you command your own messengers: “*Go swiftly to my nation rent and torn to pieces, to a very strong people* who once were a terror to all the surrounding nations [cf. [Josh 2:9–11](#)]. They always *expect* God’s help but do not deserve to receive what they hope for because of the extent of their sins. The kings of various nations have devastated their land”; and the other things that follow.

Eusebius of Caesarea promised a historical interpretation in his title, but he strays off into diverse meanings. When I read his book, I found it to be far different from what he had promised in the table of contents. For wherever the history failed him, he passes over to allegory and links things that are so separated that I marvel at how he joins together stone and iron into one framework (*corpus*) by means of a new craft of words.<sup>775</sup> I have uttered this brief warning so that no one thinks that we have borrowed what we are saying from his sources; for even in the present section he says that the prophecy is directed against the Jews and Jerusalem, because at the beginning of the Christian faith they sent letters to all the nations, telling them not to accept the suffering of Christ [cf. [Acts 9:2](#)], and they sent them as far as

<sup>773</sup> See [5.85](#).

<sup>774</sup> See n. at [1.50](#).

<sup>775</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 73 (119, 6–1).



Ethiopia and the western region, and they filled the whole world with the dissemination of this blasphemy.

87. (18:3) *All you inhabitants of the world who dwell on the earth, when the sign will be lifted up on the mountains, you will see, and you will hear the sound of the trumpet.*

All surrounding nations, he says, when you *hear* my orders, as if it were a *sign lifted up on the mountains*, and my command, as if it were a *sound of a trumpet* blowing loftily, then you will see what I have commanded.

88. (18:4a) *For thus says the Lord to me: I will take my rest and will consider in my place.*

What has the Lord spoken to the prophet? That which follows: “Until what I have commanded comes, I will rest in my seat”—as the Jews think, in the temple, as we think, in heaven—“and I will consider,” he says, “what end of things is coming.”

89. (18:4b) *Just as the noon light is bright, and as a cloud of dew in the day of harvest.*

*Just as* throughout the whole day nothing is brighter than noon, when the sun glows red in the middle of the sky and illumines the whole world equally; *just as* in the summer and burning heat, when the harvester stripped for work bakes and proves the extent of his work by his panting, the moderate temperature of *dew* is very pleasing, if the morning’s moisture makes the parched stalks capable of being cut; so my words, which *I will consider in my place*, will come and be pleasing to all who believe in me.

90. (18:5–6) *For before the harvest it was all flourishing, and it will bud without perfect ripeness, and its sprigs will be cut off with pruning hooks, and what is left will be cut away, (6) and they will be left together to the birds of the mountains and the beasts of the earth, and the fowls will be upon it all the summer, and all the beasts of the earth will winter upon it.*

Since he had spoken of “noon,” and had promised the “cloud of dew” in the summer and at the harvest [cf. [Isa 18:4](#)], and had taken up a comparison derived from agriculture, he preserves the comparison in the rest and describes the pride of Egypt and the devastation of that people. He says that the corpses throughout the whole province must be devoured by birds. For just as crops that bloom before they are ripe quickly perish, and those that *bud* before the *perfect* time comes are useless, so, he says, the people of Egypt *will be cut off with pruning hooks*, as useless branches, and all the *sprigs* will be bare.

And lest you should think that he was speaking about a vine and not about men, he turns the metaphor into historical truth by saying, *And they will be left together to the birds of the mountains and the beasts of the earth*. For *birds* and *beasts* devour corpses, not the branches of trees that have been cut off. Let us read Ezekiel in more detail, where he prophesies against pharaoh and against Egypt, and we will find all these things written very plainly [cf. [Ezek 29–32](#)].

And what he says, *The fowls will be upon it all the summer, and all the beasts of the earth will winter upon it*, either truly signifies the number of those who have been killed, or it shows by the same comparison what was to be devastated by all nations.

91. (18:7) *At that time a gift will be brought to the Lord of hosts from a people rent and torn in pieces, from a terrible people, after which there has been no other, from a nation expecting, expecting and trampled upon, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, to Mount Zion.*

After the devastation of Egypt and the annihilation of its empire [cf. [Isa 18:1](#)], Israel will not

trust in the vanity of that nation's shadow, but will return to the Lord and will bring their *gifts to Mount Zion*, that is, into his temple, seeking him alone, whose aid is true and eternal. But we understand this as having been accomplished under Zerubbabel, Jesus, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

What we have expressed as *expecting, expecting*, and is written in Hebrew as “hoping, hoping,” the Septuagint on the other hand translated as “not hoping,” that is, *ανελπιστον*.<sup>776</sup> And this gave Eusebius an occasion to think that it was to be understood of the nations, which have neither hope nor God's covenant nor the prophets [cf. [Eph 2:12](#)], rather than of the Jews, because afterward gifts were to be sent by them to the church, which was set on the summit [cf. [Matt 5:14](#)], and spiritual sacrifices were to be offered [cf. [Rom 12:1](#); [1 Pet 2:5](#)].

92. ([19:1](#)) *The burden of Egypt. Behold, the Lord will ascend upon a light cloud, and will enter into Egypt, and the idols (simulacra) of Egypt will be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in his midst.*

It is customary in the Scriptures to link things that are clear to obscure things, and to declare with a clear voice things that were previously spoken enigmatically. And this is why he now makes the understanding clearer in the present passage. For he had threatened Egypt with the words, “Woe to the land that darkens with wings, which is across the rivers of Ethiopia” [[Isa 18:1](#)], and with the other things that the prophetic discourse has composed. Having uttered this threat against Egypt itself, he now says that, not by means of angels, but *the Lord* himself is coming *on a light*, that is, swift, *cloud*, and he is entering *into Egypt* and all *the idols* (idola) of *Egypt* are trembling, and the *heart* of the strong ones is melting; and Jeremiah's prediction is fulfilled: “I will scatter the images and make the idols cease from Memphis” [[Ezek 30:13](#)].<sup>777</sup>

Some<sup>778</sup> refer this entire prophecy to the time of the Savior, when he *entered upon a light cloud*, that is, the human body that he had assumed from the virgin, being weighed down by no seed of human commingling; or, because he was carried by a *light cloud*, that is, by a virgin's body, and at his entrance all the demons *trembled*, and at that time occurred the chief fall of the *idols*, who were unable to endure the Lord's presence.

93. ([19:2](#)) *And I will make Egyptians clash against the Egyptians, and a man will fight against his own brother, and a man against his own friend, city against city, kingdom against kingdom.*

When the Lord has entered into Egypt and his presence has destroyed the most powerful nation [cf. [Isa 19:1](#)], the chief victory will be to divide Egyptians against Egyptians and to have them fight against themselves by a rebellious hatred. It is plain that this happened at the time of the Assyrians and of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, while some remained encamped and others fought back. But Jeremiah is a witness that [Isaiah] is declaring these things of the Babylonian captivity, when he says, “Egypt [is] a fair and beautiful heifer; there will come from the north one that will goad her” [[Jer 46:20](#)]; and again, “The daughter of Egypt is confounded and delivered into the hand of the people of the north” [[Jer 46:24](#)]. Ezekiel too, with equal prophetic authority, agrees with this when he says, “I will make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon” [[Ezek 30:10](#)]; and again,

<sup>776</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (120, 14–0).

<sup>777</sup> Notice the memory slip.

<sup>778</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 75 (124, 15–25, 16).

I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, and I will put my sword in his hand, and I will break the arms of pharaoh; and they will know that I am the Lord when I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will stretch it forth upon the land of Egypt, and I will disperse Egypt among the nations. [[Ezek 30:24–26](#)]

But if we relate this to the time of the Savior, we may employ that citation from the Gospel: “Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth. I came not to send peace, but the sword; for I came to divide a man against his neighbor, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man’s enemies will be those of his own household [[Matt 10:34–36](#)].<sup>779</sup> And again in another passage, “They will be divided two against three and three against two, father against son, and mother against daughter, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law” [[Luke 12:52–53](#)].

94. ([19:3](#)) *And the spirit of Egypt will be broken in its bowels, and I will cast down their counsel, and they will consult their idols and their diviners, and their wizards and soothsayers.*

When a sedition has arisen in Egypt, whether between those who desire to serve the Babylonian and those who are unwilling to submit their necks to his yoke, or between some who believe in Christ and others who are resistant, *the spirit of Egypt will be broken* and torn, since all do not want the same things, and all *their counsel* will be reduced to nothing. At that time they will go to their *idols and diviners and soothsayers* and prophets, and *they will ask* those who are learned in the magic arts why these things have happened.

95. ([19:4](#)) *And I will deliver Egypt into the hand of cruel masters, and a strong king will rule over them, says the Lord of hosts.*

We are pursuing a twofold understanding, either of the Babylonian period, when Egypt was overcome by Nebuchadnezzar, or of the Roman Empire, when in the wake of Antony and Cleopatra’s defeat, Augustus Caesar subjugated Egypt.<sup>880</sup> The whole of Scripture testifies that the Babylonians were *cruel*. They did not spare little ones, pierced them with their own javelins, and did not pity pregnant women [cf. [Isa 13:18](#)]. Now even the Scripture of Daniel testifies that the Roman Empire was extremely powerful, when it sets forth that the fourth beast has teeth and horns of iron [cf. [Dan 7:7, 19](#)].

96. ([19:5–7](#)) *And the water of the sea will be dried up, and the river will be wasted and dried up, (6) and the rivers will fail; the streams of the banks will be diminished and be dried up. The reed and the bulrush will wither away. (7) The channel of the stream will be laid bare from its spring, and everything sown by the water will be dried up; it will wither away, and will be no more.*

It is natural that, when captivity comes by the wrath of God, his indignation is followed by pestilence, and all the elements together wreak havoc against those who have offended God. This is why it is written in another prophet that both the birds in the air and the fish in the waters have died out, so that everything for human use is taken away [cf. [Jer 12:4](#); [Hos 4:3](#); [Zeph 1:3](#)]. We say this if we want to understand the drying up of the Nile river and its streams literally. But if we take this metaphorically, we understand by *river* a kingdom and by *streams* its

<sup>779</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (126, 13–5).

<sup>880</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (127, 5–6).

generals, and in the greenness and *reed* and “papyrus,” we understand all the abundance of Egypt, so that through these things the wealth of Egypt is being described. Egypt is the most fertile in respect to these things. Let us read Ezekiel, where pharaoh the king is described as a great dragon who lives in the rivers and says, “The river is mine, and I made myself” [Ezek 29:3]; and he hears, “I will put a bridle in your jaws, and I will cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales, and I will draw you out of the midst of your rivers, and all your fish will stick to your scales, and I will cast you into the desert” [Ezek 29:4–5].

Now at the coming of Christ all these things must be understood tropologically, in accordance with what we read above: “The Lord will make the sea of Egypt a desert” [Isa 11:15];<sup>881</sup> and again: “The Lord will let his hand fall on the violent river of Egypt and will strike it into seven channels, so that one may cross it with sandaled feet” [Isa 11:15]; namely, so that all the error of the Egyptian waters, as well as the evil arts by which they deceived the peoples who were subject to them, will be *dried up* by the advent of Christ. And we can also interpret historically what he says: *The water of the sea will be dried up*. It does not signify the Great Sea, but the Lake of Mareotis.<sup>882</sup> For Scripture calls all gathering places of waters “seas” [cf. Gen 1:10].<sup>883</sup> These statements can also be understood as hyperbole. And what follows, *The channel of the stream will be laid bare from its spring*, depicts how both the stream and the spring dry out at the same time.

97. (19:8–10) *The fishers also will mourn, and all who cast a hook into the river will lament, and those who spread a net upon the surface of the water will languish away, (9) and they will be confounded who work in flax, combing and weaving subtle things, (10) and its watery places will be dry, all who were making pools to catch fish.*

Understand this too in two ways: first, that when Egypt has been laid waste and the whole province has been parched with drought, the *fishers mourn*, and those *who cast a hook into the river lament*, and those who worked *nets* and large fishing nets and who weaved vessels from reeds of various kinds, that is the princes and those of royal descent and the rulers;<sup>884</sup> second, that at the advent of Christ all the fishers of a perverse kind have been confounded. They caught men in order to lead them to perdition, contrary to apostolic discipline, and by a foolish wisdom they wove nets and large fishing nets with which they caught those who have perished. And no one is captured [by them] any longer in the land of Egypt, or rarely. We see this being fulfilled in the following work: the war monuments of the churches<sup>885</sup> are rising, and throughout all of Egypt the idols have fallen.

98. (19:11–13) *The princes of Zoan (Tanis) are fools, the wise counselors of pharaoh have given foolish counsel. How do you say to pharaoh, “I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings”? (12) Where now are your wise men? Let them tell you, and show what the Lord of hosts has purposed upon Egypt. (13) The princes of Zoan (Tanis) have become fools, the princes of Memphis have disappeared; they have deceived Egypt, the corner of its people.*

<sup>881</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (127, 32–4).

<sup>882</sup> A lake in a part of Libya bordering Egypt; cf. Pliny, 5.10.11, 62.

<sup>883</sup> See also Jerome, *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* (1.10; 36.24).

<sup>884</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 75 (129, 1–0).

<sup>885</sup> See 16.5.

The Psalmist also makes known that *Tanis* was a metropolis of Egypt,<sup>886</sup> for Moses performed many signs there, which are described in Exodus: “He appointed his signs in Egypt and his marvels in the field of Zoan (*Tanis*)” [Ps 78:43]. That Memphis was also devoted to the magic arts, the vestiges of former error show up to the present time. And this is succinctly indicated, that when the Babylonian devastation comes, all the counsels of the magicians and of those who promised the knowledge of the future are exposed as foolishness; and at the advent of Christ all things are reduced to nothing, since the prophets of Egypt do not find *counsel* for how they may put down the Christian doctrine. It is an idiom of the Scriptures to record *corner* for “kingdom,” because a corner holds together the peoples and is the strongest part of the whole house, as it were. And this is why Christ, who holds together the walls of two peoples, is said to be the cornerstone [cf. Eph 2:20].<sup>887</sup> And what he has added, *How do you say to pharaoh, “I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings”?* signifies that the Egyptians fabricate heroes and gods as the founders of their nation, Horos, Isis, Osiris, and Typhon.

99. (19:14–15) *The Lord has mingled in the midst of it the spirit of dizziness, and they have caused Egypt to err (errare) in all its works, as a drunken man staggers (errat) and vomits. (15) And there will be no work for Egypt to do, head and tail, him that bends down and that holds back.*

Let us first speak about the translation, and afterward we will discuss what is written. *Spirit of dizziness* can also be translated as “spirit of error.” Also, what we have translated as *Him that bends down and that holds back*, we can express as “bent and frolicking,” so that we understand old man and child. But while we were hurriedly translating what was written, we have expressed the Hebrew word *agmon* as *holding back*, having been deceived by the ambiguity of this word. Aquila translated it more meaningfully as στρεβλουντα, that is, one who does nothing correctly, but everything crookedly, so that it signified a child.

The sense then is that the princes of Tanis have become fools and the wise counselors have given foolish counsel to pharaoh [cf. Isa 19:11–13], and the princes of Memphis have vanished and have deceived Egypt, the corner of the peoples, because *the Lord mixed with them a spirit of error and dizziness*, so that they did not know what they are saying and they make Egypt *stagger* (errare). And just as a drunk does when he vomits what he had ingested, and does not know where he is, but lies down out of his mind, so Egypt will have no *work* or counsel that has either *head* or end, or is suitable either to the elderly or children, some of whom are silly and crazy because they have seen too many years, others of whom through playfulness and infancy do not know what they are doing. Now this passage will be coherent whether you want to receive it in respect to the Babylonian devastation, or to the advent of Christ, both according to the letter and according to the spiritual understanding.

100. (19:16–17) *In that day Egypt will be like unto women, and they will be amazed and afraid before the moving of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which he will move over it. (17) And the land of Judah will be a festivity to Egypt; everyone that will remember it will tremble before the counsel of the Lord of hosts, which he himself has designed concerning it.*

I think that it is better to find fault with one’s own error than to continue in the error,

<sup>886</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 75 (130, 11–9).

<sup>887</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (130, 23–8).

ashamed to admit one's ignorance. In what I translated, *And the land of Judah will be a festivity to Egypt*, for *festivity* the Hebrew reads *agga*, which can be translated both *festivity*—as *Haggai* (*Aggeus*) is translated “festive”—and “fear,” which Aquila meaningfully translated  $\gamma\upsilon\rho\omega\sigma\iota\nu$ , when someone in a panic and trembling glances about and dreads the approaching enemy. Thus if we want to take it in a good sense, that the memory of Judah is a cause of joy to Egypt, then *festivity* is said correctly. But if, on the other hand, as I [now] think, *festivity* is rendered as “fear,” we should understand it as dread or terror. For when Nebuchadnezzar comes and all the hands of the brave men have been made weak, like those of women, even the name of Judah would be a terror to Egypt, since, while he wants to offer it help, it has endured such great evils.

In our times, no one doubts that in comparison with the Christians all the pagans are *like women*, holding to feeble opinions, and that whatever they have said has been turned to folly. Meanwhile they are *amazed* at such a great conversion of a nation, and they marvel and understand *the Lord's hand*, and any of the Gentiles who has *remembered* the Christian name admits to the feebleness of idolatry out of *fear*.

101. (19:18) *In that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt speaking the language of Canaan, and swearing by the Lord of hosts; one will be called the city of the sun.*

I do not know what the Septuagint intended when it translated *city of the sun* as “Asedec.” One of our own<sup>888</sup> translates this as “city of justice.” He was led into error because he thinks that what is written in Hebrew as *ares* refers to the “earth,” which is written in different letters. Therefore, Symmachus has translated it better: “One will be called the city of the sun.” For the ambiguous word *ares* is used both for a “piece of clay” and “the sun,” because both are thirsty and dry. Failing to understand this passage, Onias built a temple in Egypt in the town of  $\eta\lambda\iota\omicron\pi\omicron\lambda\epsilon\omega\varsigma$  [Heliopolis]. Read the history of Josephus.<sup>889</sup> Others think that by *ares* the city of Ostracines is intended, that is,  $\omicron\sigma\tau\rho\alpha\kappa\omicron\nu$  (“piece of clay”) and the other cities adjacent to Rinocoruram and Cassium. It is plain even today that these cities in Egypt speak the Canaanite language, that is, Syrian. These interpreters think that because of their proximity, the Syrians and Arabs were transferred by Nebuchadnezzar into that land.

On the other hand, those who explain the prophecy in relation to the advent of Christ and the Roman Empire think that the *five cities* are either the law of the Lord, which was first translated in Alexandria, or the orders of the church<sup>990</sup>—bishops, priests, deacons, the faithful, the catechumens—or at least the spiritual understanding of the law, of which even the Apostle says, “I would rather speak with *five* words in the churches in my mind than with ten thousand in a tongue” [1 Cor 14:19]; and that one of the five cities is called *city of the sun*, namely that of justice, in whose wings there is healing [cf. Mal 4:2].<sup>991</sup>

102. (19:19–21) *In that day there will be an altar of the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and an inscription (titulus) to the Lord at its border, (20) and it will be for a sign, and for a testimony to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt. For they will cry to the Lord before the oppressor, and he will send them a Savior and a defender to deliver them. (21) And the Lord will*

<sup>888</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 76 (133, 8–0).

<sup>889</sup> Cf. [Josephus, Ant 13, 1–, 62–3](#),

<sup>990</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 76 (133, 12–5).

<sup>991</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (133, 6–).



*be known by Egypt, and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day, and will worship him with sacrifices and gifts, and they will make vows to the Lord, and perform them.*

From this passage to the end of the “vision” or *burden* of Egypt, both the Jews and our own interpreters think that it should be understood of the advent of Christ, but the Jews postpone these promises into the future, and we hold them in reserve as if they have already been performed. Now understand *day* as “time,” although Josephus claims that these were accomplished under Onias, who was a refugee in Egypt, and with a very large crowd of Jews built a temple and an altar. With groundless temerity he tried to fulfill the prophecy of Christ.<sup>992</sup> But the altar is called one in just the same way as there is one faith and one baptism and one church [cf. [Eph 4:5](#)].<sup>993</sup> Doubtless the words *and an inscription to the Lord at its border* signify the gospel and the writings of the apostles; for just as above, according to a figurative (*tropicam*) understanding, the land of Judah, inspiring fear or festivity to Egypt [cf. [Isa 19:17](#)], is understood as the Old Testament, so too the *inscription* at the borders of Egypt is shown to be the historical narrative of the Gospels. After all, he adds, *And it will be for a sign and for a testimony*, namely of the Lord’s passion. Then, those who have believed, while the Egyptians are clashing against Egyptians, and while a man is fighting against his own brother, and while city is struggling against city [cf. [Isa 19:2](#)], when the time of persecution has broken out, they will implore the Lord’s mercy, and at once the *Savior* will arrive, that is, Jesus, for *Jesus* expresses this in our language [cf. [Matt 1:21](#)]. And *the Lord will be known by the Egyptians, and they will know him*, either the persecutors who will have been overcome, or the believers who will have been delivered by the present help. *And they will worship him with sacrifices and gifts, and they will make vows to the Lord, and perform them.* Let the Jews respond: in the law there is a command that no altar be made except in one location that the Lord God has chosen, and sacrifices are offered only by priests of Levitical descent [cf. [Deut 26:2–4](#), [12](#)]. Behold, Isaiah teaches openly that the Egyptians know the Lord, and worship him, and offer sacrifices and offerings, and make vows and fulfill them. If the Egyptians have a priesthood, the testimony of Paul is fulfilled also in these things. He says, “When the priesthood is changed, it is necessary that there be a change of law” [[Heb 7:12](#)].

103. ([19:22](#)) *And the Lord will strike Egypt with a blow, and will heal it, and they will return to the Lord, and he will be pacified toward them, and heal them.*

“For the one whom the Lord loves, he disciplines, but he chastises every son whom he receives” [[Prov 3:12](#); [Heb 12:6](#)].<sup>994</sup> Persecution is not a question of rejecting believers but of testing and crowning them.

104. ([19:23](#)) *In that day there will be a way from Egypt to the Assyrians, and the Assyrian will enter into Egypt, and the Egyptian to the Assyrians, and the Egyptians will serve the Assyrian.*

Before the coming of Christ each nation had its own king, and no one was able to go from one nation to another. Under the Roman Empire all things became unified. Let the learned reader turn the pages of the ancient histories and find out that from the Euphrates to the Tigris every region in between belonged to the Assyrians. Consequently those whom we now call the

<sup>992</sup> Cf. Josephus, *Ant* loc. cit.

<sup>993</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 77 (134, 1–).

<sup>994</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (135, 12–3).

Syrians, identifying the whole from the part, were the ancient Assyrians. Now the words *The Egyptians will serve the Syrians* should be understood either as follows, that the Roman legions that have been deployed by a Syrian soldier guard Egypt, or that both nations conduct commerce between themselves and Syrian cities receive the abundance of Egypt, just as, on the other hand, Egypt is drenched with goods from Palestine and Phoenicia. Some of our interpreters<sup>995</sup> wrongly refer these things to the thousand years, and in a Jewish fashion declare that they will happen at the consummation of the world, when the antichrist comes from the Assyrians and takes possession of Egypt and Ethiopia.<sup>996</sup>

105. ([19:24–25](#)) *In that day Israel will be the third to the Egyptians and to the Assyrian, a blessing in the midst of the land (25) which the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, Blessed be my people of Egypt, and the work of my hands to the Assyrian, but Israel is my inheritance.*

Israel, which is between the Egyptian and the Assyrian, will not be crushed,<sup>997</sup> as sometimes the Antiochenes [cf. 1 and 2 Macc] and the Demetreids [cf. [1 Macc 7–9](#); [2 Macc 14–15](#)] entice the kingdom of Judah to themselves, and sometimes the Ptolemies lay claim to it as a possession for themselves; but the possession itself will be established under the Roman Empire, and through it under Christ's empire, as a thing made by him to whom belongs both Egypt and the Assyrians. And Israel will be blessed in all the earth, "for a law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" [[Isa 2:3](#)]. At that time the Lord will say, *Blessed be my people of Egypt*, when Christ the Lord, not Moses, leads forth countless thousands of men and they will fill the deserts and, with pharaoh drowned, they will say in the desert, "Let us sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously exalted; horse and rider he has cast into the sea" [[Exod 15:1](#)]. At that time *the work of the Lord's hands will be among the Assyrians*; for this refers chiefly to the fact that Egypt and Mesopotamia are the nations that are flourishing with swarms of monks, and they contend with each other with equal devotion. Now Israel is Christ's *inheritance*, that is, the location of his birth, cross, resurrection, and ascension. People flock to these locales from the whole world.

106. ([20:1–6](#)) *In the year that Tharthan entered into Ashdod (Azotus), when Sargon the king of the Assyrians had sent him, and he had fought against Ashdod (Azotus), and had taken it, (2) at that time the Lord spoke by the hand of Isaiah the son of Amoz (Amos), saying, Go, and loose your sackcloth from off your loins, and take off your shoes from your feet. And he did so, and went naked and barefoot. (3) And the Lord said, As my servant Isaiah has walked, naked and barefoot, it will be a sign and a wonder of three years upon Egypt, and upon Ethiopia. (4) So will the king of the Assyrians lead away the captivity of Egypt, and the deportation of Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered to the shame of Egypt, (5) and they will be afraid, and ashamed of Ethiopia their hope, and of Egypt their glory; (6) and the inhabitant of this island will say in that day, "Was this our hope, to whom we fled for help, to deliver us from the presence of the king of the Assyrians? And how will we be able to escape?"*

We have recorded the entire content of this chapter in order to explain the details bit by bit. Azotus, which is expressed in Hebrew as *Ashdod (Esdod)*, was the most powerful of the five

<sup>995</sup> Probably Victorinus Petabionensis.

<sup>996</sup> See [introduction](#).

<sup>997</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 77* (135, 24–8).

cities of Palestine. Sargon, king of the Assyrians, who is identified by seven names,<sup>998</sup> captured and held it, having sent the general of his army whose name was *Tharthan*. At that time, then, when the neighboring city was captured, Isaiah is commanded to lay aside his sackcloth tunic—for that was the dress of the prophet who was a member of a people who were bewailing their transgressions—and with the shoes, which the Septuagint call “Gallic shoes,”<sup>999</sup> [taken off] from his feet, he went about naked and barefoot, displaying a type of captivity of Egypt, and of the Ethiopians, since they had been allied with the Egyptians. Hence, just as Isaiah was walking about naked, and by means of his naked buttocks was showing hideousness to those who looked on, so all Egypt and Ethiopia would be stripped at the hands of the ravaging Assyrian, and absolutely nothing would remain in the land. Let no one think that this contradicts the happiness that is promised above to the Egyptians [cf. [Isa 19:25](#)]. For in the former passage there is proclamation of a future beatitude after the evils; but here the present captivity is being narrated, through which, after Israel, Damascus, and Philistia have been annihilated, [the king of the Assyrians] reached Egypt by a direct road and simultaneously defeated them and the Ethiopians. If this seems doubtful to anyone, let us record the testimony of Isaiah himself: “And Rabshakeh (*Rapsaces*) returned, and found the king of the Assyrians in a battle against Libnah (*Lomnam*); for he had heard that he had set out from Lachish. And he heard them speaking about Tirhakah (*Tharaca*) the king of Ethiopia, ‘He has come forth to fight against you’ ” [[Isa 37:8–9](#); cf. [2 Kgs 19:8–9](#)]. At the same time we learn of the obedience of the prophets, that a noble man—for the Hebrews have the tradition that Isaiah was father-in-law of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah king of Judah—was not ashamed to go naked. On the contrary, judging that nothing is more honorable than the commands of God, he laid aside his sackcloth. When that was cast off he was naked, since he previously had but one tunic, and it was made of goat’s hair. Now the phrase *A sign and a wonder of three years will be upon Egypt, and upon Ethiopia*, signifies that within three years Egypt and Ethiopia must be devastated by the Assyrians. *Then, it says, the inhabitant of this island*, that is of Jerusalem, which is pounded by the waves of the neighboring nations, *will say, “Was this our hope?”* Was it to them that we fled, so that they could offer us help, those who were not able to rescue themselves from the evil of captivity?

Therefore, this is the progression of God’s providence and of the one who governs the whole human race by his ineffable judgment. In opposition to the wrath of God, Israel placed its hope in Damascus: let the city that offers help to the wicked contrary to his will be demolished [cf. [Isa 17:1–3](#)]. Judah set its hope in the Egyptians: let Egypt as well be destroyed [cf. [Isa 18:1–4](#)]. The Egyptians placed their trust in the Ethiopians: let the Ethiopians too be conquered by the Assyrians [cf. [Isa 20:4–6](#)]. The Assyrians became arrogant, thinking that the victory came not from God but as a result of their own strength: let them also be conquered by the Babylonians [cf. [Isa 17:3](#)]. Babylon lifted up its head against the Lord: let it too be overcome by the Medes and Persians [cf. [Isa 13:17](#); [Dan 5:28](#)]. The Persians and Medes persecuted the people of God to some extent, and a very savage ram agitated all peoples to the east and west [cf. [Dan 8:3–4](#), [20](#)]: let the he-goat Alexander come and crush it with his feet [cf. [Dan 8:5–7](#), [21](#)]. And he was lifted

<sup>998</sup> Cf. [11]36.1–0.

<sup>999</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 78 (138, 21–3).

up exceedingly [cf. [Dan 8:8](#); [1 Macc 1:3](#)]: let him perish by means of poison,<sup>1100</sup> and let his kingdom be divided into parts [cf. [Dan 8:22](#); [11:4](#)], and when after a long time it experienced mutual conflict, let it too be ravaged by the conquering Roman [cf. [Dan 8:23–26](#)]. The Roman himself tore the flesh of the saints with teeth and horns of iron and with a cruel mouth [cf. [Dan 7:7–8](#), [19](#)]: let a stone be cut without hands from a mountain, and let it crush like pieces of clay the very powerful first kingdom, and also the iron one, then the fragile and weak one [cf. [Dan 2:34–35](#), [44–45](#)].

107. ([21:1a](#)) *The burden of the deserted sea.*

If I had not read in what comes later in this chapter, Babylon my beloved has been set as a wonder to me [[Isa 21:4](#)]; and again, Babylon has fallen, she has fallen, and all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground [[Isa 21:9](#)];<sup>1101</sup> and again, Go up, O Elam, besiege, O Mede [[Isa 21:2](#)]; I would hesitate to affirm that this was the “weight” that is imposed on *the deserted sea*. Therefore it is clear that Babylon is being called *the deserted sea*, since Jeremiah says in God’s name, “I will make her *sea deserted*, and I will dry up her land, and Babylon will be heaps of sand” [[Jer 51:36–37](#)]. Now it is called a *sea* because of the multitude of its inhabitants. And this is why above the multitude of Egypt is compared with the *sea*: the Lord will make the sea of Egypt a desert [[Isa 11:15](#)].

Now because the Medes and Persians fought against Babylon and overthrew it, we read in the words of Jeremiah cited above,

Sharpen the arrows, fill the quivers. The Lord has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes, and his mind [is] against Babylon, to destroy it, for this is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance for his temple. Upon the walls of Babylon lift up the standard, strengthen the watch, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes; for the Lord has purposed and done all that he spoke against the inhabitants of Babylon. [[Jer 51:11–12](#)]

And again,

Lift up a standard in the land, sound with the trumpet among the nations, sanctify the nations over her, declare against her to the kings of Ararat, Minni (*Menni*), and Ashkenaz, number Thapsar against her, bring the horse as the stinging locust, sanctify the nations against her, the kings of Media, its captains, and all its magistrates, and all the land under its authority. And the land will be in a commotion, and will be troubled, for the plan of the Lord against Babylon has awakened, to make the land of Babylon *deserted* and uninhabitable. [[Jer 51:27–29](#)]

108. ([21:1b–2a](#)) *As whirlwinds come from Africa, it is coming from the desert, from a terrible land. (2) A grievous vision has been announced to me.*

<sup>1100</sup> There are several late accounts that Alexander died by poisoning. Cf. [Diodorus 17.118](#); [Curtius 10.10.14ff.](#); [Plutarch, Alexander 77.2ff.](#) According to one account reported by [Arrian, Alexander 7.27](#), Aristotle was to have made up the poison. There is no mention of this in [1 Macc. 1](#), and modern scholarship does not generally believe it.

<sup>1101</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 79 (138, 27–39, 4).

He introduces the voice of the fearing Babylonian people,<sup>1102</sup> or of Babylon itself, since it hears that the Medes and Elamites are preparing an army against them and are *coming from the desert*. Then he illustrates this by a comparison and says, Just as a powerful storm normally *comes from the wind of Africa*, so devastation is *coming to me from the desert, from a terrible land*, whose name I am not even able to hear without dread. *A grievous vision has been announced to me*; for what is more grievous than the captivity at hand?

109. (21:2b) *He who is incredulous deals unfaithfully, and he who is a plunderer wreaks devastation.*

In Hebrew this can be read as follows: “You who kill, kill! And you who destroy, destroy!” Thus the prophet’s prediction is directed toward the Elamite and Mede himself. The prophet is encouraging him to complete what he has begun, to go up intrepidly, to lay siege to the very powerful city. But if, on the other hand, it is read as we translated it, as though it is said under a third person, *He who is incredulous deals unfaithfully, and he who is a plunderer wreaks devastation*, it must be linked with what precedes where Babylon declares that a “grievous vision has been announced” to it.

110. (21:2c) *Go up, O Elam, besiege, O Mede; I have made all his groaning cease.*

Do not be afraid of the multitude of Babylon, O Persian and Mede, he says, do not stand in awe of his former power; *I have made all his groaning cease*, and the weight with which previously he had been accustomed to oppress you. This means either that no one groans any longer and suffers under the oppression of the power of Babylon, or that Babylon itself has been overwhelmed by such great evils that it does not even have a groan to spare.

111. (21:3–4) *Therefore my loins are filled with pain, anguish has taken hold of me, as the anguish of a woman in labor. I fell down when I heard it; I was troubled when I saw it. (4) My heart failed, darkness amazed me; Babylon my beloved has been set as a wonder to me.*

The reason the prophets are difficult to understand (*obscuri*) is because very many of the personae are changed in their writings. Thus, even here the voice of Isaiah is introduced bewailing Babylon in a prophetic spirit, because evils will come upon it that are so great that even one who talks about them is overcome with fear and is unable to bring forth any words, when he sees that so much blood is being poured out. Moved by feelings of mercy—for he is a human being speaking about human beings—he suffers no less pain than a woman is accustomed to cry out during childbirth. But having become disturbed and fearful, he *falls down* on the ground with *darkened* eyes and does not know what he is saying.

Now what we have translated, *Babylon my beloved*, reads in Hebrew as *neseḫ esci*, and is the same word that we recorded at the beginning of the “burden of Babylon” [cf. [Isa 13:1](#)]: “upon the *gloomy* mountain” [[Isa 13:2](#)], for *neseḫ* is used for “gloomy” and “dark.” And this city is uniquely described this way on account of its height and its summit of pride that has been raised to the sky [cf. [Gen 11:4](#)].

112. (21:5) *Set the table, behold in the watchtower those who eat and drink; arise, O princes, take up the shield.*

This passage is interpreted in two ways. “O Medes and Elamites, to whom I said above: ‘Go up, O Elam, besiege, O Mede’ [[Isa 21:2](#)], take food, prepare yourselves for the coming battle,

<sup>1102</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (139, 17–9).

lest after the time of the fighting arrives, weariness keeps you back; and when you have eaten and drunk, *rise* and seize your weapons, fight it out with the Babylonian.” And what he says, *Behold in the watchtower*, is read in this sense: carefully observe what is coming. It can also be understood as follows: “O Babylon, prepare a table and feast for Belshazzar (*Balthasar*) [cf. [Dan 5:1](#)], the son of Evil-merodach [cf. [2 Kgs 25:27–30](#); [Jer 52:31](#)], the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar your king, and see what happens after dinner, when he was drinking a toast with prostitutes and concubines using the vessels of the Lord [cf. [Dan 5:2–3](#)]. *O princes*, who recline with the king—now this signifies the Medes and the Persians—*arise* and seize your weapons to kill the king.” We learn about this in more detail in the Book of Daniel.

113. ([21:6–10](#)) *For these things has the Lord said to me: Go, and set a watchman, and whatsoever he will see, let him tell. (7) And he saw a chariot with two horsemen, a rider upon a donkey, and a rider upon a camel, and he beheld them carefully with much consideration. (8) And a lion cried out, “I am upon the watchtower of the Lord, standing continually by day, and I am upon my ward, standing whole nights.” (9) Behold, this man is coming, the rider upon the chariot with two horsemen, and he answered and said, “Babylon has fallen, she has fallen, and all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground.” (10) O my threshing and the son of my threshing floor, that which I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I have declared unto you.*

He is giving the reasons for his former fear, why anguish took possession of him as a woman in labor and he fell upon hearing it, and became terrified and was surrounded by the darkness of error [cf. [Isa 21:3–4](#)].

*Thus has the Lord said to me, he says: Go, and appoint a watchman*, in order that he may predict what will come upon you by means of a prophet’s spirit. When I had *set him upon the watchtower*, he *saw a two-horse team coming and chariot* from above and *a donkey and a camel* drawing the chariot. Now he is signifying Cyrus, king of the Persians and of the Medes, coming with a small and a large empire. For the Persians were not well known before Cyrus, and were accorded no ranking among the nations; the Medes were always very powerful.

Therefore, that single *rider* of two nations, supported by his army, came against Babylon, and that *watchman* who had been *set to observe* what was coming *cried out* like a *lion*—or the prophet himself is being called a lion—and because there was a doubt concerning the persona of the *watchman*, who had seen Cyrus coming up, he himself explains it more clearly, and says, *I am upon the watchtower of the Lord, standing continually by day*, announcing that he himself is the *watchman* of the Lord, who was always *set* on prophetic duty, and while preparing day and night for the Lord’s empire, he speaks whatever he has commanded.

Well then, what did the *lion cry out*? *Behold this man is coming, the rider upon the chariot with two horsemen*. Doubtless Cyrus is being indicated here. And the lion himself, who above had cried out, *answered and said: Babylon has fallen, she has fallen, and all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground*. For when the *rider of the two-horse team* destroys Babylon, it is annihilated forever, and the temple of Bel and all the idols are flattened to the ground.

Now as for what follows, *O my threshing and the children of my threshing floor*, he is



making an apostrophe<sup>1103</sup> to Jerusalem and to the temple that is situated in the threshing floor of Ornan [cf. [1 Chr 21:15](#)], and he says to it, O Jerusalem and people, the child of my temple, may what I have said not seem incredible to you; for these are not my words but the Lord's, and through my mouth his words have resounded.

Some wrongly think that this is not said to Jerusalem but to Babylon, of which even above it says, "Babylon my beloved has been set as a wonder to me" [[Isa 21:4](#)], and that the sense is, you who have broken me will yourself also be broken, not by my words, but by the power of the Lord, who declares these things that will befall you.

Now what the Septuagint translators intended for themselves in this passage<sup>1104</sup> when instead of *lion*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *aria*, they translated "Uriah," I do not sufficiently comprehend, especially since the priest Uriah spoken of above [cf. [Isa 8:2](#)] who is called in testimony is written with different letters.

114. ([21:11–12](#)) *The burden of Dumah. He calls to me from Seir, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?"* (12) *The watchman said, "The morning is coming, also the night; if you seek, seek; convert, come."* For Dumah the Septuagint records "Idumea."

Now *Dumah* is not the entire province of "Idumea," but a certain part of it that faces toward the south and is twenty miles from the Palestinian city that today is called Eleutheropolis. The mountains of *Seir* are adjacent to it, the latter name being derived from the founder; for *Seir* means "shaggy" or "hairy," which Esau was [cf. [Gen 25:25](#); [27:11](#)]. We have conducted a more detailed discussion of this nation in our commentary on the prophet Obadiah,<sup>1105</sup> in which it became necessary to reread ancient history, and to draw upon the same visions of Ezekiel and Jeremiah [cf. [Jer 49:7–22](#), [28–29](#); [Ezek 25:8](#); [35:2–15](#)] as testimony, and especially the prophecy against Mount Seir [cf. [Obad 8–21](#)]. We also consulted the following from the Psalms: "Into Edom (*Idumeam*) will I stretch out my shoe" [[Ps 60:8](#)], and elsewhere: "The tabernacles of the Edomites, and the Ishmaelites, Gebal, and Ammon and Amalek" [[Ps 83:6–7](#)]. Amos too says, "For three crimes of Edom and for four I will not reject him, because he pursued his brother with the sword, and violated his own mercy" [[Amos 1:11](#)], or as Symmachus translated it, "his own bowels (*viscera*)." This is said because he dared to fight against his own relatives and people and to be divided from them with the ill will of an enemy. Now Esau's area was in the region of *Dumah*, that is, in the mountains of *Seir*. We believe that this region, as a metropolis, was defeated by the Assyrians or by Nebuchadnezzar, in accordance with the sequence of the earlier visions. When they remembered their former race, that they were descended from the stock of Abraham and Isaac, they implored the help of God and earnestly begged for his mercy, since they were compelled by necessity.

Therefore, the Lord is now narrating: he who is being besieged in *Seir* and is surrounded by enemies is imploring my help and says, "O watchman of Israel, you who protect your people with an everlasting guardianship and stay away throughout the *night*, as it were, while they sleep, to keep the enemy from breaking through, why do you not protect us as well with a similar clemency, we who are from his race?" I, the watchman and the one who is awake, of

<sup>1103</sup> See n. at [1.50](#).

<sup>1104</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 79 (140, 22–2).

<sup>1105</sup> Cf. Jerome, *in Abd* 6–.

whom it is written, “He who guards Israel will not sleep or slumber” [[Ps 121:4](#)], *respond* to them, “*The morning is coming* to my people, *also the night* to the nation of the Idumeans; I will supply them with light; I will abandon you in darkness.” Or possibly as follows: “When the night was spent, the light came; if you call upon my help and are of the stock of my servant Abraham, do not merely *seek* me in necessity, but *convert* to me with your whole heart (*animo*). *Come*, and I will receive the penitent.” Let this be said according to history.

On the other hand, some of the Hebrews read “Rome” here instead of *Dumah*, owing to the similarity of a letter, namely because *res* and *daleth* scarcely differ from each other. They think that the prophecy is directed against the Roman Empire, so that by a frivolous persuasion they think that the Romans are shown in the name Idumea. Now *Dumah* means “silence.”

115. ([21:13–17](#)) *The burden in Arabia. In the woods at evening you will sleep, in the paths of Dedanim (Dodanim). (14) When you meet the thirsty, bring him water; you who inhabit the land of the south, meet with bread the one who is fleeing. (15) For they have fled from before the swords, from before the sword that hung over them, from the bent bow, from before a grievous battle. (16) For thus says the Lord to me: Within one year, as if in the year of a hireling, all the glory of Kedar (Cedar) will be taken away, (17) and the remnant of the number of strong archers of the sons of Kedar will be diminished. For the Lord the God of Israel has spoken.*

To the one asking me and to the one considering at length and with deliberation which *Arabia* it was to which the prophetic discourse is being directed, whether the Moabites or the Ammonites and Idumeans and all the other regions that are now called *Arabia*, he has offered an occasion [to answer this] in what follows in this same vision: *All the glory of Kedar will be taken away. And the remnant of the number of strong archers of the sons of Kedar will be diminished.* Thus the Ishmaelites ought to be understood. The Book of Genesis shows that from Ishmael were born Kedar and those born of Hagar [cf. [Gen 25:12–16](#)]. By a corruption of their name they are called Saracens. They live throughout the whole desert. I think that even the poet speaks of them: “And the Barchaeans<sup>1106</sup> who wander widely.”<sup>1107</sup> So does the book cited above: “He will live in opposition *before* all his brothers” [[Gen 16:12](#)]. For a very wide desert stretches from India to Mauretania as far as the Atlantic Ocean. I think that a heading found in Jeremiah expresses this: “To Kedar and to the kingdoms of Hazor (*Asor*), which Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon struck” [[Jer 49:28](#)], and it follows immediately: “Thus says the Lord: Arise, and go up to Kedar, and devastate the children of the East; they will capture their tents and their flocks, they will carry off for themselves their curtains and all their vessels and camels” [[Jer 49:28–29](#)]; and again:

For Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has taken counsel against you, and has conceived designs against you. Arise, and go up to a nation that is at ease and that dwells securely, says the Lord; [they have] neither gates, nor bars,<sup>1108</sup> they dwell alone. And their camels will be for a spoil, and the multitude of their cattle for booty, and I will scatter into every wind those who have their hair cut round, and I will bring destruction upon them from

<sup>1106</sup> People from Barce.

<sup>1107</sup> [Virgil, Aeneid 4.42](#).

<sup>1108</sup> That is, the bolts or levers on large doors and gates.

all their confines, says the Lord. And Hazor (*Asor*) will be a habitation for dragons, desolate for ever; no man will abide there, nor will a son of man inhabit it. [[Jer 49:30–33](#)]

I have recorded nearly the whole testimony from Jeremiah in order that you may understand without any doubt what *Kedar* is. And consider how he has uniquely described the nation of the Ishmaelites, that is of the Saracens, who live in tents, who occupy residences that the night has compelled, who have herds and cattle and groups of camels, who do not have gates or bars, for they do not live in cities, but dwell in the desert. And therefore they were annihilated by the Babylonians, who leveled the city of Hazor to the ground, which was the metropolis of that nation in the desert. And yet he is not signifying the complete destruction of that nation, though the herds of camels and sheep were captured and their curtains and tents were divided by lot. For in one day they are accustomed to flee through the desert waste with a hundred dromedary camels [cf. [Isa 60:6](#)] and thousands more. *All the glory of Kedar (Cedar) will be taken away*, and with the number of *archers diminished*, in which fighting skill they are particularly capable, the rest who will have fled will remain.

Since we have come to understand what *Kedar* is, and what *Arabia* is, and what *Hazor* is, let us see what Isaiah the prophet is saying by *In the woods at evening you will sleep, in the paths of Dedanim*. The word *arab*, as we have often said already, is used for “evening,” “Arabia,” “raven,” “plain,” and “the west”; and that which we translated in accordance with the Septuagint, *You will sleep*, can be translated, “You will delay,” or “You will dwell,” that is, *αυλισθησεσθαι*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *thalinu*. *Dedanim* too is translated as “near ones” and “relatives.” And so, it is now being predicted to the Jews, who will have been able to escape the Babylonian siege and to move to the nearby desert away from the devastation of the entire province, that they will dwell in the desert of Arabia on a journey that leads to their brothers. And again, the word turns to the Ishmaelites and exhorts them to mercy: “Run and *bring water* to your weary brothers and to those in danger from the heat of adverse thirst; for the heat of the sun is so great that if you do not bring help, they may perish in the desert. And *bring* not only *water* but also *bread* to those who are *fleeing*. Thus your clemency may relieve those whom the siege has worn out.” And at the same time, he gives the reasons why he commands these things to be done, when he says, “*They have fled* the Babylonian sword, *they have fled* the bows of the Elamites, *they have fled* the battle that threatens. Do not despise the wretched ones: quickly your captivity will also come. For just as *the year of the hireling* is swift, and he thinks all labor is brief, provided that he obtains the desired wage, so *all glory* of the *sons of Kedar* will be taken away from you, and your arrows will be crushed, and a small number of fighters will remain.”

Because it says, *Within a year, all the glory of Kedar will be taken away*, some think that it is not the Babylonian captivity that is being announced, of which also Jeremiah speaks [cf. [Jer 25:11](#)], but that of the Assyrians, who on a very wide scale persecuted the Saracens one year after the Jewish devastation. Moreover, that passage that we translated, *You that inhabit the land of the south, meet with bread the one who is fleeing*, and that we read in the imperative mood, as if it were said under the persona of the Lord, they affirm that in Hebrew it can be read as follows: “Those who inhabit the land of the south met with bread the one who was fleeing.”

Consequently, when God said to them, *When you meet the thirsty, bring him water*, they, with malicious intent, brought bread without water, in order to increase their thirst by means of food.

116. ([22:1a](#)) *The burden of the valley of vision*. The Septuagint translated this more clearly as “The word of the valley of Zion (*Sion*),” although this is not how the Hebrew reads.

For this city [Zion] is a seedbed of the prophets. The temple was built upon it and the visions of the Lord were multiplied there. Because, therefore, it is set among the other nations and is reputed as one [city] out of many, it is not called “mount.” This is in accordance with the following prophetic words: “Its foundations are on the holy mountains, the Lord loves the gates of Zion above all the tents of Jacob” [[Ps 87:1](#)]. Instead it is called a *valley*, because it has been laid low. Jeremiah says this same thing with different words, when he receives the cup full of wine, gives it to all nations, and finally offers it to Jerusalem to drink, vomit, stagger, and rave. This signifies that even this city must be devastated by the Babylonians, which the history of Kings and of Jeremiah narrates in greater detail [cf. [Jer 25:15–18](#)].

From this we understand that God is the Creator of all without distinction, and he governs all with the same judgment.<sup>1109</sup> This accords with what he himself says through Amos: “Are you not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel, says the Lord? Did I not bring up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines out of Cappadocia, and the Syrians out of Cyrene? Behold the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom” [[Amos 9:7–8](#)]. To prevent the Jews from thinking that they have an advantage precisely because of their merits, since they were led out of Egypt, he says that other nations too were transferred to different lands by his command.

117. ([22:1b–2a](#)) *For what is it with you also, that you too have wholly gone up to the housetops, (2) full of clamor, a crowded city, an exulting city?*

A Hebrew related to me<sup>1110</sup> that the current vision does not pertain to the time when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and led Zedekiah, deprived of his eyes, in chains to Babylon [cf. [2 Kgs 25:1–7](#)], but to the time of Sennacherib, when Shebna (*Sobnam*) the high priest betrayed a large part of the city, and only Zion, that is, the citadel and the temple, and the nobles remained.<sup>1111</sup> It was similar to the situation when the Gauls attacked and a Roman city saved the patricians and the flower of the youth in the citadel.<sup>1112</sup> But we can say this also concerning the Babylonian captivity, although Eusebius refers everything to the coming of Christ and thinks that it was fulfilled in the time of Vespasian and Titus.

Let us then make use of the details and attain briefly to a threefold exposition. *For what is it with you also?* What do you have, O Zion, he says, *that you too have wholly gone up to the housetops?* When he says, *you too*, he shows that the others went up first. And you were

<sup>1109</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 81 (143, 21–8).

<sup>1110</sup> Although Jerome claims to be speaking autobiographically here, it was Eusebius who originally reported this interpretation from a Hebrew scholar. See M. J. Hollerich, [Eusebius of Caesarea’ Commentary on Isaiah: Christian Exegesis in the Age of Constantine](#) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 150.

<sup>1111</sup> See below under [22:15–5](#)

<sup>1112</sup> I have not been able to identify Jerome’ source.

reputed among the nations, you who are being besieged by enemies and go up on your housetops full of the wailing and crying of miserable women, you the once royal city?

118. ([22:2b–3](#)) *Your slain have not been slain by the sword, nor [your] dead in war. (3) All the princes have fled together, and have been bound hard; all who were found are bound together, they have fled far off.*

If you refer this to the time of Sennacherib, when the city was partially captured, they are said correctly not to have been captured *by the sword* nor cut down *in war*, but by betrayal; while some were fleeing from the city, others whom the enemy oppressed were bound in chains. But if you refer this to the Babylonian captivity—which is also truer—we will say that they were conquered not in a battle but in a siege. But if you want, with Eusebius,<sup>1113</sup> to understand this tropologically of the advent of Christ, you will say that they *were not slain by the sword* but by infidelity, and *all their princes* withdrew from God and were *bound* with the cords of sins [cf. [Prov 5:22](#)], nor were there any of the Pharisees who were not *bound* by the nets of the devil.

119. ([22:4](#)) *Therefore have I said, Depart from me, I will weep bitterly; do not be inclined to comfort me, for the devastation of the daughter of my people.*

If the prophet is shedding tears [[Isa 22:4](#)] with the feelings of one who is mourning for the devastation of Babylon, and if he is saying, “Anguish has taken hold of me, as the anguish of a woman in labor, I fell down when I heard it, I was troubled when I saw it, my heart failed, darkness amazed me, Babylon my beloved has become a wonder to me” [[Isa 21:3–4](#)], how much more now can he receive no consolation for the collapse of his own city! He devotes himself completely to mourning.

120. ([22:5a](#)) *For it is a day of slaughter and of treading down, and of weeping to the Lord the God of hosts in the valley of vision.*

He gives the reasons, in accordance with the threefold understanding, for why he said, “Depart from me, I will weep bitterly” [[Isa 22:4](#)]: because Zion, the onetime mount of visions and now *valley of weeping*, has been *tread down*.

121. ([22:5b–6](#)) *Searching the wall, and magnificent upon the mountain, (6) and Elam (Aelam) took the quiver, the chariot of the horseman, and the shield stripped the wall.*

The army of Babylon is being described as entering the city, occupying the temple, and proudly advancing through the streets in four-horse chariots. And what it *stripped*, golden double doors, and the walls covered with the inlaid work of marble, and the *shield*, which customarily cover other things, has an elegant sound to it in Hebrew. The meaning is very beautiful, that he has not protected any shield but stripped them down, because all the wealth has been dug out by the strength of soldiers. But if it is the Elamites who are set for battle, which is a city of the Assyrians, this cannot be referred to the time of the Roman devastation, unless perhaps we interpret everything allegorically.

122. ([22:7–9a](#)) *And your choice valleys will be full of chariots, and the horsemen will place themselves in the gate, (8) and the covering of Judah will be revealed, and you will see in that day the armory of the house of the woods, (9) and you will see the breaches of the city of David, that they have been multiplied.*

<sup>1113</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 81 (144, 23–9).

He is clearly describing the captivity that happened in the eleventh year of the king Zedekiah [cf. [2 Kgs 25:2](#); [Jer 39:2](#)], of which Jeremiah also speaks: “Behold I will call together all the families of the kingdoms of the north, says the Lord, and he will come, and each one will set his throne in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem and upon all its walls round about” [[Jer 1:15](#)]. Lest we think that this was predicted with words and not fulfilled in deeds, the same Jeremiah says, “In the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the fifth [day] of the month, the city was opened, and all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and set themselves in the middle gate” [[Jer 39:2–3](#)]. At that time, then, round about the city of Jerusalem, an army of countless number poured in, and the holy of holies was opened; and the armory, which had been set in a grove, was unlocked by the enemy’s plundering, and through each part of the city the enemy entered, since the walls had been breached.

123. ([22:9b–11](#)) *And you have gathered together the waters of the lower pool, (10) and have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and broken down houses to fortify the wall, (11) and you have made a ditch between the two walls and the water of the old pool, and you have not looked up to the one who had made it, nor regarded him that wrought it even at a distance.*

He is telling how they prepared the city for the siege and transferred the waters of the lower pool, which could have been captured, to the upper and more fortified pool. They also destroyed houses in order to build walls, and they measured by individual families how much water each house was to receive. And they made a cistern between two walls, and restored the old pool to preserve the water, and they no longer invoked the help of God, who is the founder of the city and the Lord of the pool. In other words it is as if he were saying, You trust in man, and not in God, who is the maker of man.

Some,<sup>114</sup> in accordance with mystical interpretations, understand the *old pool* of the shadow of the law [cf. [Heb 10:1](#)], and *between the two walls* of the New and Old Testaments, the *ditch* of the Pharisees, because their traditions and commands cannot hold water [cf. [Jer 2:13](#); [Matt 15:1–9](#)], and because *they did not look up to* the Son of God, nor did they believe in the presence of the one whom *long ago*<sup>115</sup> *they regarded not*, for they were always incredulous with respect to God’s commands.

124. ([22:12–14](#)) *And the Lord, the God of hosts, in that day called to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth, (13) and behold joy and gladness, killing calves and slaying rams, eating flesh, and drinking wine: “Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we will die.” (14) And [the voice] of the Lord of hosts was revealed in my ears: Surely this iniquity will not be forgiven you till you die, says the Lord God of hosts.*

With the captivity at hand and Jerusalem under siege, when sword, famine, [and] thirst were pressing down upon the city, Jeremiah summoned the people to repentance; and instead of repentance, the kings, princes, and wretched common people devoted themselves to feasting out of the sense of desperation that afflicts those who are perishing. But nothing so offends God as lifting one’s neck erect after committing sins, and showing contempt out of desperation. He also speaks about this through Amos: “For three and four crimes I will not reject him” [[Amos 1:3](#), [6](#), [9](#), [11](#), [13](#); [2:1](#), [4](#), [6](#)], because he both devised evil, committed it, and

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (145, 30–46, 8).

<sup>115</sup> Jerome left “ong ago” out of the lemma.



did not repent of it; in addition, he even taught it. This is why it is now said, *Surely this iniquity will not be forgiven you till you die.*

Allegorical interpreters think that this was predicted about the passion of Christ, because God has called the unhappy people to repentance even after the cross of the Lord and Savior, and nevertheless that people devoted themselves to desperation and pleasure. They refer the beginning of this vision, in which he says, “Full of clamor, a crowded city, an exulting city” [[Isa 22:2](#)], to that time when the people were incited by the Pharisees to shout out with one voice against Jesus, “Crucify him, crucify him, we have no king but Caesar” [[John 19:15](#)]. Also, the Apostle has made use of the precedent of this testimony when writing to the Corinthians concerning the resurrection, “If the dead do not rise, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die” [[1 Cor 15:32](#)].<sup>1116</sup>

125. ([22:15–25](#)) *Thus says the Lord God of hosts: Go, enter unto him who dwells in the tabernacle, to Shebna (Sobna) who is over the temple. (16) Why are you here, or as if you were somebody here, since you have hewed out for yourself a sepulcher here? You have hewed out a monument in a high place, carefully a tabernacle for yourself in a rock. (17) Behold, the Lord will cause you to be carried away, as a rooster is carried away, and he will lift you up as a garment. (18) He will crown you with a crown of tribulation; he will toss you like a ball into a large and spacious land. There you will die, and there will the chariots of your glory be, the shame of the house of your Lord. (19) And I will drive you out from your station, and depose you from your ministry. (20) And it will come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim (Heliachim) the son of Hilkiah (Helchia), (21) and I will clothe him with your robe, and will strengthen him with your sash, and will give your power into his hand, and he will be as a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. (22) And I will lay<sup>1117</sup> the key of the house of David upon his shoulder, and he will open, and no one will shut, and he will shut, and no one will open. (23) And I will fasten him as a peg in a sure place, and he will be for a throne of glory to the house of his father. (24) And they will hang upon him all the glory of his father’s house, diverse kinds of vessels, every little vessel, from the vessels of cups even to every instrument of music. (25) In that day, says the Lord of hosts, the peg will be removed that was fastened in the sure place, and it will be broken and will fall, and that which had hung on it will perish, because the Lord has spoken.*

Above<sup>1118</sup> we said that Shebna was a high priest who betrayed the city to the Assyrians. But because this is a Hebrew tradition, and the Scripture does not say so, let us understand him as proud, arrogant, pleasure-loving, and as one who treads the people under his feet, and because he did all that the prophet describes, his priesthood was transferred to Eliakim the son of Hilkiah. Accordingly when that one had been ejected, he became the new high priest. From this we understand that pride needs to be avoided at all costs. It offends God; not even the privilege

<sup>1116</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 81 (147, 3–).

<sup>1117</sup> Lit., “ive.”

<sup>1118</sup> See [5.117](#); cf. *Eus Is* 82 (147, 19–7). Eusebius reports that a “ebrew” told him that Somnas was actually a high priest and a man of dissolute character devoted to pleasure. Both these details are attributed by Jewish sources to Rabbi Eleazar. Cf. Hollerich, *Eusebius of Caesarea’s* Commentary on Isaiah, 150, 183.

of the high priesthood can be protected from it. Some think that this is the Shebna and the Eliakim of whom the same prophet wrote,

The king of the Assyrians sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah with a great army, and he stood in the aqueduct of the upper pool on the way of the fuller's field. And there went out to him Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the house, and Shebna (*Sobna*) the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph one of the recorders.

[[Isa 36:2–3](#)]

Thus the prophet is commanded to go in to the high priest, who according to the Septuagint was living “in the little chapel (*pastophorio*)”;<sup>1119</sup> according to Aquila, “in the tabernacle.” Theodotion follows the Hebrew truth and renders it, “Go in to that *Sochen*,” which can be translated as “just” and “straight,” namely so that, by the use of opposites, “unjust” and “twisted” are understood, with reference to the temple's high priest.

*And you will say to him, “You who dwell in the house of God, whose crimes are running wild throughout the whole city, why are you secure in your works, as if you do not fear the captivity; why have you hewed out for yourself a sepulcher in the rock, and constructed it arrogantly, so that ambition has followed you even unto death. Listen to what is the Lord's verdict against you: just as a rooster is carried away on the shoulder of a porter, and each man lifts up his garment on his back, so your transference into captivity will be easy. You will have a crown, not of a plate of gold and of the Lord's sanctification [cf. [Exod 28:36](#); [29:6](#)], but of tribulation and anguish. For just as a ball, if it is tossed down a slope, cannot stand still, but it rolls at a swift pace, so also you will be conducted to the largest land—which we understand either as Egypt or the plains of Babylon—and there you will die and there will be the chariots of your glory, all the power and wealth supported by which you now advance. There you will feel the shame of the house of your Lord, because you will be enduring these things on account of the evil works and the polluted temple of your God. I will drive you out from your station and cast you out from the office of your high priesthood, and in your place I will clothe my servant Eliakim, son of Hilkiah with your vestments, and I will adorn him with your sash, just as Eleazar was clothed with the vestments of Aaron his father [cf. [Num 20:28](#)]. I will lay on him the authority of the temple, who regards the people not as a slave that has been subjected to him, but as his own beloved son. He will receive the key of my house and will carry it on his shoulder; he will have authority over all ceremonies. And just as in the case of a peg, if it is fastened onto the wall of the temple and is located in a very strong place, all the vessels of the priest and Levites are hung upon it, both the things that are necessary for sacrifices and for every kind of music; so all the people will depend on the authority of Eliakim my servant.”*

Now as for what he says, *In that day the peg will be removed that was fastened in the sure place, and it will be broken and will fall, and that which had hung on it will perish, because the Lord has spoken*; many refer this to Shebna (*Sobnam*), because when Eliakim had been fastened in as the peg, the former peg that had been fastened in collapses. But because he follows up with *And that which had hung on it will perish*, which did not take place when Shebna was cast

<sup>1119</sup> L & S: a little chapel in a temple where the image of a god was preserved and his servants abode, cf. [1 Macc 4:38](#); [4:57](#).

aside, we understand this as said because when Shebna was deposed, Eliakim received the high priesthood. The final captivity destroyed the dignity of his priesthood.

Those who take everything anagogically<sup>1120</sup> think that the priesthood of the Jews falls with the pontificate of Shebna; and with the succession of Eliakim, which means “God rising again,” the mysteries of the evangelical worship are being shown. Thus what follows, *In that day, says the Lord of hosts, the peg will be removed, that was fastened in the sure place, and it will be broken and will fall*, pertains to the collapse of the former people. But no one doubts, both according to history and according to allegory, that since he had said *peg*, the metaphor is being preserved in the hanging of vessels of diverse kinds, and that when the former things were broken, others are hung up.

126. ([23:1–2a](#)) *The burden of Tyre. Howl, you ships of the sea, for the house has been destroyed, from whence they had been accustomed to come; from the land of Cyprus (Cethim) it has been revealed to them. (2) Be silent, you who dwell on the island, the trade of Sidon.*

The prophet Ezekiel explains more clearly and in greater detail both the overthrow of Tyre and the reasons for its overthrow, when he says,

Son of man, because Tyre said of Jerusalem, “Aha, the gates of the peoples have been broken; she has turned to me, I will be filled, she has been deserted,” therefore, thus says the Lord God: Behold I [am] against you, O Tyre, and I will cause many nations to come up to you, as the waves of the sea rise up, and I will break down the walls of Tyre, and her towers will be destroyed, and I will scrape her dust from her. [[Ezek 26:2–4](#)]

Now which are these “many nations” that inundate Tyre as the “waves of the sea”? He reveals their names in what follows:

Behold, I will bring against Tyre Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, from the north, the king of kings, with horses, chariots, horsemen, companies, and much people. Your daughters that are in the field, he will kill with the sword, and he will surround you with fortifications, and will cast up a mound round about, and he will lift up the shield against you, and he will set engines of war and battering rams against your walls, and will destroy your towers with his arms. [[Ezek 26:7–9](#)]

He continues to reveal them in the other things that follow down to the end of the vision. For the same Scripture composes in another prophecy as well, which is seen against the Egyptians: “Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has made his army to undergo hard service against Tyre; every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled, and there have been no wages given to him, nor to his army for Tyre” [[Ezek 29:18](#)]. By means of these things, he is indicating that over a long period of time the army of Babylon heaped up a mound. Hence Nebuchadnezzar was the first to attempt to do what Alexander did later on, when he joined the island to the mainland.<sup>1121</sup>

Therefore, just as we read above about God’s threats against Babylon, Philistia, Moab,

<sup>1120</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 82 (148, 29–49, 4).

<sup>1121</sup> Cf. [Quintus Curtius 4; Arrian, A/lex. 2.](#)

Egypt, the Idumeans, and the Ishmaelites, because they scoffed at the captivity of his people, so even now a prophecy is composed against Tyre, the hostile scoffer at Jerusalem's overthrow, that she too must be destroyed by the same enemy. We have read the historical narratives of the Greeks, and especially of those who describe the wars of the Assyrian nation.<sup>1122</sup> There we have discovered that after the captivity of Jerusalem, in succession the Philistines, Arabians, Damascenes, and the Egyptians were overthrown. Now, the prophet Amos explains at the beginning of his book that these nations, and especially Tyre, always fought against Israel and rejoiced over Israel's destruction [cf. [Amos 1:9–10](#)]. Moreover, the Psalmist briefly sings praises to God and declares,

O God, who will be like to you? Be neither silent nor still, O God. For behold, your enemies have made a noise, and those who hated you have lifted up their head. They have taken a malicious counsel against your people, and have made designs against your saints. They have said, "Come and let us destroy them as a nation, and let the name of Israel be remembered no more." For they have made designs with one consent, they have made a covenant together against you, the tabernacles of the Edomites, and Ishmaelites, Moab, and the Hagrites (*Agarens*),<sup>1123</sup> Gebal, Ammon, Amalek, and Philistia (the foreign born), with the inhabitants of Tyre. [cf. [Ps 83:1–7](#)]

From all of this we learn that the weight of God's wrath came against the harlot Tyre, which is being described here by the image of a prostitute, in Ezekiel under the metaphor of a ship [cf. [Ezek 26:18](#)].

*Howl*, he says, *you ships of the sea*, which we read in the Septuagint as "of Carthage." The Hebrew has "of Tarshish." I have discussed this both in my commentary on Jonah the prophet and in a certain letter.<sup>1124</sup> Now since Carthage is a colony of the Tyrians, in the current passage we can take Tarshish not as the *sea* generally, but as "Carthage." For ships do not come to Tyre from Africa, nor from the land of Cethim, which some translate as Cyprus;<sup>1125</sup> for up to the present day there is among them a city called Citium, where even Zeno the heresiarch of the Stoic sect came from—although the majority of our interpreters, and especially the beginning of Maccabees, think that *Cethim* refers to the islands of Italy and of Macedonia. For the Scripture records this, that Alexander king of the Macedonians came from the land of Kittim (*Cethim*) [cf. [1 Macc 1:1](#)]. Even the identification of it as an island is not false; for later on it became linked to the mainland by Nebuchadnezzar, or by Alexander, on account of the siege in which great piles of earth were heaped up into the narrow channel. He speaks of *the trade of Sidon* too, in accordance with the following little line in which he says, "Be ashamed, O Sidon" [[Isa 23:4](#)]. For history hands down that Tyre is a colony of Sidon.<sup>1126</sup>

127. ([23:2b–3](#)) *Passing over the sea, they have filled you; (3) in many waters of the seed of the Nile, the harvest of the river [is] her revenue.*

<sup>1122</sup> Berossus, *Chaldean Histories*.

<sup>1123</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 83 (150, 1–).

<sup>1124</sup> Cf. [Jerome, In Ionam 1.3; Ep. 37.2](#).

<sup>1125</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 83 (150, 19–1).

<sup>1126</sup> Cf. Justin, *Epitome* 18:3.

That Tyre rejoices in her trade and is the market of the whole world [cf. [Isa 23:3b](#)], both the present times prove and Ezekiel describes with a lengthy speech [cf. [Ezek 26–28](#)]. Now no one doubts that the traders pass over the seas while transporting merchandise. The city itself does not have its wealth so much from the land of its own territory, which is very confined and is hemmed in by the borders of Galilee and Damascus, as from the transportation of ships. The whole of the *Nile* and the productivity of Egypt flows into Tyre from the vicinity. Instead of *Nile*, which we read in Hebrew as *sior*, the Septuagint and Theodotion have translated “merchants.” This word means “troubled,” and by this, it means the waters of the Nile are signified, since Jeremiah testifies, “What do you have to do with Egypt, that you drink the waters of Geon?” [[Jer 2:18](#)]. The Hebrew reads *sion* here, that is “troubled.”

128. ([23:4](#)) *Be ashamed, O Sidon, for the sea speaks, the strength of the sea, saying, “I have not been in labor, nor have I brought forth, nor have I raised young men, nor brought up virgins to growth.”*

I said above that Tyre was a colony of the Sidonians.<sup>1127</sup> Listen, then, O mother, to all the seas sounding out together against your daughter and as it were emitting a voice, seas which by their nature cannot speak. “In vain have I accumulated riches, without reason have I conveyed wealth from the whole world to Tyre. That rich one, that luxurious one and the one who once rejoiced in the multitude of her people, in which a crowd of mortals were born, a throng of boys, swarms of youth, whose streets made great noise from the games of virgins, children, young men, and girls, has now been reduced to a desolation.” Now it is common usage that the *προσωποποιεῖα* (dramatizations) be made from the speechless things.<sup>1128</sup>

129. ([23:5](#)) *When it will be heard in Egypt, they will be sorry when they hear of Tyre.*

This is clear, that the Egyptians, after they have heard that a very powerful neighboring nation has been annihilated after a long siege, would know that destruction is approaching for them as well.<sup>1129</sup>

130. ([23:6](#)) *Pass over the seas; howl, you inhabitants of the island. Again for sea and “Tarshish” the Septuagint translated “Carthage.”*

We read in the historical narratives of the Assyrians that the Tyrians, while they were under siege, after they saw no hope of escape, mounted ships and fled to Carthage, or to other islands of the Ionian and Aegean Sea.<sup>1130</sup> And this is why in Ezekiel, it is said, “There have been no wages given him, nor to his army from Tyre” [[Ezek 29:18](#)], because all the wealth of the city was transferred and all the nobles abandoned it as empty.

131. ([23:7a](#)) *Is not this your [city], which gloried from the days of old in her antiquity?*

He convicts Tyre of pride, because it gloried in the antiquity of its foundation,<sup>1131</sup> and did not look to God, but it considered itself everlasting, calling to mind the names of its founding fathers.

<sup>1127</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 83 (150, 32–4).

<sup>1128</sup> The Greek term refers to personifications of inanimate objects or scriptural anthropomorphisms, in this case, of the sea speaking. Cf. *Eus Is* 63, 2 (M24, 501D).

<sup>1129</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 83 (150, 36–51, 1).

<sup>1130</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (151, 2–).

<sup>1131</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (151, 4–).

132. (23:7b) *Her feet will carry her far off to sojourn.*

He is speaking of those who had remained in the city and were led captive to Babylon.

133. (23:8a) *Who has made this design against Tyre, that was formerly crowned?*

Again, read Ezekiel and you will understand from the lamentation of its prince the extent of Tyre's glory [cf. [Ezek 27](#)]. He calls it *crowned* because, just as the king among a great multitude of men raises his head that has been adorned with a diamond, so Tyre resplendent and exalted with wealth, gold, gems, silk, and royal purple was reckoned as a shining queen among all nations.

134. (23:8b) *Whose merchants were princes, and her traders the nobles of the earth.*

We marvel that the ambassador of Pyrrhus once said of the city of Rome, "I have seen the city of kings."<sup>1132</sup> Notice how well before those times the *merchants* and *traders* of Tyre are described as *princes* and *nobles*, so that through this the extent of its opulence is shown, since a merchant of Tyre could be a king of another city.

135. (23:9) *The Lord of hosts has designed (cogitavit) this, to pull down the pride of all glory, and bring to disgrace all the glorious ones of the earth.*

Above he had spoken in the manner of one asking a question, "Who has made this design (*cogitavit*) against Tyre, that was formerly crowned?" [[Isa 23:8](#)].<sup>1133</sup> Therefore, he now responds: It is not as the threads of fate have been spun out, as fools think; it is not that the wheel of fortune has turned, but this has been accomplished by the judgment and by the will of God, who resists the proud and gives grace to the humble [cf. [Jas 4:6](#)]. And he warns those who are arrogant with regard to their founding to learn through their misery of the power of him whose clemency they had been unwilling to perceive through his kindnesses.

136. (23:10) *Cross your land as a river, O daughter of the sea; you have a girdle no more.*

He is saying, just as a river, or, as the Hebrew says more meaningfully, "stream,"—for the word used is *ior*—is easily *crossed* on foot, so also you will *cross your land* when you have been led into captivity, *O daughter of the sea*, either because you are an island, or because above it was written about you, "The sea has spoken, the strength of the sea, I have not been in labor, nor have I brought forth" [[Isa 23:4](#)]. And Symmachus shows more clearly what meaning his added words have, *You have a girdle no more*: "You will not be able to resist any longer," that is, you will have neither strength nor loins that have been girded to fight, in order to be able to oppose your adversaries.

137. (23:11a) *He stretched out his hand over the sea, he troubled kingdoms.*

Who *stretched out his hand*? Doubtless God, as arises from the very context of the words, of whom he said above, "The Lord of hosts has designed this, to pull down the pride of all glory" [[Isa 23:9](#)]. Accordingly he has *stretched out his hand over* all the seas, signifying the age and the

<sup>1132</sup> Pyrrhus, king of Epirus (319–72 BC) in northwest Greece, campaigned against Macedonia and was then called in to help the Greek cities of south Italy and Sicily against the expanding power of Rome. He defeated the Romans in 279, but with such heavy losses that a "pyrrhic victory" became proverbial for one gained at too great a cost. In his *Life of Pyrrhus*, 19, Plutarch reports that Cinias, Pyrrhus' ambassador to Rome, told him that the Roman Senate had impressed him "as an assembly of many kings." Cicero often refers to Pyrrhus.

<sup>1133</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 83 (151, 7–0).



world, and *he has troubled* all nations, among which even you, Tyre, have been disturbed, or *over the sea*, on which you are uniquely situated.

138. (23:11b) *The Lord has given a charge against Canaan, to destroy its strong ones.*

He shows which “sea” it is over which the Lord “stretched out his hand” [cf. [Isa 23:11a](#)], saying, he *has given a charge against Canaan*; for Tyre was founded in the land of Canaan. Read the Scriptures and especially the Gospel where the Syrophenician woman, who was interceding for her daughter, comes from the land of Canaan, and the woman is called a Canaanite [cf. [Matt 15:22](#); [Mark 7:26–30](#)]. And at the same time, since he had said, “He stretched out his hand,” to keep you from believing that God works with limbs and bodily functions, he has added *has given a charge*. Consequently that God did it means that he commanded it.

139. (23:12) *And he said, You will glory no more, O virgin daughter of Sidon, who are enduring calumny; arise and sail over to Cyprus (Cethim): there also you will have no rest.*

God, who “designed to pull down the pride of all glory” [cf. [Isa 23:9](#)], who has “given a charge against Canaan to destroy its strong ones” [cf. [Isa 23:11](#)], himself says, “*No more will you glory and trust in your own power, O virgin daughter of Sidon*, that is, O colony of the Sidonians;<sup>134</sup> indeed you will flee in ships to the islands of the west, or to Cyprus and other lands of Macedon and Greece; but even there, with God as your enemy, you will not be able to find *rest*.” In any case every wanderer and sojourner in the world is continually in mourning and always in anguish over his uncertain residences.

140. (23:13–14) *Behold the land of the Chaldeans: there has not been such a people; the Assyrian founded it for captivity. They have led away its strong ones, they have destroyed its houses, they have brought it to ruin. (14) Howl, O ships of the sea, for your strength is laid waste.*

Since he had said above, “Her feet will carry her far off to sojourn” [[Isa 23:7](#)], and again, “Cross your land as a river” [[Isa 23:10](#)]; and since there were two groups of people in Tyre, those who had fled and sailed over to Cethim, and those who had remained in the city, he speaks to both groups. Above he speaks of those who had fled: “Arise and sail over to Cethim; there also you will have no rest” [[Isa 23:12](#)]. Of those who had remained and were led into captivity, he says, *Behold*, inhabitants of *the land of the Chaldeans*, whose power no people have previously had, and that was *founded* by the *Assyrian*, *they have led away the strong ones* of Tyre. *They have destroyed* not only the walls but all the dwellings of the city, *and they have brought it to ruin*. Since some fled, therefore, others were captured. *Howl, O ships*, either *of the sea*, or “of Carthage”; for your trade and your colony has been annihilated. And at the same time, consider how he has praised the Chaldeans. He did not say, “There will no longer be such a people,” for the kingdom of the Romans is more powerful and more lasting, but *there has not been*, previously. One who has denied what was prior has allowed what comes later.

141. (23:15a) *And it will come to pass in that day that you, O Tyre, will be forgotten, seventy years, just as the days of one king.*

From this passage until the end of this prophecy, favorable things are being announced to Tyre: that it ought to do penance, that it must be built again, that Tyre’s overthrow lasts only

<sup>134</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (151, 23–5).

seventy years,<sup>1135</sup> during which time the Lord's temple as well was desolated. Thus the time of its ruins imitates the ruin of the one at whom it was scoffing. Now many think that the *seventy years of one king* is said of Nebuchadnezzar, during which years the kingdom of the nation of Assyria continued in Jerusalem; others think that this has been declared generally, that the one who will have had a long time to reign cannot go beyond seventy years.<sup>1136</sup>

142. ([23:15b-16](#)) *But after seventy years, there will be unto Tyre as the song of a harlot: (16) Take a harp, go about the city, you harlot that have been handed over to oblivion, sing well, sing many a song, that you may be remembered.*

Since you have committed fornication with many nations, and your former lovers have despised you as one desolate, naked, and covered with the filth of captivity, *take a harp* now, repeat the songs, *go about the city*, lament the former brothel and wash away the traces of your ancient error with tears, that you may be able to provoke God to show mercy to you.

143. ([23:17](#)) *And it will come to pass after seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and will bring her back again to her wages, and she will commit fornication again with all the kingdoms of the world (terrae) upon the face of the earth (terrae).*

In the literature of the Greeks and Phoenicians there exists a harmonious agreement that proves that all these things were fulfilled historically. After being restored after seventy years, Tyre returned to her former power,<sup>1137</sup> and there was merchandise from all nations, which nations I think are being called acts of *fornication*. Consequently, just as one who commits *fornication* enters a brothel and pays the *wage* of immorality, so too the merchants flocking from the whole world will have filled the beauty of the city with prostitutes, as it were.

144. ([23:18](#)) *And her commerce and her wages will be sanctified to the Lord; they will not be kept in store, nor laid up, for her merchandise will be for those who will dwell before the Lord, that they may eat unto satisfaction, and be clothed for a long duration.*

We have not yet gained certain information about these facts according to history, unless perchance one is to think that after the building of Jerusalem and the restoration of Tyre, the cities came to be on friendly terms with one another, and the Tyrians frequently sent gifts over to the temple of God, just as we read in Ezra also that he drove away and did not allow to enter the city the Tyrians who sold fish on the Sabbath [cf. [Neh 13:16-21](#)]; and that one must reckon on the basis of one form of commerce also concerning others. The Jews defer their pointless promises to the future and speak of these things being fulfilled after the antichrist during the thousand years. It is no wonder if they fabricate these things, those who have spurned the truth of Christ and will receive the antichrist, the instrument of the devil, since even Judaizing Christians claim that these things have been said concerning the blessed time of the thousand years.

But just as I understand in the vision of Babylon [cf. [Isa 13-14](#)] the time of consummation under the type of its overthrow, and I refer to the time of Christ the Lord's altar that has been set up in Egypt [cf. [Isa 19:19](#)], when its idols have been destroyed; and in respect to the vision of Moab [cf. [Isa 15:1](#)], I recognize the Savior's throne established in its land [cf. [Isa 16:5](#)]; and in the

<sup>1135</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (151, 33-52, 1).

<sup>1136</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (152, 1-).

<sup>1137</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (152, 17-9).

other visions of Damascus [cf. [Isa 17:1](#)], I do not doubt that they are mysteries of our times; so also, with respect to the vision of Tyre, which is the last one, I interpret it with reference to the time of Christian blessedness. For after “Tyre” has been built and received its former status, and every tradesman has entered its port in the ancient manner, both its commerce and labor will be dedicated to the Lord.

Let us perceive in *Tyre* the churches of Christ that have been built.<sup>1138</sup> Let us contemplate the wealth of all, that it is not *laid up* or treasured up, but is given to those who live before the Lord, as “those who serve at the altar share in the altar” [[1 Cor 9:13](#)].<sup>1139</sup> But the Tyrians serve not for riches, nor in order to accumulate wealth for the priests, but to make available what is necessary for living (*victus*) [cf. [Judg 17:10](#)]. Thus according to the apostle, having food (*victum*) and clothing, let us be content with that [cf. [1 Tim 6:8](#)]. And take note that he did not say that the commerce and wages of Tyre that have been sanctified to the Lord must be given to those who *live in Jerusalem*, as the Jews think, but those who are *before the Lord*, who serve him. For “thus the Lord established that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel” [[1 Cor 9:14](#)].<sup>1140</sup> But to serve the Lord and *live before him* is not a question of location, but of merit.

Up to this point, we have discussed by means of a historical interpretation Isaiah’s “visions,” or *burdens* that he recorded for certain nations, as you<sup>1141</sup> have commanded and as we were able. We followed the tracks of the Hebrew truth only. What follows pertains to all nations and generally to the consummation of the whole world. You have not asked me to write about this, nor did I have leisure to do so, to dictate an overflow of things that have not been requested. Indeed I have scarcely written what was requested.

<sup>1138</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (152, 31–6).

<sup>1139</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (153, 1–).

<sup>1140</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (152, 36–53, 1).

<sup>1141</sup> He is addressing Bishop Amabilis. See the preface to this book.

## [THE SIXTH BOOK]

1. In the two books that follow, O virgin of Christ, Eustochium, I will endeavor to do what I promised in the preceding book: to set in place a roof upon the historical foundations, to build a spiritual edifice and show the perfect adornments of the church. This I will do by means of your prayers and the Lord's mercy, if Christ nods his assent to our will. Thus, by the same effort by which the fifth book summarized history, the sixth and seventh will touch upon anagogy. They will not discuss everything; otherwise, they would turn into many volumes; but they will briefly indicate what men of the church before us have thought.

2. (13:1) *The burden of, or "vision against," Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.* He saw how heavy a weight was to be placed upon Babylon, not with the eyes of the flesh but of the mind [cf. [Eph 1:18](#)].<sup>11</sup> And since *Babylon* means "confusion," which is expressed in Hebrew as *Babel*, because there the speech of those building the tower was "confused" [cf. [Gen 11:4–9](#)], spiritually it signifies this world, which "is placed in wickedness" [[1 John 5:19](#)] and "confuses" not only languages but the works and minds of everyone. The king of this *Babylon* is the true Nebuchadnezzar (*Nabuchodonosor*), who is proud over *against* God. He says in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will set my throne above the stars of heaven [cf. [Isa 14:13](#)], I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High" [[Isa 14:13–14](#)]. This is the one who showed the Lord all the kingdoms of the world and said to him, "All these things have been handed over to me, and I will give them to you, if you fall down and worship me" [cf. [Matt 4:8–9](#); [Luke 4:6](#)]. After all, in what follows the threat is not "against Babylon," but "against" the world: "The Lord of hosts has given charge to the most warlike nation, that it should come from a land afar off, from the end of heaven, to destroy the *world*" [[Isa 13:4–5](#)];<sup>22</sup> and again: "Behold, a day of incurable fury and wrath is coming, to make the *world* desolate and to destroy the sinners out of it" [[Isa 13:9](#)]; and then: "I will command evils for the whole *world*, and their sins for the ungodly" [[Isa 13:11](#)]. From these things it is proven that everything that is said "against Babylon" pertains to the "confusion" and destruction of this world.

3. (13:2a) *Upon the gloomy mountain, or "of the plain"* [cf. [Isa 13:2](#)], *lift up a standard.*

To the apostles, to apostolic men, and to teachers of the churches, a charge is given that those who are about to speak "against Babylon" [cf. [Isa 13:1](#)] should *lift up* the *standard* of the Lord's cross, not in a lowly place and in sunken valleys, but *upon the gloomy mountain*, or that is, "of the plain." The former [*gloomy mountain*] signifies the hidden mysteries of the church, which for Moses to see and hear the voice of God, he entered darkness and *gloom* [cf. [Exod](#)

1 Cf. *Bas Is* 254 (565C); 255 (568B).

2 Cf. *Eus Is* 65 (95, 3–).

[20:21](#)—for God “made darkness his hiding place” [[Ps 17:11](#)], and “clouds and gloom [are] round about him” [[Ps 97:2](#)]. The latter [“mountain of the plain”] shows that we ought to ascend to the high places of ecclesiastical doctrines in such a way that we are humble, like the Apostle Paul, and we should say, “I am not worthy to be called an apostle, since I persecuted the church of God” [[1 Cor 15:9](#)]. And he is one who *lifted up a standard* “on the mountain of the plain” [[Isa 13:2](#)], when he said with his innate humility, “But I have decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified” [[1 Cor 2:2](#)]. Now up above, this one *lifted up* this *standard* that arose from the root of Jesse [cf. [Isa 11:1](#)] for the nations [cf. [Isa 11:10](#)], to gather those of Israel who were lost [cf. [Isa 11:12](#); [Matt 10:6](#); [15:24](#)].

4. ([13:2b](#)) *Exalt the voice, lift up the hand*. The Septuagint translated this, “Comfort with the hand.”

He *exalts the voice* who speaks of lofty things and thinks little of the things of the present, which are brief and transitory; who hears from the same Isaiah, “Go up upon a high mountain, you who bring good tidings to Zion; lift up your voice with strength, you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem” [[Isa 40:9](#)]. He *lifts up his hand*, who is able to say with David, “The lifting up of my hands [is] an evening sacrifice” [[Ps 141:2](#)], and who “in every place lifts up holy hands” [cf. [1 Tim 2:8](#)]. Thus he not only *lifts up the hand*, but he also “comforts with the hand,” so that he would not say to the poor, “Come tomorrow and receive” [[Prov 3:28](#)],<sup>33</sup> but he “comforts” him in his poverty and need by his present mercy.

5. ([13:2b](#)) *And let the rulers go into the gates*. The Septuagint says, “Open, O princes.”

The *rulers* of the church *go into the gates* of the mysteries (*mysteriorum*)<sup>44</sup> of God and recognize the symbols (*sacramenta*) of the Scriptures. They hold the key of knowledge [cf. [Luke 11:52](#)], that they may “open” them for the people entrusted to them. This is why teachers are commanded to “open” and disciples to *go in*.

6. ([13:3a](#)) *I have commanded my sanctified ones*. The Septuagint renders this, “I will command and I will bring them.”

For he is sanctifying his own ministers, that both he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified may all be from one [cf. [Heb 2:11](#)]. And he who says to believers in another passage, “Be holy, for I am holy” [[Lev 11:44](#)], himself “commands and brings” his own “princes,” to do what they have been “commanded.”

7. ([13:3b](#)) *And I have called my strong ones in my wrath, those who rejoice in my glory*. Septuagint: “Giants are coming to fulfill my fury, rejoicing at the same time and insulting.”

In the Hebrew this sticks closely to what is said above, that he has *called his strong ones* and *those who rejoice in their own glory*, who had “commanded his sanctified ones.”<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, in the Septuagint the “giants” who are “coming to fulfill the fury” of the Lord, “rejoicing” in the injury of others and glad, should be understood as the left-hand and hostile powers of which we read in the Psalms, “He sent against them the fury of his wrath, fury, anger and tribulation, a sending by means of evil angels” [[Ps 78:49](#)]. One of these is the destroyer in Egypt, who does not dare to enter the lintels smeared with lamb’s blood [cf. [Exod 12:23](#)]. There is also

3 Cf. *Bas Is* 257 (572A).

4 Cf. *ibid.* (572B–).

5 Cf. *Eus Is* 65 (96, 17–5, 21–5); *Bas Is* 258 (572D–73A).

that spirit who came forth and stood before the Lord and says, “I will deceive Ahab,” and the Lord said to him, “You will deceive and prevail, go and do so” [cf. [1 Kgs 22:21–22](#)]. This is why Micah says in the same Book of Kings, “I saw the God of Israel sitting on his throne, and all the army of heaven was standing around him on the right hand and on the left” [[1 Kgs 22:19](#)]. The powers of the right consist of those angels who are sent for good things, but those on the left are the ones to which we are handed over for punishment. This is also why the Apostle says, “Whom I handed over to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” [[1 Tim 1:20](#)].

Now the term “giants,” for which the Hebrew has recorded *gebborim*, that is, *strong ones*, the Septuagint and Theodotion translated in imitation of pagan myths, just as they use the terms *Sirens* [cf. [Isa 13:22](#); [34:13](#); [Job 30:29](#)], *Titans* [cf. [2 Sam 5:18](#), [22](#)], *Arcturus* [cf. [Job 9:9](#)], *Hyades*, and *Orion* [cf. [Job 38:31](#)], which are called by different names in Hebrew.<sup>66</sup> Now if the “giants” are rebels against God, and all heresies that are contrary to the truth rebel against God, [then] all heretics are “giants,” who “rejoice” in their error and boast especially at that time when they have “insulted” the church.

8. ([13:4a–b](#)) *The voice of a multitude in the mountains, as it were of crowds of people, the voice of the sound of kings, of nations gathered together.*

This passage is understood in three ways. First, that with the “standard raised on the mountain of the plain” [cf. [Isa 13:2](#)] a multitude *of nations* comes, and it is established *in the mountains*; the multitude is divided in two, namely into *people* and *kings*, disciples and teachers, of whom even the Savior said in the Gospel, “Many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven” [[Matt 8:11](#)]. But the reason it is said to be one harmonious *voice* is so that the following words of the Apostle may be proven: “You should all speak the same thing, and let there be no schisms among you, but be perfect in the same understanding and in the same knowledge” [[1 Cor 1:10](#)]. Second, the pride of the heretics is being described, who are “raised up against the knowledge of God” [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)], believing that they are *on mountains*, and they “speak wickedness on high, and they set their mouth in heaven” [[Ps 73:8–9](#)]. They also have *people*, they have *kings*, who devour the deceived people.<sup>77</sup> The third interpretation is this: since he had said above, “Giants are coming to fulfill my fury, rejoicing together and insulting” [[Isa 13:3](#)], he is describing the arrogance of these giants and their consensus, in a bad sense, to punish those who have been handed over to them.

9. ([13:4c–5](#)) *The Lord of hosts has given charge to the troops of war, (5) to those coming from a land far off, from the end of heaven, the Lord and the vessels of his fury, to destroy the whole land.* Septuagint: “The Lord Sabaoth has given charge to a most war-like nation to come from a land far off, from the utmost foundation of heaven; the Lord and his warriors, to destroy the whole world.” “Foundation” is marked in front with an obelus.<sup>88</sup>

In the Books of Kings and in Chronicles, we read that God’s wrath was kindled over Israel, when David numbered the people and offended God [cf. [2 Sam 24](#); [1 Chr 21](#)]. In the Psalms too, it is written, “Lord, do not rebuke me in your fury nor chasten me in your wrath” [[Pss 6:1](#); [38:1](#)],

6 Cf. *Eus Is* 65 (95, 21–2).

7 Cf. *Bas Is* 259 (573C).

8 He apparently means, in Origen’ *Hexapla*. For the term obelus, see [Jerome, Ep. 104](#); [108](#); [112](#).



and other things similar to these. I have read in someone's commentary that the wrath of God can be understood as the hostile power to which we are handed over for punishment, of which also in the eighth Psalm it is sung, "That you may destroy the enemy and the avenger" [[Ps 8:2](#)]. There can be talk of "warriors" who "come from a land far off" and "from the utmost of heaven," even ministering angels, who will be sent at the consummation of the world to make bundles of weeds and to prepare for the eternal fire those who have been separated from the crop [cf. [Matt 13:40–42](#)]. Also, *the whole land is destroyed*, when earthly works are undermined. There are also other "warriors" of the Lord, fitted out with the apostle's weapons, those who on a daily basis in the church, which is understood as the ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ, that is the inhabited world, *destroy* and kill those who are "raised up against the knowledge of God" [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)].

10. ([13:6–8a](#)) *Howl, for the day of the Lord is near; it will come as destruction from the Lord. (7) Therefore all hands will be weakened, and every heart of man will melt, (8a) and will be broken.*

Since the Lord's "warriors" are coming [cf. [Isa 13:4](#)], "to destroy the whole land" [cf. [Isa 13:5](#)],<sup>99</sup> *howl* and repent, for the things for which the punishment is coming. For *the day of the Lord is near*, or of the consummation and judgment of the entire world, or of the departure of each one from life. For a plundering is *coming from the Lord*, which we have called *destruction*, to preserve the metaphor, since he had spoken of "warriors" earlier [cf. [Isa 13:4](#)]. When the day of judgment or of sleeping arrives, *all hands will be weakened*, to which it is said in another passage, "Be strong, O weakened hands" [[Isa 35:3](#)].<sup>110</sup> Now the *hands* will be *weakened* because no one's work will be found worthy of God's justice, "and no one living will be justified in his sight" [[Ps 143:2](#)]. This is why the prophet says in the Psalm, "If you should pay heed to iniquities, O Lord, who will endure?" [[Ps 130:3](#)]. *Every heart* too, or *soul of man will melt*, and the consciousness of sin will tremble. This is the fearful and terrible day of which Zephaniah also speaks: "Be afraid before the face of the Lord, for the day of the Lord is near" [[Zeph 1:7](#)];<sup>111</sup> and again: "The great day of the Lord is near, it is near and exceeding swift" [[Zeph 1:14](#)]. And Amos says, "Woe to those who desire the day of the Lord. To what end is it for you the day of the Lord, which is darkness, and not light?" [[Amos 5:18](#)].<sup>112</sup>

And what has been added in the Septuagint, "The ambassadors will be troubled and pains will seize them," we can understand of those "ambassadors" whom the citizens had sent against him who had set out to a distant land to seek a kingdom for himself [cf. [Luke 19:12, 14](#)].<sup>113</sup> This is why he says in the Gospel, "But the enemies, who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and kill them before me" [[Luke 19:27](#)].

11. ([13:8b–e](#)) *Writhing and pain will take hold; they will be in pain as a woman in labor. Everyone will be amazed at his neighbor; their countenances will be as faces burnt.*

When the Lord's warriors come from a distant land and all hands are weakened [cf. [Isa 13:7](#)],

9 Cf. *Bas Is* 261 (576C).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (577B).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 262 (577C).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (580A).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 263 (580C)

and the heart is full of fear and contrite, then *στροφωματα*, which we have translated *writhing* of the stomach, and *pains will take hold* of them, like the *pain of women in labor*.<sup>114</sup> Through this it is shown that they are tormented by their own conscience, and that they have *faces burnt* by the very fire that they had kindled for themselves [cf. [Isa 50:11](#)]. For they are not able to say, “O Lord, the light of your countenance is signed upon us” [[Ps 4:6](#)]; and, “We all with an unveiled face contemplate the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image” [[2 Cor 3:18](#)]. *Everyone will be amazed at his neighbor*, when he sees that he is in the same torments by which he himself is being tortured.

12. ([13:9](#)) *Behold, the day of the Lord is coming, cruel and full of indignation, wrath, and fury, to make the land a desolation, and to destroy its sinners out of it.* For *land* the Septuagint translated “world,” and for *cruel*, “incurable.”

For when the *day* either of judgment or of death arrives,<sup>115</sup> that will be fulfilled that is read in the sixth Psalm, “Who will confess to you in hell?” [[Ps 6:5](#)]. For that is not a time of penitence but of punishments. And in another passage it is said, “How great is the multitude of your sweetness, O Lord, that you have hidden for those who fear you” [[Ps 31:19](#)]. Therefore, much of God’s mercy is hidden from those who are still set in fear and do not have the perfect love of God [cf. [1 John 4:18](#)], so that when they hear about *the day of the Lord*, both “incurable” and *full of indignation and fury*, they would cease sinning. Also, the “world” or *land* will be *made a desolation* and *sinners* will be *destroyed out of it*, a land that was previously burdened down with the weight of sins, in order that justice alone might dwell and reign in the land, once wickedness has been blotted out and destroyed.

13. ([13:10](#)) *For the stars of heaven and their brightness will not display their light, the sun has been darkened in its rising, and the moon will not shine with her light.* The Septuagint: “For the stars of heaven and Orion and all the adornment of heaven will not give their light; and they will be darkened by the sunrise, and the moon will not give her light.” What we translated as *their brightness*, doubtless referring to that of the stars, Aquila and Theodotion recorded the Hebrew word itself, *xileem*; the Septuagint translated this “Orion,” adding on its own, “and all the adornment of heaven.” This ought to be marked in front with an obelus.

Now pagan myths say that Orion has twenty-two stars, four of which are of the third magnitude, nine of the fourth, then the other nine of the fifth, which some call *βωτηρης*.<sup>116</sup> We also read in Job of Hyades, Vesperus, and Arcturus [cf. [Job 9:9](#)]<sup>117</sup> and the treasures, or interior, of the south. One should speak of these things in their own passages. We should not think that

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 262 (580B).

<sup>115</sup> According to J. P. O’onnell, [The Eschatology of St. Jerome](#), *Dissertationes ad Lauream* 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 83, the *vel* (or) is used disjunctively here and not conjunctively, so that it does not indicate that the two days are equivalent to each other. Jerome accurately distinguishes the day of judgment from the day of death. He normally restricts the word *judgment* to the last day. Cf. *In Joelem* 2.1; *In Soph* 1.9, 2.4; *In Michaeam* 7.5.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 266 (585C).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (588A).

in the Hebrew these stars are identified by these names<sup>118</sup> that the Greek and Latin languages express. On the contrary they have their own terms. For just as God called the light “day” [cf. [Gen 1:5](#)], and the firmament “sky” [cf. [Gen 1:8](#)], and the dry ground “earth” [cf. [Gen 1:10](#)], and the gathering places of the waters “seas” [cf. [Gen 1:10](#)]; so also each of the stars he named by their own names. The unique characteristics of these names our language does not express. In another passage it is written of God, “He who counts the multitude of the stars and calls them all by name” [[Ps 147:4](#)].<sup>119</sup>

When therefore the *day of the Lord comes, to make the world a desolation* [cf. [Isa 13:9](#)], and to remove *its sinners out of it* completely, at that time, in comparison with the divine majesty,<sup>220</sup> *the stars of heaven and all their brightness will withdraw their light*. It is not surprising that he says this about the lesser stars, since even *the sun is darkened in its rising and the moon* does not have its customary brightness. Now as for what the Septuagint translated, that the “stars,” “Orion,” and “all the adornment of heaven is darkened by the sunrise”; this does not require a miracle of a sign, for this happens all the time: the stars in the sky disappear at sunrise. It is no wonder that he said this about the sun, since even during a full moon, and on a very bright night, a large number of stars do not shine. Now, that there are stars in the sky even during the day is proven by a solar eclipse, because, as the philosophers discuss,<sup>221</sup> the stars appear brighter in the sky when the sun has been darkened by a shadow of the earth and by the orb of the moon lying in the way.

14. ([13:11a](#)) *And I will visit upon the evils of the world, and against the wicked for their iniquity,*

When God *visits* and strikes, he strikes for this purpose: to correct. After all, when he is violently angry with those who do not repent, he says, “I will not *visit* upon your daughters, when they fornicate, and upon your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery” [[Hos 4:14](#)]. On the other hand, of those who will believe in Christ, it is said, “I will *visit* their iniquities with a rod, and their sins with stripes, but my mercy I will not take away from them” [[Ps 89:32–33](#)].

15. ([13:11b–c](#)) *And I will make the pride of infidels to cease, and will humble the arrogance of the mighty*. Septuagint: “And I will destroy the injury of the wicked, and will humble the injury of the haughty.”

Because the Hebrew word *gaon* clearly expresses *arrogance* and pride, Theodotion and the Septuagint always translate it “injury,” expressing the meaning rather than the word, since every proud person is ready to injure. For this reason, then, the Lord “visits upon the evils of the world and against the wicked for their iniquity,” in order that the *arrogance* of the haughty may be checked and the pride *of the mighty* may be humbled. For “God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble” [[1 Pet 5:5](#)]; and we read in Proverbs, “Before contrition a man’s heart is lifted up, and before glory it is humbled” [[Prov 18:12](#)]. A fall always follows pride, and glory follows humility: “For he who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” [[Luke 14:11](#)]. And in another passage we read, “I will destroy the wisdom of the

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (588AB).

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (588A).

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (585BC)

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Pliny 2.12.9, 54.

wise, and the intelligence of the prudent I will reject” [[Isa 29:14](#)].<sup>222</sup> It is not that the Lord destroys true wisdom and true prudence, but falsely called knowledge [cf. [1 Tim 6:20](#); [Prov 21:6](#)]. These are the ones who treasure up for themselves a lying tongue and grow weary while searching out with searching [cf. [Ps 64:6](#)], and they find nothing, speaking iniquity on high and setting their mouth in heaven [cf. [Ps 73:8–9](#)]. This is why the pride of heretics is properly called an “injury” of the truth.

16. ([13:12](#)) *A man will be more precious than gold, and a human being than the finest of gold.* Septuagint: “And they that are left will be honored more than gold tried in the fire; and a human being will be more honorable than a stone from Sophir.”

At the consummation of the world, when the world has been reduced to a desolation, and the sun has been darkened in its rising and the moon does not give off its brightness [cf. [Isa 13:9–10](#)], the signs and portents from the antichrist will become so great that the love of many will grow cold at the increase of iniquity, leading to the deception, if it were possible, even of God’s elect [cf. [Matt 24:12, 24](#)]. At that time *a man will be more precious than gold*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *phaz*, and was translated by Aquila as κίρρον, because it is of the finest blood-red color; *and a human being than the most pure refined gold*, which in Hebrew is expressed as *ophir*, and Aquila translated it σπιλωμα ωφιρ. I do not know what the Septuagint intended when they translated it “stone from Sophir.” Now there is a place in India<sup>223</sup> where the finest gold is found, as we read in Genesis about the river Pishon: “That is the one that encompasses all the land of Havilah (*Evilath*), where there is gold, and the gold of that land is very fine; and there is found carbuncle and the emerald<sup>224</sup>” [[Gen 2:11](#)].<sup>225</sup> Now it is understood as *more precious* because it is rarer. For everything that is rare is also *precious*, just as in the Book of Samuel we read, “And the word was *precious* in Israel” [[1 Sam 3:1](#)].

17. ([13:13a](#)) *For this, I will shake<sup>226</sup> the heaven, and the earth will be moved out of her place.* Septuagint: “For the heaven will be enraged, and the earth will be moved from her foundations.”

When a man is more precious than gold, and a human being than the finest of gold [cf. [Isa 13:12](#)], and what is written is fulfilled, “Do you think when the Son of Man comes, he will find faith on earth?” [[Luke 18:8](#)], at that time both *heaven* and *earth will be moved*. For “heaven and earth will pass away” [[Matt 24:35](#)],<sup>227</sup> not by their own will and personal choice, as many think who believe that they are living beings, but ([13b](#)) *because of the indignation of the Lord of hosts, and because of the day of his fury*, “who looks upon the earth and makes it tremble” [[Ps 104:32](#)]. This is why what is expressed in the Septuagint, “For the heaven will be enraged,” should be understood as metonymy for “those who live in heaven,” just as we say, “The whole

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 267 (588BC).

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 268 (592A).

<sup>224</sup> Lit., “reen stone.”

<sup>225</sup> In *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* ([2.11](#)), Jerome, following [Josephus, Ant 1.38](#), identifies the river Pishon with the Ganges in India. He also equates the “and of Havilah” with India. Cf. [Epp. 51.5.5](#); [125.3.2](#).

<sup>226</sup> The lemma in bk. [5](#) reads “rouble.”

<sup>227</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 270 (593AB).

state shouted out and the entire city went to meet the judge.”

But we also read about the “foundations” of the earth in Proverbs, “God *founded* the earth by his wisdom” [[Prov 3:19](#)], and the Lord says to Job, “Where were you when I *founded* the earth?” [[Job 38:4](#)].<sup>228</sup> It is not that the earth has foundations that have been laid down upon a deep mass of material, but the will and power of God by which everything is held together must be called its “foundations.” “For he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers” [[Ps 24:2](#)], and he hangs it upon nothing [cf. [Job 26:7](#)].

18. ([13:14–16](#)) *And it will be as a doe fleeing, and as a flock of sheep,*<sup>229</sup> *and there will be none to gather them together. Everyone will turn to his own people, and each will flee to his own land. (15) Everyone that will be found will be slain, and whoever comes to their aid will fall by the sword. (16) They will dash their infants before their eyes; their houses will be pillaged, and their wives will be violated.*

When heaven and earth have been moved [cf. [Isa 13:13](#)], the devil will flee. He is the coiled snake, and stands for every doctrine that is contrary to the truth, which is torn up between teachers and their disciples. The former of these are called in the Greek language οξυδορκιαν, that is she-goats, on account of the οξυδορκιαν; the latter are brute animals, so to speak, since they wander about this way and that, and have *no one to bring them together*; for they have lost him of whom it is written: “The steps of a man are directed by the Lord” [[Prov 20:24](#)]. Everyone who has been set free from very bad teachers *will turn to his own people, and each will flee to his own land* from which he came; but he who has been found *will be slain* or have his throat cut.

Now this happens not only at the consummation of the world, but up to today in the church, when the deceived *flock* turns back to their own *people* and *land*, when their teachers have been overcome, and where *he is found, he is slain*, in order that he may cease being a heretic, and *whoever comes to help will fall by the spiritual sword*. At that time *they will dash their infants* and little ones, who have not yet come to the perfect age of error, *before the eyes* of their teachers, and *they will pillage* their churches, and *their wives will be violated* by depraved wisdom and perverse doctrine. This is why we ought to pray for fathers of this sort, whose little ones must be slain, and say, “Give them, O Lord. What will you give them? A sterile womb and dry breasts” [[Hos 9:14](#)]. For they have given birth to wickedness, they have conceived grief and begotten injustice” [[Ps 7:14](#)].

19. ([13:17–18](#)) *Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, who do not seek silver, nor desire gold, (18) but with their arrows they kill the children, and have no pity upon the nursing infants of the womb, and their eye does not spare their sons.*<sup>330</sup>

We find in Genesis that Madai was the founder of the nation of the Medes [cf. [Gen 10:2](#)],<sup>331</sup> which means “measure” or “from the powerful” or “strong one.” Therefore, ministers are stirred up by the powerful and strong God against the Babylonians, who were confused in their mind, to punish the powers, so that they may render to each one according to his works [cf. [Ps 62:12](#)].

<sup>228</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (593A).

<sup>229</sup> The lemma in bk. [5](#) has simply “s a sheep.”

<sup>330</sup> The lemma in bk. [5](#) uses the future tense for the verbs in this verse.

<sup>331</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 272 (596D).

For by the “measure” by which they measured, it will be measured back to them [cf. [Luke 6:38](#)]. They will restore the measure stirred up, shaken, full and overflowing into their laps [cf. [Luke 6:38](#)]. Those will receive neither silver nor gold, that is, neither beautiful eloquence nor mental acumen, in which things previously they applauded themselves; but they will inflict punishments upon those who have been handed over and upon the *children*, and they *will have no pity on nursing infants of the womb*, so as to have more pity. And would that we too might be *stirred up* by the Lord, and that this power might be granted to us, that we would *desire neither silver nor gold* of eloquence and secular wisdom, but might *slay the sons* of the heretics, and of all who have been deceived, with spiritual arrows, that is, with testimonies from the Scriptures; and we might pitilessly slice in two those who feed on the milk of error, that they might perish by a merciful cruelty; and we might have no pity on any infant and be worthy of that blessedness: “Blessed is he who will take their little ones and dash them against the rock!” [[Ps 137:9](#)].<sup>332</sup>

20. ([13:19–14:1a](#)) *And that Babylon, glorious among kingdoms, the famous pride of the Chaldeans, will be even as God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. (20) It will no more be inhabited unto the end, and it will not be founded unto generation and generation; neither will the Arabian pitch his tents there, nor will shepherds rest there, (21) but wild beasts will rest there, and their houses will be filled with serpents, and ostriches will dwell there, and the hairy ones will dance there, (22) and owls will answer one another there in its shrines, and sirens in the temples of pleasure. (14:1a) It is near, so that her time is coming, and her days will not be prolonged.* Septuagint: “And Babylon, which is called glorious by the kings of the Chaldeans, will be as when God overthrew Sodom, and Gomorrah. (20) It will never be inhabited, neither will they enter into it for many generations, neither will the Arabians pass through it; nor will shepherds rest in it, (21) but wild beasts will rest there; and the houses will be filled with noise; and sirens will recline there, and demons will dance there, (22) and donkey centaurs will dwell there; and hedgehogs will make their nests in their houses. It will come soon, and will not tarry.” And what follows, *And her days will not be prolonged* is to be marked with asterisks. It was added from Theodotion.

When the Medes have been stirred up against the city of confusion, who do not regard gold and silver among things that are good [cf. [Isa 13:17–18](#)], who slay little ones with arrows and have no pity on babes nursing from the womb, and do not spare the eyes of children, the once-famous city that was the pride of the Chaldeans, which translate as “as if demons,” will be overthrown, just as Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, so that no trace of a former dwelling remains in it. But after the new heaven and new earth comes [cf. [Isa 65:17](#)], and the figure of this world passes away [cf. [1 Cor 7:31](#)], the city of confusion is left uninhabited forever and does not receive the same status.

For *the Arabian*, which means “western” or “evening,” *will not pitch his tents there*, after it ceases to exist in its former glory, so that he would desire to dwell in that place that he sees has been deserted. Now in the present passage *Arabian* is understood in a good sense, because he always reaches for the goal, and forgetting the past, he stretches himself forth to what is ahead



[cf. [Phil 3:13](#)].<sup>333</sup>

*Nor will shepherds rest there*, who customarily pasture the Lord's most gentle flock in Jerusalem, but instead *wild beasts will rest there*, which the Psalmist abhors when he says, "Do not hand over to *wild beasts* the soul that confesses to you" [[Ps 74:19](#)],<sup>334</sup> for which Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion recorded the Hebrew word itself, *siim*. *And their houses*, that is, the Babylonians', *will be filled*, according to the Septuagint and Theodotion, "with noise and shouts"; according to Aquila, "with monsters (*typhonibus*)."<sup>335</sup> We have translated this as *serpents*. Symmachus records *oim*, which is the word found in the Hebrew.

*And ostriches will dwell there*, an animal that always seeks deserted places. It is described in more detail in Job [cf. [Job 39:13–18](#)].<sup>335</sup> Though it seems to have feathers, yet it is not lifted very high off the ground. The Septuagint translated this "sirens." Now *hairy ones*, which are expressed in Hebrew as *seirim*, Theodotion translated as "hair standing on end." Symmachus and the Septuagint translated it "demons."

For "donkey centaurs" also, which is the translation of the Septuagint alone, one that emulates pagan myths, which speak of there being horse centaurs,<sup>336</sup> the remaining three translators recorded the Hebrew word itself, *ihim*, which we translated as *owls*. But where the Septuagint said, "Hedgehogs will make nests in their houses," and in Hebrew it is recorded as *thennim*, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion translated it as "sirens," indicating that they were either certain wild beasts or demons,<sup>337</sup> who, according to the error of pagans, sing sweetly and deceive human beings, who are unable to pass through the shipwreck of this world with their ears closed.<sup>338</sup> On the other hand, the term "donkey centaur," a composite of donkeys and centaurs,<sup>339</sup> seems to me to signify those who think something human in part, and on the other hand are led toward the vices by pleasures and by disgusting filth.

Therefore, according to tropology, he is saying that at the end of the world, or at death, all the glory of each one and the pride of the Chaldeans and the confusion of the world leave us, and all things are destroyed, just as God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. The state of this world will exist no more, but it perishes *forever*, *the Arabian does not pitch his tents there*, of whom it is said in the sixty-seventh Psalm, "Make a journey for him who ascends upon the west; the Lord is his name" [[Ps 68:4](#)]. *Shepherds will not rest there*, the angels who are present with the human race and daily see the face of the Father [cf. [Matt 18:10](#)], but *wild beasts rest there* and *serpents and ostriches and hairy ones and owls and sirens*. We understand all these wild beasts as figures of apostate angels, or demons, and of those to which we are delivered for punishment. And in *houses formerly of pleasure*, where there was gladness and joy, there is the *wailing* of *owls* and a lamentable *sound* of *sirens*, which lead their listeners to death. Now to

<sup>333</sup> The symbolic link to St. Paul may be based on the fact that he was a tentmaker (cf. [Acts 18:3](#)).

<sup>334</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 67 (100, 22); *Bas Is* 274 (601A).

<sup>335</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 67 (100, 22–3); *Bas Is* 274 (601A).

<sup>336</sup> That is, half horse and half man. Cf. *Eus Is* 67 (100, 23–4).

<sup>337</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 67 (100, 25–7).

<sup>338</sup> Cf. [Homer, Od 12](#).

<sup>339</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 276 (605B).

those who daily see Babylon being destroyed in those who believe in the Lord by means of holy men, it will not be surprising that the *time* of judgment is impending, and the *day* of the consummation of Babylon is not being *prolonged*, and that the whole length of this period is near, when compared with eternity. We have briefly spoken about the kinds of wild beasts, or rather, monsters, since in the former book they were partially touched upon according to history.

This too needs to be considered, that after the ecclesiastical words and the teaching of the Savior overthrew the city, so that it is compared with *Sodom and Gomorrah*, it is not inhabited by holy men, nor do *shepherds rest* in it, who were accustomed to shepherd Christ's flock, but instead *wild beasts rest there*, and *serpents and ostriches*, and *hairy ones dance in it*. For whatever the heretics speak in the synagogues of Satan [cf. [Rev 2:9](#)], it is not the Lord's teaching, but the *wailing* of demons and *hairy ones*, whom Esau emulated [cf. [Gen 25:25](#)]. And *sirens will rest in the shrines of pleasure*, which entice souls into the abyss by a sweet and lethal song, so that they are devoured by wolves and dogs in a violent shipwreck. It is near, therefore, and the time of the ruin of the heretics menaces; their overthrow is not being postponed.

21. ([14:1b-4a](#)) *For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose out of Israel, and will make them rest upon their own ground. And the stranger will be joined with them, and will adhere to the house of Jacob. (2) And the people will take them, and bring them into their place, and the house of Israel will possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids; and they will take captive those who had taken them captive, and will subdue their oppressors. (3) And it will come to pass in that day, that when God will give you rest from your labor, and from your vexation, and from the hard bondage with which you served before, (4) you will take up this parable against the king of Babylon, and will say,*

For *stranger*, that is, προσηλυτω, the Septuagint translated γιωραυ, which is expressed in Hebrew as *ger*. I think this is why even Moses' son, who was a *stranger* in the land, was named Gershom (*Gersam*) by his father [cf. [Exod 2:22](#)]. Thus *gioras* is not a Greek word, but a Hebrew word declined according to Greek usage, although someone ignorant of the Hebrew language may try to express a Greek etymology in it, from the fact that [the stranger] has care of an *earthly* thing; for the earth is called γη [*ge*], he says, and ωρα φροντις [*hora frontis*], that is, solicitude. And again, the Septuagint translated "lamentation" for *masal*, which Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion translated *parable*. We also have followed the latter.

Now here is the progression: after Babylon has been deserted forever, so that it becomes a habitation of wild beasts, *the Lord will have mercy upon Jacob*, namely, upon the one who throws down his vices [cf. [Gen 32:24-28](#)], *and he will choose Israel*, the one who sees God with his mind. And take note of the fittingness of the words: he will *have mercy upon Jacob*, who is still placed in the struggle, but *choosing* is applied to *Israel*, who received his name after the victory. Also, *he will make them rest upon their own land*, of which the Savior speaks: "Blessed are the meek, for they will possess the land" [[Matt 5:4](#)], and: "I believe that I will see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living" [[Ps 27:13](#)]. And *to the house of Jacob* will be joined those who have been *chosen* through the apostles, a multitude of Gentiles, and *they will take the remnant of the house of Israel, and bring them into their place*, that they may live in their tents, *and the house of Israel will possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and*

*handmaids*,—for it is beneficial for the bad to serve the good; and this is why it is said to Esau: “You will serve your brother” [[Gen 27:40](#)], and to Jacob: “Your brother will serve you” [[Gen 27:29](#)]*—and they will take captive those who had deceived them earlier by means of sophisms, and their oppressors, who do everything for the sake of profit, they will reduce to servitude. But after Jacob and Israel has rested from his labor, in which he had labored much by fighting against the world and the heretics, and from vexation and his own bondage, in which he had previously been enslaved to evil interpretation and false doctrines, then he will take up this “lamentation” and parable against the king of Babylon, who stands for the heretical talk of error and confusion, and he will say the things that follow.*

The Jews interpret this passage carnally, because after they returned from Babylon, they were unable to show that it came about. For the Babylonians, who had previously *taken them captive*, did not *serve them*; nor did they conquer the Babylonians and *possess their houses*; nor did they have them *for servants and handmaids*. It remains, therefore, that in accordance with their own fables, they think that this will come about from the Roman Empire: when in the final time the nations whom they previously served have been overcome, these nations will serve them. But if by following the letter they deceive themselves by a false hope, who will make allowances to them that Rome is called Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar is called the king of the Roman Empire?

22. ([14:4b–6](#)) *How has the oppressor<sup>440</sup> stopped, the tribute ceased? (5) The Lord broke the staff of the wicked ones, the rod of the rulers, (6) that struck the people in wrath with an incurable wound, that brought nations under in fury, that persecuted in a cruel manner.*

In the Epistle of Peter, we read, “It is time for judgment to begin with the house of God” [[1 Pet 4:17](#)]; and in Ezekiel it is said to the torturers, “Begin with my holy ones” [[Ezek 9:6](#)]. For the order of judgment is arranged according to the diversity of sin. Consequently, those who have transgressed less are purged first, but the last enemy, death, is destroyed [cf. [1 Cor 15:26](#)]. When Israel, therefore, has been delivered from a harsh bondage [cf. [Isa 14:3](#)], it will take up a parable against the king of Babylon [cf. [Isa 14:4](#)], which we ought to understand as a parable. For if the words are against Nebuchadnezzar, and the explanation of history is literal (*simplex*), why is it called a “parable,” which is not *παραβαλλεται* (thrown beside) anything different? Therefore, Israel is amazed at how *the oppressor stopped*, who was accustomed to exact down to the last penny [cf. [Matt 5:26](#)], but to exact it from no one but debtors, who say in the Lord’s prayer, “Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors” [[Matt 6:12](#)]. The debtors are handed over to this oppressor by the judge, who throws them into prison and exacts down to the least sin [cf. [Matt 5:25–26](#)]. Finally, even the Apostle Paul handed over to the *oppressor* the fornicator in Corinth, who had taken his father’s wife [cf. [1 Cor 5:5](#)], as well as Phygelus and Hermogenes [cf. [1 Tim 1:20](#)]. And concerning these *oppressors*, it is likewise said above, “O my people, your oppressors plunder you, and those who extort rule over you” [[Isa 3:12](#)]. Instead of *tribute*, Aquila translated “hunger.” When the bridegroom has been taken away from us [cf. [Matt 9:15](#); [Mark 2:20](#)], we endure a hunger for the word of God [cf. [Amos 8:11](#)], and we fast continually from the body of the Lord. And on that account *the rod and staff of the wicked ones*, which the Septuagint translated “yoke,” *strikes* or oppresses us, because we have been

<sup>440</sup> Or “xactor.”

unwilling to endure the lightest yoke, the Savior's yoke [cf. [Matt 11:30](#)]. But this staff and this rod was striking the nations with an *incurable fury*, and it was *persecuting in a cruel manner* those who fled, intending not to correct but to kill those who had been handed over.

23. ([14:7–11](#)) *The whole earth has become quiet and still; it is glad and has rejoiced.* (8) *The fir trees also have rejoiced over you, and the cedars of Libanus: "Since you have slept, none have come up to cut us down."* (9) *Hell below was in an uproar to meet you at your coming; it stirred up the giants for you. All the rulers of the earth rose up from their thrones, all the rulers of nations.* (10) *All will answer and say to you, "You also were wounded as we were, you have become like unto us.* (11) *Your pride has been dragged down to hell, your corpse has fallen down, under you decay<sup>441</sup> will be strewed, and vermin will be your covering.*

Before the destruction of the wicked king, who was striking the nations with an incurable wound and was persecuting them cruelly [cf. [Isa 14:6](#)], *the whole earth has become quiet and still*, which previously was full of tumults and sedition, to such an extent that the *fir trees and the cedars of Libanus have rejoiced*. Of them it is written in the Psalms, "You have brought a vineyard out of Egypt; you have cast out the nations and planted it.... The shadow of it covered the mountains, and its branches the cedars of God" [[Ps 80:8, 10](#)]. The Lord handed over these *cedars* of God to be broken by punishments, because they had sinned at one point. This is why in another Psalm, it is said, "The Lord will break the cedars of Libanus" [[Ps 29:5](#)]. Now the *fir trees* ought to be understood of whoever is high and lofty in the service of the Lord. With a unified voice they said, *Since you have slept*—note that even the death of death is called "sleep"—*none have come up to cut us down*. For since the strong man has been bound and his vessels have been plundered [cf. [Matt 12:29](#)], likewise the rest of his lackeys have fallen. This is also why the Lord says in the Gospel, "Go into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels" [[Matt 25:41](#)]. How many hewers of wood and trees have they cut down with their axes and caused to fall!

*Hell* too, *in an uproar*, or, "turned to bitterness," to meet the advent of the true Nebuchadnezzar, is the place of punishments and torments, where the rich man, clothed in purple, is seen [cf. [Luke 16:19, 28](#)], to whom the Lord also descended, to release from prison those who were bound [cf. [Isa 42:7](#)]. We can speak of hell meeting even that angel who has been put in charge of hell and the punishments, the angel who *stirred up* all the *giants*, which some have translated as "Raphaim," others as "Titans."<sup>442</sup> Now they are called *giants* in accordance with pagan usage, who think of them as γηγενεις, in other words, those whom the "earth produced." Now in accordance with the etymology of the Greek word, we can call those ones *giants*, who have served earthly works.

Finally, it follows, *All the rulers of the earth who rose up from their thrones* at the advent of their own former ruler, so that the one whom they were previously honoring for his power, later they would marvel at his punishments and say, *You also were wounded as we were, you have become like unto us*. These words have the following meaning: we thought that we were not able to resist the power of God, owing to our weakness, and that you were the only one who remained in your height; but the facts show that you too were *wounded* and captured and have

<sup>441</sup> The lemma in bk. [5](#) has "oth."

<sup>442</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 68 (102, 19–0).

*become like us, so that those whom office separated on earth, punishment joins together in hell.*

*Your pride, or “glory,” has been dragged down to hell, your corpse has fallen down, or as the Septuagint translated, “your great gladness,” with which previously you were glad about those subjected to you. Under you decay will be strewed, and vermin will be your covering.*

This “rest” of the devil [cf. [Isa 14:3](#)], that bed of the tempter, who was lifted up with such great pride, even dared to tempt the Lord, saying, “All these things I will give to you, if you will fall down and worship me” [[Matt 4:9](#)]. The *decay* and the *moth* and the *covering of vermin* should be understood either as the eternal punishments that one’s own conscience begets, or as the material of penalties that is born out of one’s own sins. For as long as there is the material of a *corpse*, and some fluid in the *corpse*, *vermin* are born out of the *decay*. In the same way, out of the very material of sins penalties are begotten. This is why, when death has been slain, to which the prophetic discourse was spoken through Hosea, “I will be your death, O death; I will be your bite, O hell” [[Hos 13:14](#)], even the Apostle Paul says to it, “Where O death is your quarrel? Where O death is your goad?” [[1 Cor 15:55](#)]. For *there is none dead to cut us down*; for there will be no sin that needs to be cut down, because the goad of death is sin [cf. [1 Cor 15:56](#)].

24. ([14:12](#)) *How have you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, you who rose in the morning? You have fallen to the earth, you who were wounding the nations.* Septuagint: “How has Lucifer fallen from heaven, who rose in the morning? He who sent to all the nations is crushed to the earth.”

For *Lucifer*, which in Hebrew is expressed as *helil*, Aquila translated, “howling son of the dawn.” For truly he ought to howl and to wail, he who on account of his own pride has been hurled down and “crushed” from heaven to the earth. This is also why the Savior says to the disciples, “I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven” [[Luke 10:18](#)]. Not only do I see, but previously I *saw*, when he fell. And if on account of pride he fell from such a great measure of greatness, you also ought not to boast, because “the demons have been subjected to you, but because your names have been written in heaven” [cf. [Luke 10:20](#)]. Hence you should ascend through humility to the place from where that one fell through pride. He is the ruler of the world [cf. [John 12:31](#)], who arose in the morning along with the other stars, and from Lucifer became the evening [star] by his own fault, and not the rising, but the setting.<sup>443</sup> He is the one who *was wounding the nations*, or who sent his lackeys to the nations, to seduce all of them by his deceit. They are the “false apostles, deceitful workers, who are being transfigured into apostles of Christ” [[2 Cor 11:13](#)], who sow darnel over the good seed [cf. [Matt 13:25](#)], while the teachers of the churches sleep and are unwilling or unable to stand up against their cunning. Now Jacob and Israel, whom the Lord pitied and whom he has chosen [cf. [Isa 14:1](#)], is still saying these things *to* the devil, or, as the Septuagint understands it, “about” the devil, that is, not *to*, in the second person, but “concerning” a third person.<sup>444</sup>

25. ([14:13–14](#)) *You who were saying in your heart, “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my*

<sup>443</sup> Or: “ot the East (*oriens*), but the West (*occidens*).”

<sup>444</sup> The LXX of [Isa 14:12](#) speaks of Lucifer in the third person (“ow has Lucifer fallen?”, not the second person, as in the Hebrew: “ow have you fallen, O Lucifer?”



*throne above the stars of God, I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north. (14) I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High."*

He said this, either before he fell from heaven, or after he fell from heaven. If he was still stationed in heaven, how is it that he says, *I will ascend into heaven?* But because we read, "The heaven of heaven is the Lord's" [Ps 115:16], when he was in heaven, that is, in the firmament,<sup>445</sup> he desired to ascend into the heaven where the throne of the Lord is, not by humility, but by pride. But if, on the other hand, he is speaking these arrogant words after he fell from heaven, we ought to understand that he who has fallen headlong is not at rest [cf. Isa 14:3], but he is still promising himself grand things, not just to be among the stars, but *above the stars of God*. And though the Lord says to the apostles, "It is sufficient for the disciple to be like the teacher, and for the servant to be like master" [Matt 10:25], and though he says to the Father, "Holy Father, grant that just as you and I are one, so also they may be one in us" [John 17:11], that one becomes so puffed up that he boasts that his throne will be placed *above the stars of God*, which have not fallen.

And as for what he adds, *I will sit on the mountain of the covenant in the sides of the north*, which the Septuagint translated, "On a lofty mountain, upon high mountains, which are toward the north," let us refer to the following, which is expressed in Jeremiah: "Evils will flare up from the *north* over all inhabitants of the earth" [Jer 1:14], and a boiling cauldron is kindled from the face of the north [cf. Jer 1:13]. This is the "very severe north wind" [Prov 27:16 (25:23)], from which the Lord wishes to free his captives and to lead them back to the holy city, saying, "I shall speak to the north, 'Bring them'; and to the south, 'Do not forbid, bring my sons from the land far off'" [Isa 43:6]. Now it is possible that the following passage stands in conflict with this: "The mountains of Zion, the sides of the north, the city of the great king" [Ps 48:2], but there is an easy solution to this. For those who were once "very severe" [Prov 27:16 (25:23)] *in the sides of the north*, later through penance began to be in the city of God.

A *Lucifer* of this sort always seeks to *ascend above* those who have the image of the heavenly [cf. 1 Cor 15:49] and who shine in the church as *the stars of God* [cf. Dan 12:3], and to *sit on the mountain of the pact, or covenant*, that is in the church, which is located in the lofty places and possesses the inhabitants from the onetime *sides of the north*. This one has forgotten himself to such an extent that he wants to *ascend above the clouds* that the Lord commanded not to rain a rain shower upon Israel [cf. Isa 5:6] and to which the truth of the Lord reached [cf. Ps 36:5]. Even Obadiah says to him, "If you are exalted as an eagle, and set your nest among the stars, I will drag you down from there, says the Lord" [Obad 4]. Wretched Judas was sent with the other apostles [cf. Matt 10:5] like the *clouds*, to rain a rain shower upon Israel. He was a star among the other stars, to which [stars] the Lord said, "Let your light shine before men!" [Matt 5:16]. Yet by his own fault he received the ascender, the devil [cf. John 13:27], who in order to fulfill his arrogant words dared to say even this, *I will be like the Most High*, in order that just as Christ has his prophets and apostles [cf. Eph 4:11], so too I would have false prophets and false apostles. Now all these things should be referred to the heretics, who though they are down below, boast that they are high up with their ruler.

26. (14:15) *Nevertheless, you will be dragged down to hell, into the depth of the pit.*

<sup>445</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 68 (102, 30–1; 103, 8–0).



Septuagint: “But now you will go down to hell, even to the foundations of the earth.”

“You will go down to hell,” not of your own accord—for this is from the Lord and Savior, that he would liberate those in chains—but you will be dragged to hell unwillingly, so that you who were able through the virtues to ascend to the heights, through vices will be dragged down to punishments. The saints have the wings of an eagle [cf. [Isa 40:31](#)] and the wings of a dove, and can say, “I will fly and rest” [[Ps 54:7](#)]. But the wicked and those like the Egyptians “sank like lead in the mighty waters” [[Exod 15:10](#)], and sank into the deep like a stone. This is why even wickedness, or, as the Hebrew says better, “impiety,” is seen sitting upon a talent of lead [cf. [Zech 5:7](#)]. Therefore that which we read elsewhere, “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled” [[Luke 14:11](#)], the king of confusion also experienced, so that he was dragged down “to the foundations of the earth,” or, as the truer reading has it, *into the depth of the pit*. It is written in Deuteronomy about the “foundations of the earth,” “A fire has been kindled in my fury, it will burn even to the lowest hell, and will devour the earth and its foundations” [[Deut 32:22](#)], namely those who are earthly. Concerning the *pit*, that the depths of hell are being signified, these are testimonies: “I have been likened with those who go down to the pit” [[Ps 88:4](#)]; and: “They placed me in the lowest pit” [[Ps 88:6](#)]. For just as a *pit* receives the waters that go down to it, so hell receives souls. Elhanan (*Heleanan*) went down to this *pit* at the time of snow and cold, and he killed a lion in it [cf. [2 Sam 23:20, 24](#)]. This is also why the heretics forsake the Lord, the font of living water [cf. [Zech 14:8](#)], and dig broken *pits* for themselves, which cannot hold water [cf. [Jer 2:13](#)]. Concerning these *pits*, which do not have the warmth of the Holy Spirit, they are not like the prophet Jeremiah, who according to the Septuagint translators said, “I found it warm in the wilderness” [[Jer 31:2 \(38:2\)](#)], but they lost the warmth of the Holy Spirit when their love grew cold [cf. [Matt 24:12](#)]. This is the *pit* of which the same Jeremiah says, “Just as a pit makes water cold, so wickedness makes cold those who have it” [[Jer 6:7](#)]. Would that they would be, according to the Apocalypse of John, either hot or cold [cf. [Rev 3:15–16](#)], that is, that they would either believe or not believe at all, lest they be rejected by the Lord through their lukewarmness and pretense of faith!

27. ([14:16–17](#)) *Those who see you will turn toward you and behold you: “Is this the man who troubled the earth, who shook kingdoms, (17) who made the world a desert and destroyed its cities, who did not open the prison to his prisoners? Or, as the Septuagint translated, “Who did not release those who were being led?”*

*Those who see* with the gaze of the heart, not of the eyes, that Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian king has fallen from heaven to hell, *will turn* with humility, which is the opposite of pride, and *will behold* him. They will say this: *Is this the man*—or “human being”—*who troubled*—or “stirred up”—*the earth?* And the meaning is this: he who had said, “I will be like the Most High” [[Isa 14:14](#)], and who was boasting that he was a god, is proven to be a man, of whom it is said in the ninth Psalm, which is properly directed against the devil, “Arise, O Lord, let not the *human* prevail” [[Ps 9:19](#)]; and in the Gospel, “A *human* enemy sowed over weeds” [[Matt 13:25, 28](#)]. This is why we read the statement to him and his comrades, “I have said: You are gods and all of you are the sons of the Most High, but you will die like *human beings* and will fall like one of the princes” [[Ps 82:6–7](#)]. And it is said to the same one under the figure of the prince of Tyre, “Because your heart is lifted up, and you have said: ‘I am God, and I have dwelled in the

dwelling of God in the heart of the sea,' whereas you are a *human*, and not God, and you have set your heart as the heart of God ..." [Ezek 28:2].

That *man* and that "human" *troubled the whole earth*, namely those who hear with Adam: "You are earth and you will go into the earth" [Gen 3:19]; and he *shook kingdoms*, or "kings," whose heart is in the hand of the Lord [cf. Prov 21:1]. He *struck*, it says, not destroyed. This is why one of them, who had been struck and yet had not fallen, said, "But my feet had nearly stumbled" [Ps 73:2]; and the apostle tells believers to take up the armor of God and take a stand against the plots of the devil [cf. Eph 6:11]. But the house that has been founded upon the rock is not *shaken* by any storm [cf. Matt 7:25].

It follows, *Who made the world a desert*, or, as all the others apart from the Septuagint have translated it, in accordance with the Hebrew, "as if a desert." For by his own vices and sins he made the *world*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *thebel*, to be a desert, and to have no virtue, or to be subject to those very vices with which the "desolation" of the nations is filled. He also *destroyed* the same one's *cities*, in order to make synagogues of the devil [cf. Rev 2:9] out of Christ's churches, and to defile by means of heretical filth the purity of the true faith. Moreover, he *did not open the prison* to his, that is, the world's, *prisoners*. We were all prisoners and held behind bars in prison. The Savior said to these captives, "Come forth" [cf. John 11:43], and to those who were in darkness, "Be revealed." For "the Lord sets the prisoners free" [cf. Ps 146:7]. Once they have been liberated by him, they return thanks, saying, "You have loosed my bonds" [Ps 116:16]. For "each one is fast bound with the ropes of his sins" [Prov 5:22]. The apostles too can loose these bonds and ropes, in imitation of their master, who had said to them, "Whatsoever you loose on earth will be loosed also in heaven" [Matt 18:18]. Now the apostles loose by means of the word of God and citations from the Scriptures, and by their encouragement to practice the virtues.

28. (14:18–19c) *All the kings of the nations have slept in glory, everyone in his own house. (19) But you have been cast out of your grave, as blood (sanies),<sup>446</sup> defiled, and wrapped up among those killed and pierced by the sword, who go down to the stones<sup>447</sup> of the pit.* Septuagint: "All the kings of the nations have slept in honor, a man in his house. But you will be cast out on the mountains, as an aborted thing, loathsome and wrapped with those killed by the sword, who go down to the foundations of the earth."

*The kings of the nations* are those whom God had entrusted to govern the nations, according to the canticle of Deuteronomy [cf. Deut 32:8, 42]. They were struck by Nebuchadnezzar [cf. Isa 14:16], and yet they were not destroyed. Sin does not reign over them [cf. Rom 6:12]; but because their heart was in the hand of God [cf. Prov 21:1], they did not at all fall—for indeed the Savior is called "Lord of lords" and "king of kings" [1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14; 19:16], just as he is called "God of gods" [Deut 10:17; Dan 2:47]. *All these kings*, then, rested *in their glory, everyone in his own house*. For there are different dwelling places with the Father [cf. John 14:2], and in view of the variations in the virtues, there are differences in the habitations.

Furthermore, Nebuchadnezzar *was cast out of his grave*, not finding rest from his torments

<sup>446</sup> The lemma in bk. 5 reads "s a useless branch."

<sup>447</sup> The lemma in bk. 5 reads "ottom (foundations) of the pit."

in death, but *cast out as blood*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *neser*. Aquila translated this as *ιχωρα*, that is to say, “putrid matter and filth”; Symmachus as *εκτρομα*, that is, an *aborted thing*; the Septuagint as “a dead thing”; Theodotion as “sprout”; although above, where we read this same word about Christ, “There will come forth a rod from the root of Jesse, and a flower will rise up out of his root” [[Isa 11:1](#)], the Septuagint translated “flower,” Theodotion “sprout,” Aquila *ακρεμονα*, that is, “shoot.” Now technically one uses *neser* of a shoot that arises at the roots of trees, and it is *cast out* when it is removed by farmers as useless. This is why we translated it “useless branch.”

Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar, as a useless branch prepared for the fire, or as *blood* defiled and *wrapped up in those who have been killed* by him *by the sword* and have *gone down to the foundations of the pit*, will be dragged into the depths, and even in burial he will not keep company with those whom he killed. For the author of a wrong faces one punishment, and the one who has been compelled by the author faces another.

This is the *sword* with which very many have been wounded and *killed*. Also in the seventh Psalm we read about it, “Unless you will be converted, he has brandished his sword, he has bent his bow and made it ready; and in it he has prepared the instruments of death, he has made his arrows for those who burn” [[Ps 7:12–13](#)], namely, for those who have received the fiery darts of the devil into their heart [cf. [Eph 6:16](#)].

On the other hand, according to the Septuagint the corpse of Nebuchadnezzar will lie “defiled and pierced with many of those killed on the mountains” of pride and will be brought down to hell. Now for *stones of the pit* Symmachus has translated “foundations of the pit” in order to indicate with other words the depths and Tartarus of hell.

29. ([14:19d–20b](#)) *As a rotten corpse*, (20) *you will not keep company with them, even in burial; for you have destroyed your land, you have killed your people*. Septuagint: “As a garment mingled with blood will not be pure, so neither will you be pure, because you have destroyed my land, and have killed my people.”

Because there are significant differences between the Hebrew and the Septuagint translation, we should discuss the details separately. *As a corpse that is rotten*, or, as Aquila translated it, “trampled upon,” *you will not keep company in burial*, not even *with those* whom you killed. For you are the teacher, they were the disciples, and to whom more is entrusted, more is demanded from him [cf. [Luke 12:48](#)]. *You have destroyed your land, you have slain your people*, namely those who were entrusted to you to govern. This is why he dares to say to the Savior, “All these things have been delivered to me, and I will give them to you, if you fall down and worship me” [[Matt 4:9](#)]. Now the one who reads that sin is utterly foul will not be able to doubt that the devil’s *corpse* is *rotten* on account of extent of his sins, since the sinner himself says, “My wounds grow foul and fester, because of my foolishness” [[Ps 38:5](#)]. On the other hand, virtue has a good fragrance; and this is why the love of spiritual brothers is compared with ointment that runs down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron, and upon the hem of his “garment” [[Ps 133:2](#)]. Also, the bridegroom says to the bride, “Your scent is sweet, and your face is beautiful” [[Song 2:4](#)]. Now how the *corpse* of the devil is “trampled upon” spiritually, the following words of the Apostle show: “God will crush Satan under your feet swiftly” [[Rom 16:20](#)], as do the words of the Lord, who says, “I will blot them out like mud in the streets” [[Ps](#)

[18:42](#)].

That one, because he has *destroyed the land* entrusted to him, and has slaughtered *the people* committed to him, not sparing them alive for God, but preparing comrades for his own burial, for that reason he will neither be nor be named in eternity.

On the other hand, according to the Septuagint it has this sense: O Lucifer, you who arose in the morning [cf. [Isa 14:12](#)], you who were God's garment when you had works of virtue and of light, and it could have been said of you, "clothed with light as a garment" [[Ps 104:2](#)], because you killed many with the sword, who descended to hell [cf. [Isa 14:19](#)], and you were defiled by their blood, you will not be called God's garment, but a "garment" thoroughly "mingled with blood," not stained and defiled, as though you should seem to have something pure, but entirely soaked in blood. And what is said to the devil should be noted: "As a garment mingled with blood will not be pure, so also you will not be pure." Where then are they who grant repentance to the devil and say that he can be purified?<sup>448</sup> Nor will this immediately expose us to the heresy that asserts that there are different kinds of natures, and that there is one nature that never receives healing. For this is not a garment impure in and of itself and thus created by God that way, with which God was once clothed; but because it has been "commingled with blood" and has utterly defiled itself with vice and evils that have been added on, it "will not be pure." And the reason it "will not be pure" is because it "destroyed the land" of the Lord and "killed his people," the land of Judea, destroying and killing the land of confession and all the saints; and therefore it will not abide forever. This is also why in the Gospel it is said, "Go into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels" [[Matt 25:41](#)]. Now just as a saint is God's garment and a new garment, and he is clothed with a robe of salvation and gladness, saying, "My soul exults in the Lord, for he has clothed me with the garment of salvation and has put around me the robe of gladness" [[Isa 61:10](#)], so on the contrary the sinner who bears the image of the old earthly man [cf. [1 Cor 15:49](#)] deserves to hear, "Behold, you will all grow old like a garment, and the moth will devour you" [[Isa 50:9](#)].<sup>449</sup> Now the one who has made progress in wickedness and is unwilling to correct his oldness by means of newness, will be compared not to an old garment, but to a woman's menstrual rag, saying, "We have gone astray and all of us have become unclean, all our justice is like the rag of a menstruating woman" [[Isa 64:5-6](#)].

30. ([14:20c-22](#)) *Seed of the wicked,*<sup>550</sup> (21) *prepare your children for slaughter for the iniquity of their fathers,*<sup>551</sup> *they will not rise up, nor inherit the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities. (22) And I will rise up against them, says the Lord of hosts, and I will destroy the name of Babylon, and the remains, and the bud, and the offspring, says the Lord. Septuagint: "Evil seed, prepare your children for slaughter for the sins of your father, that they arise not, and possess the land and fill the land with cities. And I will rise up to them, says the Lord Sabaoth, and I will destroy their name, and remnant, and seed."*

For "evil seed," which is the translation of the Septuagint, in Hebrew it is written as *zera*

<sup>448</sup> This is directed against Origen's interpretation. Cf. *Bas Is* 278 (608D).

<sup>449</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (609A).

<sup>550</sup> The lemma in bk. adds "ill not be named forever."

<sup>551</sup> The lemma in bk. punctuates this differently and changes some pronouns.

*mreim*, which the others translated “seed of the wicked [ones],” not that the seed itself is bad in and of itself—for God made all things good [cf. [Gen 1:31](#)]<sup>552</sup>—but from those who are evil by their own will, bad seed has arisen, which happens by their will, not by their nature. This is also why we read in Daniel, “Seed of Canaan and not of Judah” [[Dan 13:56](#)],<sup>552</sup> and the Apostle speaks about good children, “In Christ Jesus I begot you” [[1 Cor 4:15](#)]; and in the Gospel, “As many as received him, he gave them power to become children of God” [[John 1:12](#)]. “For everyone who commits sin is of the devil” [[1 John 3:8](#)].

To this *seed*, therefore, it is commanded to *prepare for slaughter* all their *children*,<sup>553</sup> that is, all their wicked thoughts and evil works, which have been born out of wicked *fathers*. Doubtless the *fathers* refers to the hostile powers. Therefore, let not the wicked *children* who are *slaughtered* for the *iniquities of their fathers rise up* any longer and “possess” *the land*, which must be possessed and filled by the saints, so that *cities* of the Lord may be constructed in it. And because the victory is not accomplished by human beings—for “unless the Lord guards the city, those who guard it will stay awake in vain” [[Ps 127:1](#)]<sup>554</sup>—therefore the Lord himself *risers up against* the evil children and *destroys* their *name of confusion and the remains, and the bud, and the offspring*, so that they no longer sprout into cities of the Lord.

We read in the Gospel that the devil is a liar from the beginning and its father [[John 8:44](#)], that is, father of lies. Many fail to understand this and think that the serpent who rules in the sea, which the Hebrews call Leviathan [cf. [Isa 27:1](#); [Job 3:8](#); [40:20](#)], is the devil’s father. And they think that this agrees with the present passage according to the Septuagint translators, who said, “for the sins of your father,” although clearly in Hebrew *abotham* does not mean “your father” but “their father.”

31. ([14:23](#)) *And I will make it a possession for the hedgehog (ericius) and pools of waters, and I will sweep it and wear it out with a broom, says the Lord of hosts.* Septuagint: “And I will make Babylon a desert, so that hedgehogs will dwell in it, and it will be as nothing, and I will make it a pit of clay for destruction.”

When the “Lord of hosts” will have “destroyed the name of Babylon and the remains and the bud and all the offspring” [cf. [Isa 14:22](#)], he will not be content with its destruction, until he has given it *as a possession for the hedgehog and pools of waters*, and has *swept it with a broom*, not lightly and haphazardly, but *wearing it out*, so that nothing of its ancient filth remains in it.<sup>554</sup> In the Acts of the Apostles it is written in connection with that linen vessel that was hanging down from the sky, having been let down by its four corners, that all kinds of four-footed beasts and reptiles and flying creatures were contained in it [cf. [Acts 10:11–12](#)]. Later the Apostle discussed this and said, “God has shown me to call no man unclean.” Therefore, the customs of men were being shown in the various animals, just as the Pharisees and Sadducees are called “brood of vipers” on account of their wickedness [cf. [Matt 3:7](#)], and Herod is called a fox on account of his deceit [cf. [Luke 13:32](#)], and the luxuriant and those inclined toward pleasure are called horses mad for females [cf. [Jer 5:8](#)], and, “Do not become like the horse and the mule, in which there is no intelligence” [[Ps 32:9](#)]. On the other hand, the innocent are called

<sup>552</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 280 (612C).

<sup>553</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 281 (612C).

<sup>554</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 283 (616BC).

doves and sheep [cf. [Matt 10:16](#)]. Therefore, according to the teaching of the Savior and Lord, who has called the cares of this age and the seduction of wealth “thorns” [cf. [Matt 13:22](#)], it seems to me that a *hedgehog* is one who in accordance with the Apostle rejoices in the uncertainty of wealth [cf. [1 Tim 6:17](#)]. He is confident that he has armed himself, not with the armor of God [cf. [Eph 6:11](#)], but with the thorns and sins of this world, to whom the following words of the Gospel are very justly spoken: “Fool, this night your soul will be taken from you, but the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” [[Luke 12:20](#)]. “Babylon,” which is a “desert” in respect to the virtues, has inhabitants like this, where there is no irrigated field, which produces a crop of various seeds, but sterile *pools*, muddy and slimy, in which creatures delight to crawl around in the filth. For this reason the most clement Lord has *swept* it very forcefully, *wearing it out*, and has cleansed it to such a degree of purity, as it were with a dragnet, that the seeds of Babylon may perish and be inhabited only with hedgehogs. When we see someone drowning in the mud of wealth and enclosed in a βαραθρω (pit), as the Septuagint has translated it, that is, in the deep whirlpool and as it were in a slimy swamp, let us not hesitate to call him a *hedgehog*, an inhabitant of “deserted Babylon.”

32. ([14:24–25](#)) *The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely (Si non) as I have thought, so shall it be, and as I have purposed with my mind, (25) so shall it fall out, that I will crush the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot, and his yoke will be taken away from them, and his burden will be taken off their shoulder.*

After the hedgehog has dwelled in deserted Babylon, and in place of well-watered and fertile fields, pools will have covered everything [cf. [Isa 14:23](#)], so that none of the original seed and abundance remains in Babylon, the *Lord's* oath will be fulfilled, and what he *purposed with his mind* will come, that the *Assyrian* is *crushed in his land* and is *tread under foot upon his mountains*. For the reckless enemy hastens to occupy not only the *land* of God and all the lower lying places,<sup>555</sup> but also those who have made progress in God's service by the virtues, so that they are compared with *mountains*, and it is said of them, “His foundations [are] on the holy mountains” [[Ps 87:1](#)].

And note the peculiar signification: in the *land* he is *crushed*, on the *mountains* of God he is *tread under foot* by the same Lord. For when all the enemies will have been placed under Christ's feet [cf. [1 Cor 15:25](#)], so that the last death is destroyed [cf. [1 Cor 15:26](#)], then the very heavy *yoke* of the *Assyrian* will be *taken away from* the saints, with which he had previously weighed them down, and the *burden*, or, as the Septuagint translated it, ΚΥΘΟΣ, that is, “glory,” *will be removed from their shoulder*.<sup>556</sup> Thus, with the yoke of the Assyrians removed, they see the resting place, that it is good, and the land, that it is very abundant [cf. [Gen 49:15](#)], and they place their necks under Christ's yoke to labor, and they become farmers of men. This is also why Issachar, which is translated “there are wages,” received his name from the virtues, and we read in the prophet, “There are wages for those who serve the Lord” [[Jer 31:16](#)], and in another passage, “Behold, the Lord, and his wages are with him” [[Isa 40:10](#)], who will pay back to each one according to his work [cf. [Matt 16:27](#); [Rev 22:12](#)].

Now that the Assyrians, that is, the contrary powers, are *crushed* and *trod under foot*, even

<sup>555</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 284 (617C).

<sup>556</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (617C).



the following words of the Gospel show: “Behold I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy” [[Luke 10:19](#)]. Moreover the words of the Apostle attest this: “God will crush Satan under your feet swiftly” [[Rom 16:20](#)].

33. ([14:26–27](#)) *This is the counsel that he<sup>557</sup> has purposed upon all the land, and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all nations. (27) For the Lord of hosts has decreed, and who can disannul it? And his hand is stretched out, and who will turn it away? For all the earth, the Septuagint translated “the whole world,” as the conclusion of the “burden” or “vision” against Babylon [cf. [Isa 13:1](#)].<sup>558</sup>*

What was concealed is out in the open, that the Lord *has purposed a counsel upon all the land*, that is, the “world,” and not only against the land of the Chaldeans and the king of the Assyrians and of the Chaldeans; and that his *stretched out* or raised *hand is upon all nations*, and not only upon the one nation of Babylon. From this it is shown that everything that has been said pertains not uniquely to one province, but applies generally against the “world.” And what is said, *Who will be able to disannul? And who will turn it away?*, we ought to understand to mean not that this is a difficult thing, as one reads the following: “Who is the wise man and understands these things?” [[Hos 14:9](#)],<sup>559</sup> and: “Who do you think is the faithful and prudent steward?” [[Luke 12:42](#)]; and other things like this; but that it is impossible.<sup>660</sup> For no one will be able to *disannul* the Lord’s *counsel* and *turn away his raised* or lofty *hand*, to keep it from striking.

34. ([14:28–30](#)) *In the year that King Ahaz died, this burden was made. (29) Do not rejoice, Philistia, all of you, that the rod of him that struck you is broken in pieces; for out of the root of the serpent (colubri) will come forth a basilisk (regulus), and his seed will swallow the bird. (30) And the firstborn of the poor will be fed, and the poor will rest with confidence, and I will make your root perish with famine, and I will kill your remnant.* Septuagint: “In the year in which King Ahaz died, this word came. Rejoice not, all you foreign born ones; for the yoke of him who struck you is crushed, if indeed out of the seed of the serpent will come forth the young of asps, and from their young will come forth flying serpents, and the poor will be fed by him, and poor men will rest in peace; but he will kill your seed with hunger, and will slay your remnant.”

With Ahaz dead, who is interpreted as  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\sigma\chi\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ , that is, “covering” or “possession,”<sup>661</sup> who we read [was] an extremely impious king, that weight, or “word,” comes upon the Philistines. For while he was alive and reigning in sinners, neither the weight against the foreign-born ones nor the “word” of God was able to come to the prophet. I recall indeed that I spoke about this also above, when Uzziah died and Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)].<sup>662</sup> And in Exodus we read that after the king of Egypt died, the children of Israel groaned because of their works, and they cried out, and their clamor from their works

<sup>557</sup> The lemma in bk. reads “.”

<sup>558</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 68 (105, 24–5); *Bas Is* 285 (617D).

<sup>559</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 285 (620A).

<sup>660</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (617D–20A).

<sup>661</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (621B).

<sup>662</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (620CD).

went up, and the Lord heard their groaning [cf. [Exod 2:23–24](#)].<sup>663</sup> For unless what was being said were mystical, they would have cried out instead while he was reigning, when they were enslaved to the mud and bricks [cf. [Exod 1:14](#)].

Therefore it is commanded to the Philistines, whom they now call Palestinians,<sup>664</sup> and who are always translated *allophyli* by the Septuagint, that is, “foreign born,” they are told not to rejoice, not to be glad, because they have *crushed* the *rod*, or “yoke,” of *him that struck* them. “For the one whom the Lord loves, he corrects, and he chastises every son whom he receives” [[Heb 12:6](#)]. God trains us as sons, when he visits our iniquities with a rod and our sins with scourges, in order not to remove his mercy from us [cf. [Ps 89:32–33](#)]. This is the *rod* of which it is also written in another Psalm, “Your *rod* and your staff have comforted me” [[Ps 23:4](#)]. This is the *rod* and this is the “yoke” that the Savior wants to place upon the necks of everyone, so that when the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar has been laid aside, they bear Christ’s yoke [cf. [Matt 11:29](#)].

But if someone rejects and crushes it,<sup>665</sup> at once from the *seed* or *root of the serpent* (*serpentis*), who is a coiled *snake* (*coluber tortuosus*) [cf. [Isa 27:1](#)], “asps” and a *basilisk* will come forth, and from the “asps” will emerge “flying serpents,” or those who *devour birds*. But when the “yoke” of God has been cast aside, and the Lord’s discipline has been “crushed,” first, the seed of the serpent becomes rooted in our thoughts; second, from the evil seed is born a basilisk (*regulus*), who is the king of the serpents, and by his breath and stare he is said to slay men; or the “young of asps,” of which it is sung in the Psalms, “The venom of asps is under their lips” [[Ps 140:3](#)], which are the various sins. From the evil treasure of the thoughts they break out into wicked deeds [cf. [Matt 12:35](#); [Luke 6:45](#)]. And when they have reigned in “foreign-born” men, who are estranged from God, at once “winged serpents” will come forth, so that it does not suffice for them to have thought and done things that are evil, unless they have also sought patronage for their evil deeds and have fabricated various heresies. I think that those ones are “winged serpents” who exalt themselves and rise up against the knowledge of God [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)] and set their mouth in heaven [cf. [Ps 73:9](#)], or who *devour birds*, that is, those who with a venomous mouth devour with their own jaws all who desire to fly and to rise up to things high up. And this [has been said] for the time being about evils.

On the other hand, those who have not crushed the *rod* and “yoke” of *him that struck them*, but who have submitted their neck to the Lord and are poor in spirit [cf. [Matt 5:3](#)], will be fed and will say, “The Lord will feed me and there is nothing I shall want” [[Ps 23:1](#)]; and they will hear from the Lord, “I will feed them in the most fruitful pastures” [[Ezek 34:14](#); cf. [John 10:9](#)],<sup>666</sup> and they will come in and go out and find pasture [cf. [John 10:9](#)], and the *poor will be fed by him who strikes them*, in order to correct them, and they *will rest in peace*, or, with an agitated shepherd, they will act *with confidence* and *they will rest* with Lazarus in the bosom of Abraham [cf. [Luke 16:23](#)]. But those who have *crushed the “yoke” and rod of him who struck them* will endure perpetual *hunger*, so that they are not nourished on the word of God, but the whole remnant of them perishes, lest anything should sprout from the evil seed.

<sup>663</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (620B).

<sup>664</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 69 (105, 33–5); *Bas Is* 286 (621B).

<sup>665</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 69 (106, 34–07, 2); *Bas Is* 287 (621C).

<sup>666</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 288 (624C).

35. ([14:31–32](#)) *Howl, O gate; cry, O city; all Philistia is thrown down: for a smoke is coming from the north, and there is none who escapes his column. (32) And what will be answered to the messengers of the nation? That the Lord founded Zion, and the poor of his people will hope in it.*<sup>667</sup> For messengers, that is, angels, which Symmachus alone translated, everyone translated as “kings.” They were deceived by the ambiguity of the word, since except for the single letter *aleph*, which is added in the word “angels,” the Hebrew names “kings” and “angels” by the same term, namely, *malache*.

In the *Book of Hebrew Names*, I found *Philistines* translated as “those who fall with a cup.”<sup>668</sup> Therefore, those who have gotten drunk from the cup of Babylon [cf. [Jer 51:7](#)], and have drunk wine, in which there is excess [cf. [Eph 5:18](#)], and who, according to the Apostle, have not attained the kingdom of God on account of drunkenness, among the other vices [cf. [1 Cor 6:9–10](#)], to them it is commanded that their *gate* should *howl* and their *city cry*. I think that the *gate* of the heretics is the mouth with which they blaspheme,<sup>669</sup> and the *city* is their soul, which is a treasure of evil thoughts [cf. [Luke 6:45](#)]. It ought to *howl* and bewail these things, because it is *all thrown down* to the ground and laid low, and nothing in it is of sound understanding and from God’s wisdom. Why does the *gate howl*? Why does the *city cry*? Because *all Philistia is thrown down*.

Now the following verse shows why it was *thrown down: a smoke is coming from the north, and there is none who escapes his column*. This smoke is caused by the flaming darts of the devil [cf. [Eph 6:16](#)]. It is harmful to the eyes and opposed to the light [cf. [Prov 10:26](#)], and it rises *from the north*, from where, in Jeremiah, a cauldron is kindled [cf. [Jer 1:13–14](#)],<sup>770</sup> and from where evils burn upon all the inhabitants of the land, who cannot say, “I am a neighbor and a sojourner, like all my fathers” [[Ps 39:12](#)], but they live in the land. This is why even in Proverbs we read, “The north is a hard wind” [[Prov 27:16](#)].<sup>771</sup> Now it goes by the name of “right,” which, though in and of itself it is hard and left, and does not want to receive God’s yoke on its extremely stiff neck, it is called “right” by those who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, who put light for darkness and darkness for light [cf. [Isa 5:20](#)]. *And there is no one who escapes the column* of that smoke; for no one is without sin, not even if his life should be one day long [cf. [Job 14:4–5](#)].

And when *Philistia* falls and its *smoke* spreads everywhere, so that no one can escape it, what is said to the angels who are in charge of each of the nations, marveling and desiring to know why Zion alone, which is located on the summit and heights, has escaped the bitterness of this smoke? What then is said to them? Naturally, that which follows: *Because the Lord founded it, and he is its foundation, but he founded it upon the foundation of prudence, justice, strength, and moderation, by which names Christ is understood. Even the Apostle says of him, “But no one can lay another foundation besides him who has been laid, Jesus Christ”* [[1 Cor 3:11](#)]. But he who is foolish, and speaks foolish things and his heart understands vain things [cf.

<sup>667</sup> The lemma in bk. [5](#) reads “n him.”

<sup>668</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 290 (625C).

<sup>669</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (628AB).

<sup>770</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (628C).

<sup>771</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (628BC).

[Isa 32:6](#)], builds his house upon sand, which has no foundation [cf. [Matt 7:26](#)].

In this *Zion*, therefore, which has been *founded* by the *Lord*, the *poor*, or meek and humble of his people, will hope, of whom it is said, “Blessed are the meek, for they will possess the land” [[Matt 5:4](#)], and who have heard the Lord saying, “Learn from me, for I am meek and humble in heart” [[Matt 11:29](#)]. They were humbled before glory [cf. [Prov 18:12](#)], and they heard the apostle Peter say, “Be humble under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in time” [[1 Pet 5:6](#)]. But the *poor* are those of whom we read above, “The firstborn of the poor will be fed, and the poor will rest in confidence” [[Isa 14:30](#)].

36. ([15:1a](#)) *The burden of Moab*. Septuagint: “The word against the land of Moab.” Symmachus and Theodotion have, “The assumption of Moab.”

Circumcision is both fleshly and spiritual, and the Apostle says of the spiritual, “For we are the circumcision, who serve God in spirit and boast in the Lord, and do not put confidence in the flesh” [[Phil 3:3](#)]. And on the other hand, to distinguish the spiritual Israel, it is said of the fleshly one, “Consider Israel according to the flesh” [[1 Cor 10:18](#)], and, “You Gentiles in the flesh” [[Eph 2:11](#)]. In the same way, Moab, which means “from the father” or “paternal water,” should be understood spiritually. He was conceived from incest and drunkenness [cf. [Gen 19:35–37](#)],<sup>772</sup> because he seemed to be begotten when his father was absent, so to speak, or rather, unaware.<sup>773</sup> In many passages of the Scriptures we read about Moab, and especially in the Book of Numbers, when Balak king of the Moabites invited the soothsayer Balaam to curse. Among other things he prophesied even this against mystical Moab: “A star will rise from Jacob, and a man will rise from Israel, and he will strike the princes of Moab” [[Num 24:17](#)].

37. ([15:1b–c](#)) *Because in the night Ar has been devastated, Moab is silent; because the wall has been destroyed in the night, Moab is silent*. Septuagint: “By night the land of Moab will perish; for by night the wall of the land of Moab will perish.” For *Ar*, which Theodotion alone recorded, just as it reads in the Hebrew, Aquila and Symmachus translated “city.” They failed to notice that it does not have the letter *ioth* between the Hebrew characters *ain* and *res*. Had it been there, it would rightly have been expressed as “city.”

Secular wisdom, of which the Lord speaks through the prophet, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the prudence of the prudent I will reject” [[Isa 29:14](#)], since it regards intelligence as its own author, which is produced from the creation of God, seems indeed to be born “from the father,” which is the translation of *Moab*. But because it is adulterated and contrary to God’s people, it is generated from incest and in a cave and *at night* [cf. [Gen 19:30, 33–37](#)]. This is why it perishes *at night*, namely, in everlasting error. And the Egyptians are covered by waves in the Red Sea during the morning watch [cf. [Exod 14:24](#)], which points to the night time; and Lot went to Zoar (*Segor*) during the *night* when the Sodomites perished, and the sun rose for him [cf. [Gen 19:23](#)]. The blessed Apostle understands this, and writes of the saints and the perfect, “We are not of the *night* and of darkness, but we are sons of the day; for those who sleep, sleep at *night*, and those who get drunk are drunk at *night*; but we who are of the day, let us stay awake, having put on the breastplate of faith and love” [[1 Thess 5:5, 7](#)]. And since he had abandoned the night and had already begun to be a son of the day, he says to

<sup>772</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 292 (629B).

<sup>773</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (629C).

those who believe, “The *night* has advanced, but the day has drawn near, let us walk as in the day with honesty, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in bedroom chambers and excess” [[Rom 13:12–13](#)]. Now when the *Moabite land* perishes, even its *wall*, which was constructed with dialectical art, was destroyed and *laid waste* on the same night, and it became *silent* with an eternal silence. On the other hand, *Ar*, which means ἀντιδικός (“adversary”), points to this, that this wisdom, which is hostile to God, has been overcome by means of ecclesiastical sermons fighting against it.

38. ([15:2a](#)) *The house has gone up, and Dibon to the high places to mourn.* Septuagint: “Grieve for yourselves, for even Dibon will perish, where [your] altar is; you will go up there to weep.”

The whole *house* of adverse wisdom, and *Dibon*,<sup>774</sup> which means “their flow,” *has ascended the high places* in which it had taken pride. Consequently, it does not offer victims, but *mourns* for those things in which it had previously sinned.<sup>775</sup> And in fact, falsehood passes through and flows past like a river, and can never stop at a stable stage.<sup>776</sup> But the word of God, which is compact and stable—for which reason the manna seems like ice on the surface of the land [cf. [Exod 16:31](#)—does not flow past, but it stops. On the other hand, according to the Septuagint, the Moabites are commanded to mourn and “weep,” not for others, for that belongs to the perfect, but for themselves, because even their “Dibon,” that is, their orderly speech, which flowed like a torrent, will perish, where they had a consecrated “altar,” as it were, along with all their worldly riches. This is also why in the Psalm it is said, “If riches abound, do not set your heart [on them]” [[Ps 62:10](#)].<sup>777</sup> Now the beginning of salvation is to understand and weep for one’s own sins.

39. ([15:2b–9](#)) *Over Nebo, and over Medeba, Moab has howled. On all their heads [will be] baldness, and every beard will be shaven. (3) In their streets they are girded with sackcloth, and on the tops of their houses, and in their streets everyone howls [and] comes down to weep. (4) And Heshbon (Esebon) has cried out, and Elealeh; their voice has been heard as far as Jasa. For this will the unencumbered men of Moab howl; his soul will howl to itself. (5) My heart will cry to Moab; his bars as far as Segor, a heifer of three years old. For by the ascent of Luhith they will go up weeping, and in the way of Horonaim (Oronaim) they will lift up a cry of contrition. (6) For the waters of Nimrim (Nemrim) will be desolate, for the grass has withered, the sprout has failed, all the greenness has perished. (7) According to the extent of their work [is] their visitation also; they will lead them to the torrent of the willows. (8) For the cry has gone round about the border of Moab, its howling as far as Gallim, and its cry as far as the well of Elim. (9) For the waters of Dimon are filled with blood. For I will bring more upon Dibon: the lion upon those who will have fled from Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.*

Since there is nearly one meaning for this entire prophecy, lest I should tear it to pieces by explaining it piecemeal, I have recorded the whole thing at once, and I will briefly run through it and say whatever occurs to me about the details according to anagogy.

<sup>774</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 294 (633A).

<sup>775</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (633B).

<sup>776</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (633A).

<sup>777</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (633C).

*Nebo* means “sitting” or “prophecy”;<sup>778</sup> *Medeba*, “from the forest”; *Heshbon*, “thoughts”;<sup>779</sup> *Elealeh*, “going up (*ascensio*)”; *Jasah*, “deed” or “commandment”; *Segor*, “small”; *Luith*, “cheeks”; *Horonaim*, “opening of grief”; *Nimrim*, “leopards” or “transgressors”; *Agallim*, “heifers” or “heaps of sand”; *Elim*, “rams” or “strong ones”; *Dimon*, “sufficient grief.”

Every doctrine contrary to the truth<sup>880</sup> is born in the darkness of error from human thought, without God’s inspiration. It has been laid waste at night [cf. [Isa 15:1–2](#)], and its arguments, which are understood as “walls,” have been destroyed by ecclesiastical preaching, so that these arguments have been quieted with an eternal silence [cf. [Isa 15:1](#)], to such an extent that their whole faction has turned to repentance and tears over *Nebo*, that is, over “prophecy” and “sitting,” namely, their teachers, and over *Medeba*,<sup>881</sup> where there are not fruitful trees, but an infertile “forest,” in which wild beasts dwell. Of this “forest,” it is written in the twenty-eighth Psalm, “And he will reveal the thickets of the *forest*” [[Ps 29:9](#)]. Therefore, there will be *howling* and *mourning*, and all the adornments of eloquence will be removed from their *heads*, so that the naked and unshapely remain, and if they seemed to possess any manliness in the *beard*, the man of the church exposes him as *shaven*, effeminate and feeble.

In their *streets* too, that is, in the detours of their errors, while each one fabricates what he wants for the sake of his own will, they will be *girded with the sackcloth* of repentance, and over their *housetops* and dwellings, in which at first they believed that they were lofty, and in their *streets*, since they do not enter by the narrow way that leads to life, but by the broad way that leads to death [cf. [Matt 7:13–14](#)], there will be *howling*, and they will not “go up (*ascendent*)” [Elealeh] in haughtiness but go down in *weeping*.

Then they will understand their own vain “thoughts,” which means *Heshbon*, and the pointless “ascent” of pride, which *Elealeh* expresses, so that their *voice is heard all the way* to the evil works that they have “done” [*Jasah*], and the “commandment” [*Jasah*] of God that they were thinking, condemning themselves by their own confession. For this reason the *bars*, that is, those who were firm in Moab and understood their own error, will howl and begin to hold out hope of progress, when their soul has howled over itself.

This is why the prophet speaks to those whose soul howls for itself with the emotions of a fellow sufferer, and he says, *My heart will cry to Moab*, that I might summon them to repentance. But their *bars* and all their supports, which they seemed to have in the heresies, will reach *Segor*,<sup>882</sup> that is “small,” and will be shown to be not strong but fragile. Now this *Segor*, that is, “small repentance,” if it perseveres, will lead them to perfect salvation,<sup>883</sup> because it signifies heifers of three years, in accordance with what we read in Genesis, where Abraham is commanded to offer a heifer, a ram, and a goat of three years, namely a perfect sacrifice, in order that he might deserve to be the Lord’s heir [cf. [Gen 15:9](#)].

And when they repented, by means of *Luith*, that is, by means of tears on the “cheeks,” they

<sup>778</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 295 (636B).

<sup>779</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 296 (637A).

<sup>880</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 293 (632C).

<sup>881</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 295 (636BC).

<sup>882</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 297 (640A).

<sup>883</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (640BC).



will *ascend* to higher things. And they will raise a shout of contrition to the Lord, as it were through this “opening” and entrance “of grief,” [*Horonaim*], so that they can say, “A sacrifice to God [is] an afflicted spirit, a contrite and humbled heart, God will not despise” [[Ps 51:17](#)].<sup>884</sup>

And this will happen because the *waters of Nimrim*, that is, the doctrine of the heretics,<sup>885</sup> which is compared with “leopards” and “transgressors,” *will be desolate* and will be reduced to nothing—“leopards,” whose variations and spots are not changed in Jeremiah [[Jer 13:23](#)], and “apostates,” of whom we read in the Psalms, “I reckoned as *transgressors* all the sinners of the earth” [[Ps 119:119](#)]. All the *grass* too and *sprout*, and anything that seemed *green* in their speech, *withered away*, and corresponding to the extent of their sins they were *visited* by God, so that the one whom they had not perceived by means of his kindnesses they would recognize through his scourges.

Finally, “they will be led to the valley” [cf. [Isa 15:7](#)], or *torrent of the willows*, so that no fruit remains in them. For they say that this is the nature of the seed of those trees, that the one who drains a cup of it goes without children. This is why even the saints, who on account of sins have begun to be clean in the confusion of this world, hang their instruments in the willows of Babylonian rivers [[Ps 137:1–2](#)].

The *clamor* of the Moabites, either of those who summon to repentance, or of those who mourn for their error, *has gone around all the borders*, so that they can offer heifers by the howling of their lips and reach to the source of the Lord’s “rams,” or “strong ones,” since Elim means both.

Now the waters of Dimon, which means “sufficient pain,” or “grief,” which [waters] had contaminated many by its sprinkling, will be exposed by the deceived people not to have been for health but for *blood*. This is why the prophet’s words promise that over the flowing “tears,” which is the translation of *Dibon*, not one “grief,” but *more* things added to grief will multiply, so that after they have fully repented and fled from Moab, they deserve to have a lion for a prince, which the Septuagint expressed as *arihel*, which means “lion of God.”<sup>886</sup> I have refrained from discussing their translation in this passage, because also in many other passages it differs from the Hebrew truth. Moreover, on the basis of what we have translated, the sense of that [version] can also be understood.

40. ([16:1–5](#)) *Send forth the lamb, the ruler of the earth, from the rock of the desert to the mount of the daughter of Zion. (2) And it will come to pass, that as a bird fleeing away, and as young ones flying out of the nest, so will the daughters of Moab be in the passage of Arnon. (3) Take counsel, gather a council, make your shadow as the night in the midday, hide those who flee, and do not betray those who wander about. (4) My fugitives will dwell with you, O Moab; be a hiding place to them from the face of the destroyer, for the dust is at an end, the wretched man has been finished, he has failed, who trod the earth under foot. (5) And a throne will be prepared in mercy, and one will sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment and quickly rendering what is just.*

What we have translated from the Hebrew as, *Send forth the lamb, the ruler of the earth,*

<sup>884</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 298 (641A).

<sup>885</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 299 (641B).

<sup>886</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 300 (644B).

can also be read as follows: “Send forth the lamb *for* the ruler of the earth,” namely, whereby it is not the lamb itself who is the ruler of the earth, as we have translated it in accordance with history, but the *lamb* is to be sacrificed *for* the ruler of the earth. This *lamb*, therefore, who either is itself the ruler of the earth, or is sacrificed *for* the ruler of the earth, is from the nation of the Moabites, and is from those who fled from Moab and deserved to have a lion as a prince [cf. [Isa 15:9](#)]. Now it signifies Ruth, from whom Christ was generated [[Matt 1:5](#)], whom he calls a *rock of the desert*, because according to God’s command, Moabites and Ammonites do not enter the church of God to the tenth generation and unto eternity [cf. [Deut 23:3](#)].<sup>887</sup>

Now in order that we may turn from prophecy to anagogy, the one who has fled from the desert of Moab and has shown contempt for falsehood and has taken a stand on the *mount of truth*, will be as a bird fleeing and as young ones flying out of the nest. Otherwise they would be swallowed by Moabite serpents. So, he says, *will be all the daughters*, that is the Moabite souls, *in the passage of Arnon*, which means “their illumination,” when they have abandoned their errors and passed to the knowledge of the *truth*.<sup>888</sup>

And so, it is said to Moab itself, or to the one who has escaped from Moab, Do nothing without *counsel* and do not be borne around by every wind of doctrine [cf. [Eph 4:14](#)], but follow him who is the angel of the great counsel [cf. [Isa 9:6](#)], and *gather a council*, so that you may make the church of God from *those who wander about* and are astray. Now *make your shadow*, which used to be of the night and darkness [[1 Thess 5:5](#)],<sup>889</sup> and your *tabernacle*, in which formerly you thought that you were resting, *as the midday*, that is, as the brightest light, in which you ought to *hide those fleeing* from error. And you should no longer *betray* those who formerly *wander about*.

For *O Moab, my fugitives* who had forsaken me, who had left the church and, letting go of the teaching of the Holy Spirit, were following their own understanding, or who had dwelled with you, when the destroyer devil began to persecute them, you should offer *hideouts to them* for the fear of the Lord, when their whole mind has been converted. And know that after the coming of the *lamb*, who has arisen as *Lord of the whole earth from the desert rock*, and who came to the *mount of the daughter of Zion*, all power of the devil *is finished*. It is compared with *dust*, and the *wretched man is consumed*, because he made many wretched, and he has *failed who was treading on all the earth*, namely those who were earthly.

Now when that one has been *consumed* and reduced to nothing and is utterly *failing*, a *throne will be prepared* and an everlasting kingdom, first *in mercy*—for we are all under sin [cf. [Rom 3:9](#)] and lack the glory of God [cf. [Rom 3:23](#)]*—and he will sit in the tabernacle of David*, which had fallen and has been raised [cf. [Amos 9:11](#); [Acts 15:15–18](#)]. After mercy, he *judges* and *seeks justice* and *renders* to each one according to his works [cf. [Matt 16:27](#)].

Let us consider from the beginning either of the *burden* or of the “word” [[Isa 15:1](#)] *of Moab* where it is said, “In the night Ar of Moab has been laid waste” [[Isa 15:1](#)], and the other things down to this passage, how by the stages and progression of repentance they go from being Moabites to Israelites, and they flee *like a bird* and *fly away like young ones from a nest*, that

<sup>887</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 301 (645B).

<sup>888</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 302 (648B).

<sup>889</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 304 (649B).

they may pass through *Arnon*, and *dwell on the mount of the daughter of Zion*; and when all the power of the devil or antichrist has been crushed, Christ reigns and sets up his throne in those who have been saved by [his] “justice” and *mercy*. “For the Father judges no one, but he had given all judgment to the Son” [[John 5:22](#)].

41. ([16:6–8a](#)) *We have heard of the pride of Moab, he is exceeding proud; his pride and his arrogance and his indignation is more than his strength. (7) Therefore Moab will howl to Moab, everyone will howl; speak of his blows to those who rejoice upon the wall<sup>990</sup> of baked brick. (8) For the suburbs of Heshbon (Hesebon) are deserted, the vineyard of Sibmah (Sabama).* Septuagint: “We have heard of the injury of Moab, he is very insolent; his pride and injury and fury, thus [is] not your divination. Moab will not howl this way, if indeed all will howl in Moab. You will care for those who dwell in Deseth, and you will not be ashamed. The plains of Heshbon will mourn, the vineyard of Sibmah (*Sabama*).”

According to the Septuagint translators, this passage is wrapped up in such great obscurities that on the basis of it, it is clear that it can hardly be read. Let us speak, then, in accordance with the Hebrew. It is a scriptural custom to alleviate the hopelessness of the human mind by a joyful message, then, on the other hand, by means of threats to terrify the negligent and those who are unwilling to repent. This prevents God’s goodness from hardening our heart [cf. [Rom 2:4–5](#)]. Let us offer but one example of this sort of thing. In the [144th Psalm](#) we read, “The Lord is sweet to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works” [[Ps 145:9](#)]; and after a little bit, “The Lord sustains all who fall, and raises up all who are cast down; the eyes of all hope in you, and you give them food in due season” [[Ps 145:14–15](#)].<sup>991</sup> Any time he has promised, “The Lord guards all those who love him” [[Ps 145:20](#)]; lest he should have made the hearer negligent, he added, “And all sinners he will destroy” [[Ps 145:20](#)].

There was a prediction, then, that a *throne* must be *prepared in mercy* [cf. [Isa 16:5](#)], when the antichrist has been finished off and his father the devil, who *trampled upon the whole earth*, and that the one *who will sit in the tabernacle of David* was learning of his arrogance. For that reason, under the persona of the saints, who have been saved from Moab, and by his own experience, the prophet says, *We have heard of the arrogance of Moab*, or “injury,” as the Septuagint translated it. For which of the heretics is not proud? He so despises the simplicity of the church that he regards men of the church as brute beasts. And he is lifted up by such a great swelling of *arrogance* and “injury” that he arms his mouth against the Creator himself. He speaks disparagingly of his prophets, as if [his detraction is based] upon the authority of a Gospel testimony, where the Savior says, “All who came before me were thieves and robbers” [[John 10:8](#)]. Consequently, he even calls God’s servant Moses a murderer, and he disparages Joshua son of Nun as a bloodthirsty man, who was of such great sanctity that the sun and the moon stood still at the command of his words [cf. [Josh 10:12–13](#)]. As for David, from whose seed Christ has arisen [cf. [1 Kgs 6:7](#)], the heretic calls him a murderer and an adulterer. They fail to consider his repentance and gentleness, to which God’s clemency is compared.

But although he is proud and arrogant, and boasts furiously, nevertheless he is more daring than his strength allows. Therefore, *Moab will howl to Moab*, that is, one to the other; that is to

<sup>990</sup> The lemma in bk. [5](#) has “alls.”

<sup>991</sup> Cf. *Bas Is* 306 (653A).

say, all the varieties of heretics and of secular wisdom will bellow against each other, when they will be in the midst of torments. For this reason those who have *walls* that are built not with square stones, from which the temple was built, and polished to such a degree that hammer and axe are not heard in the house of God: O you teachers of the church, or you who are saved from the error of Moab, *declare* your own *blows* by which they have been wounded by the javelins of the heretics.

For all “their thoughts,” which *Heshbon* signifies,<sup>992</sup> pertain not to the habitation of the Lord’s city, of which it is written, “The force of the river makes glad the city of God” [[Ps 46:4](#)], but they are *suburbs*, so that they are believed to pertain to the city of the Lord. These *suburbs* of God *are deserted* of help, or burned by divine fire, especially the *vineyard of Sibmah* (*Sabama*), which means “raising the height.” For it raises itself on high and tries to build a tower of its own arrogance toward the sky [cf. [Gen 11:4](#)]. Now what has been recorded in the Septuagint, “for those who dwell in Deseth,” is not found in the Hebrew, but *ares* is read in its place, which signifies a potsherd or *baked brick*.

42. ([16:8b–10](#)) *The lords of the nations have cut off its branches; they have reached as far as Jazer, they have wandered in the desert, its shoots have been left, they have gone over the sea. (9) Therefore I will lament with weeping Jazer the vineyard of Sibmah (Sabama). I will water you with my tears, O Heshbon (Esebon) and Elealeh, for the voice of the treaders has rushed in upon your vintage, and upon your harvest. (10) And gladness and joy will be taken away from Carmel, and there will be no rejoicing nor shouting in the vineyards; he will not tread out wine in the press who had been accustomed to tread it out; the voice of the treaders I have taken away.*

The “suburbs of Heshborn,” of which we have read above, “are deserted” [[Isa 16:8](#)], and the *vineyard of Sibmah*,<sup>993</sup> can be translated not only as “lifting up the height,” but also as “some conversion,” because it seems that in the Moabite region “some” part wants to be converted to the Lord’s service. Therefore, *the lords of the nations*, the apostles and apostolic men, *have* completely *cut off* the *branches* and *shoots* of this *vineyard of Sibmah*, lest out of some heresies, other heresies may be born, and there would become an infinite multitude of people in error. And not only have they *cut off the shoots of Sibmah*, but they have reached *as far as Jazer*,<sup>994</sup> which means “their strength,” that is, *as far as* each of the strongest dogmas of the heretics and things constructed by dialectical art, in which they seemed to possess the strength of their error; and the sword edge has raged among them to such an extent that very recently they have strayed into the desert and had no one to kill. And though they *cut off his branches*, nevertheless by a fault of the evil root, some *sprouts* remained.<sup>995</sup> But *the lords of the nations have gone over the sea*, that is, the temptations (*temptationes*) of this age, of which we read in the Psalm, “I went into the depths of the sea and the tempest (*tempestas*) swallowed me” [[Ps 69:2](#)]; and in another passage, “Those who go down to the sea in ships, doing works on the great waters, themselves have seen the works of the Lord in the deep” [[Ps 107:23–24](#)]. They

<sup>992</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 308 (656C).

<sup>993</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 310 (657C)

<sup>994</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (660B)

<sup>995</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 311 (660C)

*have gone over the sea*, then, to look at the works of the Lord in the depths of temptations, while they are being delivered from them.

And so, *I*, the word of the prophet, *will lament* the strength of the heretics, that is, *Jazer*, and *the vineyard of Sibmah*, which exalts itself against the knowledge of God [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)], and *I will water with my tears Heshbon*, namely “their thoughts,” and *Elealeh*, by which they “ascend” to the heights. But why does he *lament* Jazer, the vineyard of Sibmah, and *water with his tears Heshbon* and *Elealeh*? So that, while he is crying, he might teach them to cry, *for*, he says, *the voice of the treaders has rushed in upon your vineyard, and upon your harvest*. Owing to the nearness of the location, the vineyard of the Moabites is like the vineyard of the Sodomites, of which it is said, “Their vineyard is from the vineyard of Sodom, and their stock is from Gomorrah” [[Deut 32:32](#)].<sup>996</sup> Moreover, in the seventy-seventh Psalm we read about the Egyptian vineyard, which God strikes with hail [[Ps 78:47](#)]. Also, the Moabite *harvest* arises in the valleys that are called Rephaim, and its false *vintage* and vineyards of which it is said above, *The lords of the nations have cut off his branches*. For they crush the very bitter grapes and trample them under their feet, lest the poison of a serpent exude from them, and kill all who drink.

Also, the *gladness and joy* of the heretics *will be taken away*, with which they were previously accustomed to rejoice, so that after they have repented, they may deserve to hear, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted” [[Matt 5:5](#)]. And what he added, *from Carmel*, signifies not that the heretics truly have Carmel, that is the knowledge of spiritual circumcision, but that they falsely claim to have it.<sup>997</sup> And when their *vineyards* have been *cut off*, and their *gladness and joy* over falsely named knowledge [cf. [1 Tim 6:20](#)] has been *taken away*, then there will be none from the former *treaders* who tramples the grapes that he was previously trampling, and *their voice* goes mute with an everlasting silence.

43. ([16:11–13](#)) *Therefore my heart (venter) will sound like a harp for Moab, and my inward parts for the wall of baked brick. (12) And it will come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is wearied on his high places, that he will go in to his sanctuaries to pray, and will not prevail. (13) This is the word that the Lord spoke to Moab from that time.*

When the Moabite error has been destroyed, or rather, when the false joy has been changed into mourning and tears, *my heart (venter)*, the prophet’s, which is arranged with musical art like a *harp*, and which, conceiving from the fear of God, has given birth to many children, so that no string renders its own sound, it will *resound* mourning to repenting Moab, and all *my inward parts for the wall of baked brick*, for which Theodotion translated, “for a demolished wall.” For all the helps of those opposed in which they were previously trusting will be destroyed and will collapse. Now the *inward parts*, and that which is within the prophet, are those things of which David also spoke in the Psalm: “Bless the Lord, my soul, and all that is within me, [bless] his holy name” [[Ps 103:1](#)].<sup>998</sup> For just as the harp does not emit a vocal and properly arranged sound, if even one string is broken, so if one string of the virtues is lacking, the spiritual *heart (venter)* of the prophet cannot resound with a sweet μέλος [song, strain], nor can it shout to the brick wall with all its inner being. There is also an opinion of the

<sup>996</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 309 (657A).

<sup>997</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 313 (661D)

<sup>998</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 314 (664B)

philosophers, that the virtues cleave to each other, and there is the thought of the Apostle James, that all the virtues are lacking the person who lacks one [cf. [Jas 2:10](#)].

Now when Moab has understood that *he wearied himself* in vain in these dogmas that he was previously regarding as *high places, he will go in to his sanctuaries*, not those that are sanctified in and of themselves, but that the erring one regarded as sanctified places, and he will not be able to find help. Or, at any rate, when the error of falsehood has been deserted, he will try to enter into the *sanctuaries* of the church, to make them his own, and to pray and *implore*, but he *will not prevail*. For we cannot have room for perfect virtue immediately, when we have the will for it.

And as for what he adds, *This is the word that the Lord spoke to Moab from that time*, we should know that he has composed an epilogue to the introduction, where he had spoken the “word,” or “burden against Moab” [cf. [Isa 15:1](#)].<sup>999</sup> Thus, what he had begun there, he has completed here. Now *from that time* should be understood from when he began to speak to him, so that all that he said is one word of God, that is, one thought.

Moreover, according to the Septuagint, which translated this as follows: the prophet’s “inward parts have been renewed” by God “as a wall,” and he “is ashamed,” that is, Moab; and [Moab] “goes in to the altars” and to the things that have been made by hands, we can explain this as follows. Let us say that the “inward parts” of the prophet are always being renewed and made stronger by God, so that the adversaries may be ashamed, and let them understand that the things that have been fabricated by human hands are pointless and do not help them make progress toward salvation.

44. ([16:14](#)) *And now the Lord has spoken, saying, In three years, as the years of a hireling, the glory of Moab will be taken away for all the multitude of the people, and it will be left small and feeble, not many.*

The *three years* in which *the glory of Moab will be taken away for all the multitude of his people*, or “with all his great wealth,” as the Septuagint has translated it, should be understood mystically. For just as the mercy of the Lord is in weights and measure [cf. [Isa 28:17](#)], so also do torments and penalties have their own measure. Accordingly, after *three years* have passed, in which *it will be left small and feeble, not many*, at that time it ceases being inglorious. And one should take note that according to the prophecy of Ezekiel, when days are numbered as years to Israel, that is, to the ten tribes, which had sinned in a greater degree, 390 years are counted for punishments, as the Hebrew says [cf. [Ezek 4:5](#)], not 190, as the common edition reads; and for Judah, where the temple of God was located, forty years [cf. [Ezek 4:6](#)]. For he who is *small* deserves mercy, “but the powerful will suffer powerful torments” [[Wis 6:6](#)]; and he will severely (*multum*) beat the slave who knows his master’s will and does not do it [cf. [Luke 12:47](#)]. Therefore Moab, though he was outside and did not belong to the people of God, when he abandons his error and is converted, he will be left *small* and *feeble* and inglorious, not for many years, but for *three*. These are the years of which we also read elsewhere, “Remember the days of the age” [[Deut. 32:7](#)], and again, “I have considered the ancient days and I have held the eternal years in my mind” [[Ps 77:5](#)]. For if Israel according to the flesh was serving shadows and copies, and all of their solemnities were a type of things to come, why should not also the

<sup>999</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 315 (665C)



years of the present time prefigure future times? We read about these things in another passage, “What will you do on the days of the assembly and on the days of the Lord’s festival?” [[Hos 9:5](#)].

As for what is joined to this, *as the years of the hireling*, this shows that false teaching does everything for profit and gain.<sup>1100</sup> “For every hireling, who is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, when he sees the wolf coming, he flees, because he is a hireling and he has no care for the sheep” [[John 10:12–13](#)].<sup>1101</sup> For this reason I think that the stranger and the priest’s *hireling (mercennarium)* do not eat of the holy things, but the slaves are sharers in the holy things [cf. [Lev 22:10–11](#)].<sup>1102</sup> For they do everything not out of love for the master, but for the sake of reward (*mercedem*). They devour the homes of widows [cf. [Matt 23:14](#)] and lead off their own flocks, in order to be clothed in their wool and use their milk [cf. [Ezek 24:3](#)]. What we have said about the teaching of the *hirelings*, we should relate to the other things. If I offer alms in order to be praised by men, I have received my reward (*mercedem*) [cf. [Matt 6:2](#)],<sup>1103</sup> and I deserve to be called a *hireling (mercennarius)*. If I pretend to be chaste and there is something else in my conscience, I have the glory of a *hireling*, but the punishment of a sinner. And when we compare two evils, it is a lesser evil to sin openly than to pretend and fake holiness. But even in this respect, Moab had made progress. For he who previously had many comrades of their error, is later reduced to few, or he who previously was *many* in the wealth of sinners, after his repentance is *small* and poor in respect to evil.

## [THE SEVENTH BOOK]

1. The seventh book likewise is the second according to anagogy, or rather, the last. For the tropological explanation is terminated in these ten visions.<sup>11</sup> When I have completed this, by means of your prayers, Eustochium, and Christ’s assistance, I will go on to the eighth book, and I will unfold both explanations continuously in accordance with the former books up through the fourth.

2. ([17:1a](#)) *The burden of Damascus*. Symmachus and Theodotion: “The reception of Damascus.” Septuagint: “The word against Damascus,” adding this on their own, which they also did in the beginning of the section on Moab [cf. [Isa 15:1](#)].

<sup>1100</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 316 (668B)

<sup>1101</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (668A)

<sup>1102</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (668AB).

<sup>1103</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (668B).

1 The ten “visions” or “urdens” are: 1) [13:1](#), Babylon; 2) [14:28–9](#), Philistia; 3) [15:1](#), Moab; 4) [17:1](#), Damascus; 5) [19:1](#), Egypt; 6) [21:1](#), the deserted sea; 7) [21:11](#), Duma; 8) [21:13](#), Arabia; 9) [22:1](#), valley of vision; and 10) [23:1](#), Tyre.

We first read the name of *Damascus* in Genesis [cf. [Gen 15:2](#)].<sup>22</sup> He was Abraham's home-born slave before the birth of Isaac, and he would have been reckoned as his heir, had not Sarah's son been born of the promise. Now the name means either "kiss of blood" or "the one drinking blood" or "blood of goat's hair." All these things befit pagan people who, before faith in Christ, were friends of blood and cruelty, and carried out deeds worthy of mourning and sackcloth.

History narrates in the Book of Days [cf. [2 Chr 24:23–24](#)] that when a year was fulfilled the army of Syria went up against Joash king of Judah. It came to Jerusalem and killed all the princes of the people; and it sent all the spoil to the king of *Damascus*, who had come with a few men, and God had handed over an extremely great multitude into their hand, because they had forsaken the Lord, the God of their fathers. Consider whether in accordance with anagogy, and as a type of things to come, we can thus relate this to the time of the Lord's coming. For after the end of the acceptable year, in which the Savior announced the gospel [cf. [Isa 61:2](#); [Luke 4:19](#)], an army of Gentiles "with few men" goes up from *Damascus* against Judah and Jerusalem, who had forsaken the Lord. And they removed all the wealth of their law and prophets; and they "sent to the king of Damascus," by means of men of the church and the gospel doctrine, who were few in comparison with the whole world, which was still at that time in unbelief, and into the whole world of dispersed Jews. And yet, the Lord handed over Jerusalem into their hands, because they had forsaken the Son of God, who was foretold earlier by the prophets. For this reason I think that even Saul, who afterward received the name Paul for his good service,<sup>33</sup> because he was zealous for the law [cf. [Acts 22:3](#)], went to *Damascus* and wanted to fight against those who believed from the Gentiles. And when he had been overcome there, he followed those who were staying in Damascus [cf. [Acts 9:19](#)], so that from there he went up again to Jerusalem to storm the Jews [cf. [Acts 9:26](#)].

May it not seem contradictory to anyone if in the Book of Chronicles (*paralipomenon*), joyful things are announced concerning *Damascus*, and now in Isaiah, grievous things. For also concerning Israel itself, which is surely God's portion [cf. [Deut 32:9](#)], sometimes adverse things are announced, sometimes favorable things. And just as there is an Israel according to the flesh [cf. [Rom 9:5](#)], and it is said to the Gentiles,<sup>44</sup> "You Gentiles according to the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh" [[Eph 2:11](#)], so, on the other hand, there is Israel according to the Spirit, and there are Gentiles according to the Spirit, and among the other Gentiles there is *Damascus* according to the Spirit, lest we should be content merely with Jewish stories (*fabulis*) [cf. [Titus 1:14](#)].

3. ([17:1b–3](#)) *Behold, Damascus will cease to be a city, and will be as a heap of stones in a ruin. (2) The cities of Aroer will be left for flocks, and they will rest there, and there will be none to make them afraid. (3) And aid will cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and*

2 Cf. Jerome, *QHG* 15:2–.

3 See Jerome' discussion of Paul' name change in *Commentary on Philemon* 1–, which is based on Origen' discussion found in Origen, *Commentary on Romans*, preface. See also [Origen, On Prayer 24.2](#).

4 Or "ations," *et infra*.

*the remnant of Syria will be as the glory of the children<sup>55</sup> of Israel, says the Lord of hosts.*

As is shown in the heading, by *Damascus* the calling of the Gentiles is being signified, who loved, or drank blood [cf. [Isa 17:1a](#)], who after they will have believed in Christ, will *cease to be a city* of their former manner of life, and *will be as a heap of stones in a ruin*. For just as heaps of stones that have been scattered in fields are collected into one pile, so the *heap* of believers from all nations has been gathered *in a ruin* of the Jewish people, when they fell, and we rose up [cf. [Luke 2:34](#)].

Also, *the cities of Aroer*, that is, of  $\mu\upsilon\rho\iota\kappa\omega\nu$  [tamarisks], *will be left for the flocks* of the church, so that we inhabit those [cities] that the Jews had deserted; or, when idolatry has been destroyed, the gospel will be erected. And we see that this has been fulfilled in our times. A Serapium<sup>66</sup> of Alexandria and a temple of Marnas<sup>77</sup> in Gaza have arisen in the churches of the Lord, and *the cities of Aroer* have been prepared *for the Gospel flocks*. *Aroer*, that is  $\mu\upsilon\rho\iota\kappa\alpha$  [tamarisks], are coming into being in the deserted places, in accordance with what is written in reference to the curse of that man who trusts in man, and his heart draws back from the Lord: “He will be,” it says, “like tamarisk (*myrice*) in the desert, and he will not see when good things will have come, and he will dwell in dryness, in the desert, in a salty and uninhabitable land” [[Jer 17:6](#); cf. [Job 39:6](#)]. Some, in fact, say that  $\mu\iota\sigma\eta\tau\rho\alpha$ , that is hatred, is stirred up from this tree by means of evil arts. Therefore, those who were first in the desert of the Gentiles and in the hatred of the name of Christian, will serve Christ’s flocks; they *will rest* in them, and *there will be no one to make them afraid*, because the Lord will live among them, and when the shepherd is present, they will not be able to fear the wolf.

At that time God’s *aid will cease from Ephraim*, who in this passage is understood as the scribes and the Pharisees—in accordance with the prophecy of Hosea, who calls those who are opposed to the people of God “Ephraim” [cf. [Hos 4:17](#); [5:3](#), [5](#); [7:1](#); [8:11](#); [14:8](#)]*—and the kingdom will cease from Damascus*, so that sin and the prince of sin, the devil, do not reign in Damascus, which previously loved blood; but *the remnant of Syria*, of those who believed from the Gentiles, are as *the children of Israel* had been formerly, when the kingdom of God has been taken away from them and given to the Gentiles, who produce its fruit [cf. [Matt 21:43](#)], as *the Lord of hosts* has spoken through all his prophets.

4. ([17:4–6](#)) *And it will come to pass in that day, that the glory of Jacob will be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh will grow lean. (5) And it will be as when one gathers in the harvest that which remains, and his arm will pick the ears of corn, and it will be as he that seeks ears of corn in the valley of Rephaim. (6) And its fruit will be left upon it as a cluster of grapes, and as the shaking of the olive tree, of two or three olives at the top of a bough, or of four or five at the top, says the Lord the God of Israel.*

After the remnant of Syria becomes as the glory of the children of Israel once was [cf. [Isa 17:3](#)], and by their transgression salvation is given to the Gentiles [cf. [Rom 11:11](#)], at that time

5 Lit., “ons.”

6 Serapis was a chief divinity of the Egyptians, subsequently worshiped also in Greece and Rome. The Serapium was a temple of Serapis, the most celebrated in Alexandria. Cf. [Tertullian, Apol. 18](#); [Spect. 8](#).

7 Marnas was a deity worshiped at Gaza, in Palestine. Cf. [Jerome, Vit. Hilar. 14](#).

all *the glory of the Jews will be made thin*, by which they were glorious in the whole world, and *the fatness of their flesh will grow lean*, of those who do not have prophets, nor signs and powers, nor the present aid of God, nor the dignity of the priesthood, but the whole body of their nation will wither away and be reduced to nothing.<sup>88</sup>

And although it is spoken about the calling of the Gentiles, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few” [[Matt 9:37](#)], these poor *will pick* the remnants of the *harvest*, which have been saved through the apostles, and the rarest *ears of corn*, not from mountains and high places, but *in the valley of Rephaim*, that is, in the vileness of the letter. And notice that *Rephaim*, which means “giants,” signifies the Pharisees and scribes, just as Ephraim above. Finally, the Septuagint translated *valley of Rephaim* as “hard valley,” in order to express the hardness of the Jewish heart.

Those who will have been saved are chosen because of their humility, as if on a stalk *of an ear of corn*, and as if in the vintage *of a grape cluster*, and just as the *shaking of olives*, of two or three olives, or of four or five. For when the striking of the Jewish people comes, that olive tree of the people of Israel, which under Moses had six thousand armed men [cf. [Exod 38:25](#)], and under David it had countless people when Joab counted them [cf. [1 Chr 21:25](#)], hardly was able to offer a few pieces of fruit to the Lord and Savior, namely the two olives of Paul and Barnabas and the three olives of Peter, James, and John, who also saw the Lord transfigured on the mountain [cf. [Matt 17:1](#)]<sup>99</sup> and went with the Lord to the daughter of the synagogue ruler [cf. [Mark 5:37](#)]. But the *four and five olives* make the remaining nine apostles, among whom Matthias took the place of Judas the betrayer [cf. [Acts 1:26](#)]. Assuredly, in view of the diversity of graces, a diversity that is unknown to us, [these nine] were separated into *four and five olives*, so as to show in themselves the number of the Gospels [four] and of the [five] books of the Law, as preachers of both instruments (*praedicatores utriusque instrumenti*).

5. ([17:7–8](#)) *In that day man will bow down to his Maker, and his eyes will look to the Holy One of Israel. (8) And he will not bow down to the altars which his hands made and which his fingers have wrought; they will not look to groves and temples.*

*In that day*, when because of the drought of spiritual grace [cf. [Mark 11:20](#)] the hungry Lord [cf. [Mark 11:12](#)] will have found out of the people of Israel scarcely two and three olives, or four or five [cf. [Isa 17:6](#)], to whom it was previously said, “The Lord your God has called you a fruitful olive tree” [[Jer 11:16](#)], and of which we read in the Psalms, “Your sons [are] as olive plants around your table” [[Ps 128:3](#)], the fullness of the Gentiles will have entered in secretly [cf. [Rom 11:25](#)]. And he *will bow down* not to idols *that his hands have made*, but to his God, and they *will look to the Holy One of Israel* and they will despise altars, *groves*, and *temples*, knowing this Scripture: “Every plant that the heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted” [[Matt 15:13](#)].

6. ([17:9–10b](#)) *In that day his strong cities will be abandoned, as the ploughs and the corn, which were abandoned before the face of the children of Israel, and you will be deserted,<sup>110</sup> (10) because you have forgotten God your savior, and have not remembered your strong helper. Septuagint: “In that day your cities will be deserted, as the Amorites and the Evaeans deserted*

8 Cf. *Eus Is* 72 (115, 25–6).

9 Cf. *ibid.* (116, 12–4).

<sup>110</sup> The lemma in bk [5](#) reads “t will be deserted.”

[theirs], before the face of the children of Israel, and they will be deserted, (10) because you have abandoned God your Savior, and have not remembered the Lord your helper.”

Just as under Moses and Jesus son of Nun, the Amorites and Evaeans, or the other nations that were living in the Promised Land, abandoned their plowshares and crops and heaps in the fields and fled, lest they should be occupied by enemies, so the land of Judah and all its very strong cities were abandoned by its own inhabitants, when the Romans devastated Judea and besieged Jerusalem. And he makes an apostrophe<sup>111</sup> to the land of Judea itself, that is, to those who live in it: “But you have suffered all these things because *you have forgotten God your Savior*, which is the translation of *Jesus*, whom the law and the prophets equally were announcing would come to you, and *you have not remembered the strong helper (adiutoris)*, who has always been your helper (*opitulator*).” Consequently the cause of the desertion of the cities of Judea is their forgetting of the Savior, who had said at the beginning of this prophet, “Israel has not known me and the people have not understood me” [[Isa 1:3](#)].

7. ([17:10c–11](#)) *Therefore you will plant a faithful plant, and will sow another’s sprout.* (11) *In the day of your planting, the wild grape, and in the morning, your seed will flourish; the harvest has been taken away in the day of inheritance, and it will grieve severely.*<sup>112</sup> Septuagint: “Therefore you will plant an unfaithful plant, and an unfaithful seed, (11) and in the day on which you plant, you will go astray. But if you sow in the morning, it will flourish in the harvest on the day of inheritance, when as a man’s father gives an inheritance to his sons.” What we have translated, in accord with Aquila, Symmachus, and the Septuagint, as *in the day of inheritance*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *biom nehela*, can be read in Hebrew as “in the evil day.” And what Aquila and Theodotion have translated as “and man will grieve,” we, having been taught by Hebrews, have translated *anus*, that is, *severely*, instead of “man,” which their language expresses as *enos*. We plan to discuss the ambiguity of this word in more detail in our [commentary] on Jeremiah, if the length of our life allows it, where it is said according to the Septuagint, “And it is the man, and who will know him?” [[Jer 17:9](#)].<sup>113</sup>

Let me say, therefore, what I have set forth. *Because*, O land of Judea, *you have forgotten God your Savior, and you have not remembered* him who always supplied strength to you [cf. [Isa 17:10](#)], *therefore, you will indeed plant a faithful plant*, or, as Aquila and Theodotion have translated, “beautiful,” or Symmachus, “good,” by proclaiming one God; but *you will sow another’s sprout*. By not receiving the Father, you do not receive the Son. For he who believes in the Father, believes also in the Son [cf. [John 12:44](#)]. And because you have sown *another’s sprout* of blasphemy against Jesus in the synagogues of Satan [cf. [Rev 2:9](#); [3:9](#)], therefore you will not gather the grape, but *the wild grape* [cf. [Isa 5:2](#), [4](#)].

And when it seems that your sprout is *flourishing* and offers some shade of piety, as you draw men away from idols, nevertheless when you come to gather the *harvest on the day of inheritance*, you will *grieve severely*, when you see that the people of the Gentiles have been preferred to yourself. This is also why the Apostle says, “My grief is great, and the pain in my heart unceasing; for I was wishing that I myself were anathema from Christ for the sake of my

<sup>111</sup> See n. at [1.50](#).

<sup>112</sup> The lemma in bk. [5](#) reads “ou will grieve severely.”

<sup>113</sup> Cf. Jerome, *Jer* 3.74, 1 (210, 13–7).

brothers, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are the Israelites, whose is the adoption of sons and the legislation and the glory and the covenant and the promises, whose are the fathers" [[Rom 9:2–5](#)]. Not only Paul, but every saint as well says this, wanting the root likewise to be saved along with the branches of the wild olive tree [cf. [Rom 11:16–17](#)]. But the *inheritance* is that which we obtain from the Lord, of which the Apostle says, "Now there are diversities of graces, but one Spirit; and diversities of ministries, but one Lord; and diversities of workings, but the same God who works all things in everyone" [[1 Cor 12:4–6](#)].

Someone may be wondering why we said *faithful plant* for what Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus translated as "beautiful" and "good plants." If the Hebrew word *neemanim* is written with the letter *aleph*, it means ΠΙΣΤΩΣ, that is "faithful"; but if it is written with an *ain*, and is expressed as *noemin*, it means "beautiful." This is also why Naomi (*Noemin*), who is written with this letter, says in the Book of Ruth, "Do not call me Naomi (*Noemin*), that is beautiful, but call me bitter" [[Ruth 1:20](#)].

8. ([17:12–14](#)) *Woe to the multitude of many people, like the multitude of the roaring sea, and the tumult of crowds, like the noise of many waters! (13) Peoples will make a noise like the noise of waters overflowing, and he will rebuke him, and he will flee far off, and he will be carried away as the dust of the mountains before the wind, and as a whirlwind before a tempest. (14) In the time of the evening, behold there will be trouble; in the morning, and he will not be. This is the portion of those who have laid us waste, and the lot of those who have plundered us.*

Above we read about the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews under the term "Damascus," and of the choosing of a few believers from the Jews through the apostles and in the apostles. In comparison with the entire world and with all nations, a small *portion* of Christian people have believed. Of them it was said above, "And the remnant of Syria will be as the glory of the children of Israel" [[Isa 17:3](#)—for "many are called and few are chosen" [[Matt 20:16](#)]]—and, "Not all have faith" [[2 Thess 3:2](#)]. Therefore, he now adds the consequence. Not lamentation, but *woe* to those nations who were unwilling to believe and who persecuted the Christian people. And they are compared with a mass of *waters* and with the *raging sea* and with one who desires to oppress and occupy all things, to the extent that it lies within them to do this. For the *peoples will make a noise* in theatrical spectacles of luxury and in the cruelty of the amphitheater and in the raging furies of the circus, *like the noise of waters overflowing*, when with the harmonious voice of impiety they blaspheme and say that Christians should go to the lions, and other things of that sort.

But when they are furious like the *sea*, the Lord will rebuke the author of their sedition and make him flee from his own people. And just as the motion of *dust on the mountains*, the higher it is, the stronger it is *carried away*, and just as a *whirlwind* that rises up from the land is borne off on high when a sudden *tempest* comes, so too that one, having been carried off from the people of God, will be separated and *will flee*, lest he be bound in the abyss [cf. [Rev 20:1–3](#)]. And when the day of consummation arrives, which is the meaning of *evening*, then there will be *trouble* for the one who recognizes his own sins. And in the time of *morning*, that is, on the day of resurrection, *he will not subsist*—which the Septuagint translated as "he will not be." But if *he will not be*, what will they respond who grant a repentance to the devil, and who promise



him the rank of an archangel, to the extent that it lies within him?<sup>114</sup>

*This is the portion of those who have laid us waste, and the lot of those who have plundered us.* Either the Christian people says this, or the prophet, under the persona of the believing people, that their persecutors, who have oppressed God's saints with exile, imprisonment, and confiscation of property [cf. [Heb 10:34](#)], will receive everlasting destruction [cf. [2 Thess 1:9](#)] and will inherit eternal punishment [cf. [Matt 25:46](#)].

9. ([18:1–3](#)) *Woe to the land, the cymbal of wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, (2) who sends ambassadors by the sea, and in vessels of papyrus upon the waters: Go, you swift angels, to a nation rent and torn in pieces, to a terrible people, after which there is no other; to a nation expecting, expecting, and trampled upon, whose land the rivers have spoiled. (3) All you inhabitants of the world who dwell on the earth, when the sign will be lifted up on the mountains, you will see, and you will hear the sound of the trumpet.* Septuagint: "Woe to the land of wings of ships, beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, (2) you who send hostages by the sea, and paper letters on the water. For light messengers will go to a lofty nation, and to a foreign and evil people, who is beyond it. A nation without hope and trampled upon, (3) now the rivers of all the land as a country that is inhabited; their country will be inhabited, as if a sign is raised from a mountain and the sound of a trumpet is heard."

I have recorded both versions of this extremely obscure prophecy, lest anything seem to be missing for those who want to understand what is written. At the same time, I deeply admire those who think that our faith and Christian hope is content with simplicity, since it is written, "The commandment of the Lord is clear, illuminating the eyes" [[Ps 19:8](#)], and that we should not seek more than this: that we do what has been commanded. For the reason that all Scripture and the prophets uniquely are wrapped in mysteries of future things is so that they may challenge us to understanding, and to that which is said in the Gospel, "Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened for you" [[Matt 7:7](#)]. Since, therefore, in the fifth book, I have set forth what is contained in the Hebrew in accordance with history, I will now explain more fully as well what appears to me according to anagogy.

Perhaps the intelligent reader may be asking what the *cymbal of wings* means in the "vision" or *burden* of Damascus [cf. [Isa 17:1](#)], and the other things that follow. We have spoken about the calling of the Gentiles, the rejection of the Jews, and the choosing of those who believed through the apostles, and afterward of the multitude of Gentiles and of the persecutors, who were compared with the waves of the sea. It followed that the prophetic word announced concerning heresies as well, which have harassed the church and lay it waste up to the present day. Heretics have sown weeds over the field of the church, while the householder sleeps [cf. [Matt 13:25](#)]. And they are called a *cymbal*, who do not have the love of the Lord, in

<sup>114</sup> Cf. 6.29; 10.3. This is directed against Origen's speculations about the possibility of the devil's future restoration, a view Jerome ultimately rejected, after reporting it sympathetically in his early writings. Cf. J. P. O'Connell, [The Eschatology of St. Jerome](#), Dissertationes ad Lauream 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 153. The last clause, "to the extent that it lies within him," seems to show that Jerome recognized that in Origen's view the devil's restoration was conditional upon his cooperation and was not guaranteed.

accordance with the following words of the Apostle: “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but I do not have love, I have become as a sounding brass or a clanging *cymbal*” [[1 Cor 13:1](#)]. And he speaks not merely of a *cymbal* clanging with a raucous noise, but of a *cymbal of wings*, on account of the lightness of the heretic’s words, which run in different directions; or, according to the Septuagint, “wings of ships,” which sail on the waves of this world promising much merchandise. Now we should understand the “wings of ships” as the sails by means of which the “ships” are propped up and drawn along. And “wings of ships” is nicely expressed; for every heretic promises lofty things, and though he boasts that he has “wings,” yet he sticks to the salty waves and does not withdraw far from land, and in midcourse he suddenly experiences a shipwreck. This is why Aquila translated it as “shadow of wings” instead of *cymbal*; for they do not have “wings,” but the resemblance of “wings.”

And what he adds, *which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia*, this signifies that all heretics gain their victories by means of their own impiety. For instance, Epicurus says that providence does not exist, and that the highest good is pleasure.<sup>115</sup> In comparison with him, Marcion is more wicked, and all heretics who mangle the Old Testament.<sup>116</sup> For although they accept providence, they make accusations against the Creator and claim that he went wrong in most of his works, and that he did not do as he ought to have done. For of what advantage to human beings [they ask] are snakes, scorpions, crocodiles, fleas, bedbugs, and gnats? Therefore they are *beyond the rivers of Ethiopia* and they *send ambassadors by the sea* of this world, that is, their own disciples, who while carrying their books, properly the *vessels of papyrus*, that is, of “paper,” they are said to carry [them] *upon the waters*, which are quickly erased. For just as books in close proximity to water are quickly smudged, erased, and ruined, even by moisture, so the word and doctrine of heretics, although it may seem to have some strength at the beginning, it passes away and disappears.

And so, it is said to them ironically, *Go, O swift angels* of the heretics—whom the blessed Apostle Paul calls “false apostles, deceitful workmen, who are transformed into apostles of Christ” [[2 Cor 11:13](#)]*—and go to a nation rent and torn to pieces—rent* by God and mangled by the bites of the heretics—*to a terrible people*—for nothing is more terrible than blasphemy, which sets its mouth against the height [cf. [Ps 73:9](#)]*—after which there is no other people*—for all sin is rather *light* in comparison with blasphemy—*to a nation expecting and trampled upon*—for all heretics promise themselves heavenly things in return, and they promise enormous things, and yet they are *trampled on* by demons—*whose land the rivers have spoiled*—[rivers] that have their waters not from heaven but from earth. For what corner of the earth is there, what ultimate solitude exists, to which the stormy words of heretics do not reach? And so, *all who inhabit the world and dwell in it*, raise their eyes *to the sign* of the heretics, which has been *lifted up on the mountains*, as it were, and they listen to *the sound of the trumpet*, that is, of their doctrine. These things have been said in accordance with the Hebrew.

On the other hand, according to the Septuagint, the “wings” of the heretics mourn, which fly like “ships” through the “sea” of this world, and they overcome the impiety of the pagans,

<sup>115</sup> Epicurus (341–71 BC) is the founder of the Epicurean system of philosophy, the best exposition of which is preserved in Latin by Lucretius, *De rerum natura*.

<sup>116</sup> See n. at [1.12](#).

whom Scripture now furnishes with the surname “Ethiopians”; and it is said to their doctrine and words, “You who send” books “by the sea” of this world, “hostages” of your perversity and “letters” to deceive those who will read them. “Light messengers go to a lofty nation, and to a foreign and evil people.” For no man of the church has as much zeal for good as heretics have for evil, and they think that they obtain profit in this, if they deceive others; and those who have themselves perished, cause others to perish. But a “nation” is called “lofty” because of pride, and “foreign and evil,” because it is alienated from God, “a nation” truly “without hope and trampled upon,” whose “rivers of all the land” imitate the dwelling place of the church, and they find lodging for themselves and “a country” in which they “raise” the “sign” of their doctrine and sound out as if with the “trumpet” of the Scriptures.

10. ([18:4–7](#)) *For thus says the Lord to me: I will take my rest and will consider in my place, as the noon light is clear, and as a cloud of dew in the day of harvest. (5) For before the harvest it was all flourishing, and it will bud without perfect ripeness, and its sprigs will be cut off with pruning hooks, and what is left will be cut away. They will be shaken out (6) and they will be left together to the birds of the mountains and the beasts of the earth, and the fowls will be upon it all the summer, and all the beasts of the earth will winter upon it. (7) At that time a gift will be brought to the Lord of hosts from a people rent and torn in pieces, from a terrible people, after which there has been no other, from a nation expecting, expecting and trampled upon, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, to Mount Zion.*

God rests and observes in his place, according to Aquila, “in the firmament,” that is, in the church, of which the Apostle Paul says, “pillar and firmament of the truth” [[1 Tim 3:15](#)]. Now he observes the things that are being done in the church and, *as the noon light is clear*, so he thoroughly illuminates all things, in accordance with what is spoken in the eighteenth Psalm anagogically concerning the sun of justice: “There is no one who hides himself from its heat” [[Ps 19:6](#)]. And just as *a cloud of dew* is extremely refreshing *in the day of harvest* and in the burning heat, so the Lord cools down those who live in his church. When he is present, everything *flourishes*. And before the time of consummation arrives, since now “we know in part and we prophesy in part” [[1 Cor 13:9](#)], many will be found *perfect*, of whom the Apostle says, “Let as many of us who are perfect think this” [[Phil 3:15](#)]. Now the *sprigs*, which are useless, *will be cut off with pruning hooks*, since the Savior says in the Gospel, “I am the true vine, and my father is the farmer; every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he will remove it, and everyone who bears fruit, he will prune him, that he may bear more fruit” [cf. [John 15:1–2](#)]. *And what* has been *cut away*, *will be left to the birds and the beasts of the earth*, to the *birds* that devour the things sown along the path [cf. [Matt 13:4](#)], and to the *beasts*, to which the soul that does not confess God is handed over [cf. [Ps 74:19](#)]. The result is that the one who has been *cut off* by the Lord and cast out and separated from the Lord’s body, which is the church [cf. [1 Cor 12:27](#)], both in the *summer* and in the *winter*, that is, in prosperous times and in adverse times, is a dwelling place of *fowls* and *beasts*. Now just as those who are useless and unfruitful in the church are cut off and thrown away, lest a little leaven corrupts the whole lump [cf. [1 Cor 5:6](#); [Gal 5:9](#)], so, on the other hand, it can happen that those who had been deceived by heretical error, and who have been *rent and torn in pieces by the Lord*, and who are *terrible* on account of their blasphemy, and who are *expecting* vain falsehoods, and have been *trampled upon* by demons,

and scattered in various directions by *rivers*; when they will have remembered their Lord and have forsaken their evil teachers, they may offer *a gift to the Lord of hosts*, in no other location but on *Mount Zion* and on the watchtower, which is interpreted as the “church.” We are speaking quite briefly, because we have already said many things in the book of historical commentary.

11. ([19:1a](#)) *The burden of Egypt*. Symmachus and Theodotion: “reception of Egypt.” Septuagint: “vision of Egypt.”

Where in Hebrew it is written *massa mesraim*, which we have translated *burden*, or “weight” of *Egypt*, for which Aquila translated ἀρμα αἰγυπτου [chariot of Egypt], we can say from the fact that the prophet removes and carries the yoke of the Lord, that he stood out as worthy, who saw or carried the prophecy of Egypt. This is why I am surprised that the Septuagint translated “vision,” instead of “weight,” in respect to Babylon [cf. [Isa 13:1](#)], and “word” in respect to the Philistines [cf. [Isa 14:28–29](#)], Moab [cf. [Isa 15:1](#)], and Damascus [cf. [Isa 17:1](#)], and now “vision” in respect to Egypt. For in the Hebrew it is not “word” and “vision” that is recorded in any of these instances, but *massa*, that is, *burden* and “weight.” But of the word that Symmachus and Theodotion have consistently translated as λημμα, that is, “reception,” we should know this, that the prophet received spiritual grace from the Lord to recognize the mysteries of Egypt, or to view them with the eyes of his mind, as the Septuagint has translated.

Now Egypt is not that one that the Jews think of, as Josephus imagined, who in his books of *Antiquities* relates that Onias the priest fulfilled Isaiah’s prediction, so that in the territory of Heliopolis, which the Egyptians call νομον, he built a temple in the likeness of the Lord’s temple, and an altar.<sup>117</sup> For so be it; let us grant that these things were spoken about Onias and the altar he built in Egypt. What will the “five cities” be [cf. [Isa 19:18](#)], which “speak the Canaanite language” in Egypt, one of which is called Asedec in the Septuagint, according to the other translators the city Ars or Ares, or the city of the sun? And who will the “savior” be who was sent to the Egyptians to “save them” [cf. [Isa 19:20](#)], and the Lord “knew” Egypt [cf. [Isa 19:21](#)]? When did they worship him with “sacrifices and gifts,” and perform “vows” [cf. [Isa 19:21](#)]? When did the Lord “strike Egypt” and “heal it” [cf. [Isa 19:22](#)]? At what time will we be able to show that this happened, that there was a “way from Egypt to the Assyrians,” and the “Assyrians entered Egypt” and the “Egyptians to the Assyrians,” and the “Egyptians served the Assyrian” [cf. [Isa 19:23](#)]? When was Israel “the third in Egypt” and among the Assyrians as “a blessing in the midst of the land” [cf. [Isa 19:24](#)], so that the Lord said, “Blessed be my people of Egypt and the work of my hands, the Assyrian” [cf. [Isa 19:25](#)]? It is obvious that these things do not apply to that Egypt of which the Jews are thinking. And so, we can call “Egypt” that place in which we live, and the world that is placed in evil [cf. [1 John 5:19](#)], especially since *mesraim*, which is expressed as “Egypt,” means εκθλιβουσα, that is “afflicting,” or “reducing to distress.” And yet, one should know that many aspects of the *burden*, or “vision,” of Egypt apply to the province of Egypt that is inhabited and seen until the present day. But in this and in other passages of the Scriptures, very many things are recorded that cannot stand as history, so that we are compelled by the necessity of the facts to look for a deeper understanding.<sup>118</sup>

12. ([19:1b–4](#)) *Behold, the Lord will ascend upon a light cloud, and will enter into Egypt, and*

<sup>117</sup> Cf. [Josephus, Ant 13.65–8](#).

*the idols of Egypt will be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt will melt in his midst. (2) And I will make the Egyptians clash against the Egyptians, and a man will fight against his own brother, and a man against his own friend, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. (3) And the spirit of Egypt will be broken in its bowels, and I will cast down their counsel, and they will consult their idols and their diviners, and their wizards and soothsayers. (4) And I will deliver Egypt into the hand of cruel masters, and a strong king will rule over them, says the Lord the God of hosts.*

In the historical commentary, I touched upon most of the prophecy of Egypt, which Isaiah *lifted*, or “saw.” This is why at this time we need to seize the heights in accordance with tropology.

The Lord *ascended upon a light cloud*, the body of the holy Virgin Mary, which was not burdened down by the weight of human seed; or surely his own body, which was conceived from the Holy Spirit [cf. [Matt 1:20](#)].<sup>119</sup> He entered into the *Egypt* of this world, and immediately all *the idols of Egypt were moved*. Thus it was that divinations and all the deceit of idolatry, which was taking possession of the deceived world, perceived that it had been shattered, to such an extent that magi from the East who had been taught by demons, or who understood in accordance with Balaam’s prophecy [cf. [Num 24:17](#)] that the Son of God was born, who would destroy all the power of their art, came to Bethlehem and worshiped the child, with the star showing the way [cf. [Matt 2:1–2](#)].

At that time the whole *heart of Egypt* wasted away, and *Egyptians rose up against Egyptians*, in accordance with what the Lord says in the Gospel: “Do not think that I came to bring peace upon earth, I came not to bring peace, but the sword; for I came to divide a man against his own father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law” [[Matt 10:34–35](#)]. At that time this too was fulfilled: “A man’s enemies [are] those of his own household” [[Matt 10:36](#)]. *And a man will fight against his own brother, and a man against his own friend*. “For there were in one house two divided against three and three against two, and a father was divided against the son, and the son against his father” [[Luke 12:52–53](#)]. *City against city, and kingdom against kingdom*, of those who did not believe against those who had believed, or at least of those who had believed, who desired to save their neighbors. *And the spirit of Egypt* has been *broken in its bowels*, so that they do not feel things equally, but having been divided against one another by the spiritual sword, they recognized that all their *counsel* has been *cast down*, and nevertheless, remaining in their former error, those who were unwilling to receive the truth of the faith [cf. [2 Thess 2:10](#)], consulted *idols and their diviners, and wizards and soothsayers*.

And when they will have done this, the Lord *delivered them into the hand of cruel masters*, in accordance with the words of the Apostle: “Whom I delivered to Satan, to learn not to

<sup>118</sup> H. de Lubac, [History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture according to Origen](#), trans. A. Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007), 115, mentions this passage alongside a string of texts from Origen and other Fathers that use oddities or inconsistencies in a text of Scripture as a pretext for finding some new significance. The practice traces back to Jesus, who confronted his adversaries with the enigma of [Ps 110](#) ([Matt 22:40](#)).

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 75 (124, 15–25, 2).



blaspheme” [1 Tim 1:20]. The purpose is that when they have been overwhelmed by this very harsh servitude, they may return to the most clement Lord. He nicely calls demons *cruel masters*, than whom nothing is crueler. The *strong king* too, who is their master, is obviously understood of the devil, whom, in the Gospel as well, the Lord calls a strong man whose house and booty is robbed once he has been bound up and overcome [cf. Matt 12:29].

13. (19:5–11b) *And the water of the sea will be dried up, and the river will be wasted and dried up, (6) and the rivers will fail; the streams of the banks will be diminished and be dried up. The reed and the bulrush will wither away. (7) The channel of the river will be laid bare from its spring, and everything sown by the water will be dried up; it will wither away, and will be no more. (8) The fishers also will mourn, and all who cast a hook into the river will lament, and those who spread a net upon the surface of the water will languish away, (9) and they will be confounded who work in flax, combing and weaving subtle things, (10) and its watery places will be dry, all who were making pools to catch fish. (11) The princes of Tanis are fools, the wise counselors of pharaoh have given foolish counsel.*

When there will have been a strong king and the harsh Lord in Egypt [cf. Isa 19:4], the entire doctrine and beauty of secular eloquence *will be dried up*, and the devil, the very *spring* of all the *rivers*, from whom originates all lies [cf. John 8:44], *will be wasted*, so that the rest of the *rivers* and *streams* fail, which were being filled from the troubled waters of the Nile. *The reed* too *and the bulrush* will wither away from excessive drought. For *bulrush*, the Septuagint translated “papyrus,” from which paper is made. They added on their own, “green grass (*achi viride*),” which is not found in the Hebrew. Now when I was seeking from educated men what this word meant, I heard from Egyptians that by this term is designated in their language every green thing that grows in marshlands. Now according to tropology, the *reed* refers to empty words that have nothing solid in them. *Papyrus*, which apparently has a core and is not hollow, is nevertheless also fragile and it quickly *withers away*.

All the *streams* too, when the source of the *streams* has been made dry, *will dry up*, and whatever was previously being irrigated by the Egyptian waters will not<sup>220</sup> be *made dry*, so that the Egyptians *fishers mourn*, who are opposed to the Lord’s fishermen. Moreover *they lament who were casting a hook into the river and were spreading a net upon the surface of the water*. Those who deceive one person at a time *cast a hook into troubled waters*; but [those who deceive] more at once, so that they speak publicly in the synagogues of Satan [cf. Rev 2:9; 3:9] and seduce flocks of people, these are the ones who *cast a net upon Egyptian waters*.

Likewise, those ones *will be confounded who work in flax*, so that they made clothing for priests, *combing it and weaving subtle things*, which pertain properly to the art of dialectics. For *subtle things* the Septuagint translated “fine linen,” which is itself woven into the clothing of priests.

And what follows, *And its watery places will be dry, all who were making pools to catch fish*, this signifies that all the traps of Egypt’s fishers are destroyed and perish. For *pools*, which they *made to catch fish*, which we translated in accordance with the sense, both the Hebrew and all the translators recorded “souls” in place of fish. Hence we are drawn from history to tropology, namely that these *fishers*, who *made pools* and trenches, did this for this reason, to deceive

<sup>220</sup> A textual variant reads “ill be made dry,” as in the lemma.



souls into them. One should know that for *pools*, the Septuagint translated ζυθον, which is a kind of drink made from barley (*frugibus*) and water, and everywhere in the provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia it is called *sabaium*<sup>221</sup> in the national and barbarous speech.<sup>222</sup> The Egyptians make use of this to an especially great degree. Accordingly, they do not offer pure water to those who drink, but it is stirred up and resembles the dregs that have been mixed in with it. The teaching of heretical depravity is illustrated by means of drinks of this sort.

At that time *the princes of Tanis*, which means “lowly command,” will be *fools*. For all heretics teach lowliness, as opposed to the height, and they drag down to hell, and they are princes of a “lowly” and sunken “command.” So will *the counselors of pharaoh*, who is the king of Egypt, and is correctly expressed as “destroyer” and “divided” and “separated” into various parts. They will be convicted of having *given foolish counsel*, when the Lord destroys the wisdom of the wise and the understanding of the prudent he rejects [cf. [Isa 29:14](#)].

14. ([19:11c-15](#)) *How do you say to pharaoh, “I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings”? (12) Where now are your wise men? Let them tell you, and show what the Lord of hosts has purposed upon Egypt. (13) The princes of Tanis have become fools, the princes of Memphis have disappeared; they have deceived Egypt, the corner of its people. (14) The Lord has mingled in the midst of it the spirit of dizziness, and they have caused Egypt to err in all its works, as a drunken man staggers (errat) and vomits. (15) And there will be no work for Egypt to do, head and tail, him that bends down and that holds back.*

Heretics customarily say to their king, or pharaoh, “We are sons *of the wise*, who delivered to us apostolic teaching from the beginning; we are sons *of ancient kings*, who are called *kings* of the philosophers, and we have knowledge of the Scriptures joined with secular wisdom.” He is now asking them, or the very king of the heretics, Where are his wise men, who were despising the simplicity of the church? And he forces them to respond *what the Lord Sabaoth has purposed upon the Egypt* of this world, and what he will do at the consummation.

*The princes of Tanis* have been proven to be *fools*, who had the “lowly command” of the heretics. All *the princes of Memphis have disappeared*, who defiled others by means of their bragging about eloquence and by their mouth. For Memphis means “mouth” or “from the mouth,” and metaphorically it expresses speech. And what follows, *They have deceived Egypt, the corner of its people*, or, according to the Septuagint, “They will deceive Egypt by tribes,” this signifies that the kingdom of secular wisdom is shown to be foolish, and the princes of individual doctrines, which are interpreted as “tribes,” are exposed as having had foolish teachers.

For *the Lord has mingled* with them *the spirit of dizziness*, or of errors, in accordance with what is written, “And just as they did not approve to have God in knowledge, God handed them over to a reprobate understanding” [[Rom 1:28](#)]. And just as the one who is holy [will do], since Isaiah can say, “We will make the spirit of your salvation upon the earth” [[Isa 26:18](#)], so he who is a sinner will drink in the spirit of error [cf. [1 John 4:6](#)], that is, of wickedness, in accordance with what we read in Jeremiah: “Your own transgression will convict you, and your wickedness

<sup>221</sup> *L & S* describes this as “drink of the poor people in Illyria, prepared from barley.”

<sup>222</sup> Jerome was born in Stridon, which was located near the border of the Roman provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia.

will chastise you” [[Jer 2:19](#)]. But if the heretic who does not receive the Old Testament is scandalized, because the Lord is said to *mingle a spirit of “error” or dizziness*, let him hear what is written in the “Apostle,” that is, in the New Testament: “God handed them over to the desires of their heart unto uncleanness” [[Rom 1:24](#)], and again: “Therefore God handed them over to shameful passions” [[Rom 1:26](#)], and again: “God handed them over to a reprobate understanding, to do what is not fitting” [[Rom 1:28](#)]. Now they are “handed over to the desires of their heart,” because they “exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of the image of corruptible man and of birds and of four-footed creatures and of reptiles” [cf. [Rom 1:23](#)]. Not only do we read this in the Epistle to the Romans, but also in the one to the Thessalonians concerning the antichrist: “Because they have not received love of the truth, that they may be saved, God will send them a working of *error*, so that they believe the lie and are judged, all who have not believed the truth, but pleased themselves with the lie” [[2 Thess 2:10–12](#)]. I think that the Apostle Paul took this from the present reading in Isaiah, where he says, *The Lord has mingled for them a spirit of “error,” and they have caused Egypt to err in all its works*, he says, *as a drunken man errs and vomits*, who has been made drunk on the vices, Joel speaks about these drunkards, “Woe to those who are drunk without wine” [cf. [Isa 28:1](#); [Joel 1:5](#)], and not only drunk, but also vomiting the fury of serpents and the incurable fury of asps [cf. [Deut 32:33](#)], so that after they have *vomited* out wine of this sort, they understand their drunkenness and recognize that, while they are *drunk*, they will have neither “beginning nor end,” that is, neither *head* nor *tail*, but the trunk of the animal maimed on each end. For “beginning and end,” which both Symmachus and the Septuagint have translated, Theodotion, in his usual fashion, recorded the Hebrew words *caffa* and *egmon*. Aquila translated these “bent over” and “depraved,” wanting old men to be understood by “bent over” and lascivious boys to be understood by “depraved,” who do all manner of depraved things. His meaning is that in Egypt not only are the *head* and *tail* missing, but also the old men and boys, that is, the “beginning and the end.”

15. ([19:16](#)) *In that day Egypt will be like unto women, and they will be amazed and afraid before the moving of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which he will move over it.* (17) *And the land of Judah will be a festivity to Egypt; everyone that will remember it will tremble before the counsel of the Lord of hosts, which he has designed concerning it.*

At that time, for as we have repeatedly said, this is the meaning of *day*, when the Lord has mingled a spirit of error and dizziness [cf. [Isa 19:14](#)], so that Egypt vomits out the wine of serpents and the incurable fury of asps [cf. [Deut 32:33](#)], by their error and former drunkenness, Egypt will *be afraid*, like a woman. This does not refer to the fortuitous fear that was customary to happen to the males whom Egypt does not love and drowns and kills, but to a feminine fear, the females whom alone pharaoh wants to live [cf. [Exod 1:16](#)]. But it will fear the *moving*, or “raising,” *of the Lord’s hand*, through which [hand] penalties are shown, which [hand] he will move and “raise” to strike Egypt.

Then *the land of Judah*, the knowledge of the Scriptures, the law and the prophets, the Gospels and the epistles of the apostles, *will be a festivity to Egypt*, if it will come to know them, or a “terror” [cf. [Isa 19:17](#)], if in the consultation of their teaching and truth, it will have

understood that it possessed a lie.<sup>223</sup> *Everyone that will remember this land will tremble* with that trembling that leads to life: for “the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord” [[Ps 111:10](#)]. And we can take this not only of the consummation of the world, but of the present time too, that every heretic *fears* the man of the church and one who is trained in heavenly doctrines, and he is frightened at the remembrance of him. Now he will “fear” and *tremble* before *the counsel of the Lord, which he has designed concerning* the Egypt of this world. We are running past these details cursorily, that we may move on to what remains.

16. ([19:18](#)) *In that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt speaking the language of Canaan, and swearing by the Lord of hosts; one will be called the city of the sun.*

It is very beneficial for the hand of the Lord to be “raised,” or *moved* over Egypt [cf. [Isa 19:16](#)], so that the land of Judah is in fear of it, and everyone who remembers it trembles [cf. [Isa 19:17](#)]. At that time, *five cities in the land of Egypt* will speak *the language of Canaan*, cities that most of our people understand of the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. When we look at a woman to lust [cf. [Matt 5:28](#)], our sight *speaks the Egyptian language*. When we listen to a judgment of blood [cf. [Isa 33:15](#)], though the Lord says, “You will not receive a vain report” [[Exod 23:1](#)], our hearing *speaks the Egyptian language*. When according to the prophet we live in delights, and we lie on beds of ivory [cf. [Amos 6:4](#)], and we are anointed with the finest oils [cf. [Amos 6:6](#)], our sense of smell *speaks the Egyptian language*. When our belly is god [cf. [Phil 3:19](#)], our sense of taste *speaks the Egyptian language*. If we fail to listen to what the Apostle says, “It is good for a man not to touch a woman” [[1 Cor 7:1](#)], but instead we are joined to a prostitute [cf. [1 Cor 6:16](#)], our sense of touch *speaks the Egyptian language*. But if instead we lift up our eyes and see that the fields are already ripe for harvest [cf. [John 4:35](#)], and we do not bend over toward the ground, but, like the woman of the Gospel who for eighteen years was unable to see heaven [cf. [Luke 13:11](#)], we raise our eyes and say, “I raised my eyes to you who dwell in heaven” [[Ps 123:1](#)], our eye and our sense of sight *speaks the language of Canaan*. If we circumcise our ears [cf. [Jer 6:10](#); [Acts 7:51](#)] and hear the Lord saying, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” [[Matt 11:15](#)], our sense of hearing *speaks the language of Canaanite*. The one who can say to the bridegroom, “We will run after you to the scent of your ointments” [[Song 1:3](#)], and, “We are the good odor of Christ in every place” [[2 Cor 2:15](#)], this one’s sense of smell *speaks the language of Canaan*. The sense of taste, too, is understood in a good sense, of him who eats the bread that comes down from heaven [cf. [John 6:51](#)], the living bread, not dead, and he hears this: “Taste and see how sweet is the Lord” [[Ps 34:8](#)], and at once he *speaks the language of Canaan*. Moreover, the sense of touch is spiritual, and the Apostle John says of it, “Our hands have touched concerning the word of life” [[1 John 1:1](#)]; also the one who touches Jesus by faith, so that the Savior is able to say of him, “Someone touched me, for I know that power has gone forth from me” [[Luke 8:46](#)].

We have learned what great goods the raised hand of the Lord bestows; let us ask why *the five cities of Egypt* do not *speak* the Hebrew *language*, but *the language of Canaan*. We will try to respond to this as follows. Hebrew expresses ΠΕΡΑΤΗΝ, that is, a “passerby,” one who is passing from place to place. Therefore, even though we are holy, while we are in Egypt and live in the darkness of this world, we are not able to speak the Hebrew language, but the *language*

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 76 (132, 17–2).

of Canaan, which is between Egyptian and Hebrew, and to a large extent is cognate with Hebrew. Canaan means “like a movement,” or “like one answering.” Therefore, when we withdraw from Egypt and want to go forth from the power of pharaoh, so that our land and confession is fearsome to Egypt, at that time we are “moved” and as it were “answer” to the Lord’s will, and yet, because we are still in the present world, we cannot yet speak the Hebrew language. And what follows, that the *five cities swear by the Lord of hosts*, this signifies that even while placed here, we do not remember the demons but the almighty God. Of these *five cities*, though the names of the other four are unmentioned, one is called *the city of the sun*, which seems to me to refer to sight. For just as a city requires the sun and the moon in order for it to be seen, so, in order for our eyes to be illumined, we need the sun of justice [cf. [Mal 4:2](#)].

17. ([19:19–21a](#)) *In that day there will be an altar of the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and an inscription of the Lord at its border, (20) and it will be for a sign, and for a testimony to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt. For they will cry to the Lord before the oppressor, and he will send them a Savior and a defender to deliver them. (21) And the Lord will be known by Egypt.*

As a consequence of what he had said above, “In that day there will be five cities in the land of Egypt, speaking the language of Canaan, and swearing by the Lord of hosts” [[Isa 19:18](#)], it is now added, *There will be an altar of the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt*, which, according to Josephus, who understood this wrongly, Onias tried to fulfill.<sup>224</sup>

There will also be *an inscription of the Lord* containing the passion, on which was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin letters, “Jesus king of the Jews” [[John 19:19–20](#)], *for a sign of the cross and for a testimony of all the Gentiles*, who are now being called *Egypt*. And when persecution will have increased *before the oppressors of the Christian name*, then *they will cry* in their hearts, “Abba, Father” [[Rom 8:15](#)], and *the Lord of hosts will send a Savior*, that is, Jesus [cf. [Matt 1:21](#)], and a judge or *defender to deliver them*, so that those who have been delivered may “know the Lord” [cf. [Isa 19:21b](#)], and *they will be known by the Lord*; and where sin abounded, grace abounded all the more [cf. [Rom 5:20](#)]. Now it is called the one *altar of Egypt*, that is, of this world, so that we may know that all the altars that are raised against the *altar of the church* are not the Lord’s. Since the prophecy was clear all the way down to the end of the “vision” of Egypt, in the book of historical commentary, we said that everything should be referred to Christ.

18. ([19:21b–22](#)) *And the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day, and will worship him with sacrifices and gifts, and they will make vows to the Lord, and perform them. (22) And the Lord will strike Egypt with a blow, and will heal it, and they will return to the Lord, and he will be pacified toward them, and heal them.*

After the *Egyptians* have come to know the Lord, they *will worship him with spiritual sacrifices and gifts, and they will make vows to the Lord, and perform them*, so that they say with David, “An afflicted spirit is a sacrifice to God” [[Ps 51:17](#)], and, “The lifting up of my hands is an evening sacrifice” [[Ps 141:2](#)]. This will be when, by believing in the Nazarene, even they themselves will become Nazarites, not drinking wine and strong drink [cf. [Num 6:3](#)], and the vinegar that was offered to the Lord [cf. [Matt 27:48](#)], and whatsoever comes from the grape of

<sup>224</sup> Cf. [Josephus, Ant 13.65–8](#).

Sodom [cf. [Deut 32:32](#)]. And when they have *performed their vows* with Abel, and the Lord has regarded these things [cf. [Gen 4:4](#)], the elder brother Cain will become jealous [cf. [Gen 4:5](#)], that is, the people of the circumcision, and he will shed Christian blood that will cry out to the Lord [cf. [Gen 4:8–10](#)]; and on that account he will go forth from the presence of God [cf. [Gen 4:16](#)], saying of the Savior, “Crucify him, crucify him” [[Luke 23:21](#)], and, “We have no king but Caesar” [[John 19:15](#)]. The one who is holy in body and spirit offers a vow and performs it to the Lord [cf. [1 Cor 7:34](#)]. And Zacchaeus offered a vow, who promised to pay back to the poor a moderate portion of his wealth [cf. [Luke 19:8](#)].

It is asked, if a Savior and defender was sent to the Egyptians to deliver them from their afflictions [cf. [Isa 19:20](#)], why is it now said, *The Lord will strike Egypt with a blow*? But let us consider what follows: *And he will heal it*. “For the Lord chastises the one he loves” [[Prov 3:12](#); [Heb 12:6](#)]. And in the sixty-eighth Psalm the Savior himself says to the Father, “Because they have persecuted him whom you have struck, and they have added to the grief of my wounds” [[Ps 69:26](#)]. If therefore he did not spare his own Son, but handed him over for us [cf. [Rom 8:32](#)], so that by his bruising and wounds we would be healed [cf. [Isa 53:5](#); [1 Pet 2:24](#)], the Lord handed over also the martyrs to suffering, but he will heal them again in the resurrection, so that the faith of believers may be strengthened by their wounds. This is also why it is said to Job, “Do you think that I have spoken with you in any other way, than that you might appear just?” [[Job 40:8](#)]. For he himself causes grief, and restores to the original health, and he visits his servants with a rod, that he might not remove his mercy from them [cf. [Ps 89:32–33](#)]. This is why your daughters and women who sinned much and spread their legs to every passerby [cf. [Ezek 16:25](#)] are *not* visited or chastised, when the Lord says, “I will not visit upon your daughters when they will commit fornication, and upon your young women, when they will commit adultery” [[Hos 4:14](#)]. *The Lord strikes the Egyptians*, then, not with fire, not with sword, but with a rod—“for what son is there whom his father does not educate?” [[Heb 12:7](#)—so that after they are healed, they may *return to the Lord*, and *he will be pacified toward them*, and again *heal them*. For we always need God’s mercy, and there is no end to his clemency.

19. ([19:23](#)) *In that day there will be a way from Egypt to the Assyrians, and the Assyrian will enter into Egypt, and the Egyptian to the Assyrians, and the Egyptians will serve the Assyrians.*

Just as we have shown that the other things that precede happened to the Egyptians in a good sense, namely the five cities in their land speaking the Canaanite language and swearing by the Lord, and the Lord’s altar located in the midst of Egypt, and the inscription and sign and testimony, and the Savior who delivered them, and that the Lord was known by the Egyptians, and they themselves knew him, and that they offered sacrifices and gifts and performed vows, and they were struck and healed, and they returned to the Lord, and he was pacified to them, and again they were healed [cf. [Isa 19:18–22](#)]; so even this that follows, that *the Egyptians serve the Assyrians*, should be understood in a good sense. For even the apostle *serves* believers, in order to gain them [cf. [1 Cor 9:19](#)]; and Esau is subjected to his brother Jacob, in order to participate in his blessings [cf. [Gen 27:29](#)]. Therefore, those who were first saved from the Gentiles and had the Lord’s altar in themselves will save by means of their servitude those who persevere in hardness, and by their intermingling and society, they themselves will go *to the Assyrians*, that they may lead the Assyrians to Egypt, and afterward they can reach the people



of Israel. For this reason I think that even a faithful wife *serves* an unbelieving husband [cf. [1 Cor 7:13](#)], so that gradually she may lead him from Egypt and the Assyrians to Judea.

20. ([19:24–25](#)) *In that day Israel will be the third to the Egyptian and to the Assyrian, a blessing in the midst of the land (25) which the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, Blessed be my people to<sup>225</sup> Egypt, and the work of my hands to the Assyrian, but Israel is my inheritance.*

Israel will be *the third* in Egypt and among the Assyrians, in order to mix the whole lump with the yeast of its blessing, and to join with this clasp of blessing those who were formerly quarreling with hostility against each other, and that *Egypt* may be God's *people*, and the *Assyrian* the work of his hands, but *Israel* is his inheritance. The Egyptian is blessed by the Lord, since he is blessed by his association with Israel, and the Assyrian is the work of his hands, because the Lord has shown his clemency to him, but Israel alone can say, "The Lord is my portion" [[Ps 119:57](#)], who sees God with his mind and is called his inheritance.<sup>226</sup>

21. ([20:1–6](#)) *In the year that Tharthan entered into Ashdod (Azotus), when Sargon the king of the Assyrians had sent him, and he had fought against Azotus, and had taken it, (2) at that time the Lord spoke by the hand of Isaiah the son of Amoz (Amos), saying, Go, and loose your sackcloth from off your loins, and take off your shoes from your feet. And he did so, and went naked and barefoot. (3) And the Lord said, As my servant Isaiah has walked, naked and barefoot, it will be a sign and a wonder of three years upon Egypt, and upon Ethiopia. (4) So will the king of the Assyrians lead away the captivity of Egypt, and the deportation of Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, with their buttocks uncovered to the shame of Egypt, (5) and they will be afraid, and ashamed of Ethiopia their hope, and of Egypt their glory; (6) and the inhabitant of this island will say in that day, "Was this our hope, to whom we fled for help, to deliver us from the presence of the king of the Assyrians? And how will we be able to escape?"*

For *Tharthan* the Septuagint translated "Thanathan," and for *Sargon*, "Arna." I cannot comprehend what they meant by this. For we cannot fabricate false etymologies out of false names. But the names are not Hebrew but Assyrian, from which we know that *Tharthan* expresses "he gave a tower," or "superfluous" or "prolonging." *Sargon*, on the other hand, means "prince of the garden." This *Assyrian king*, whom above we read about as "great meaning" [[Isa 10:12](#)], has very many generals, one of whom is *Tharthan*, lifted up in pride and advancing far in crime and more broadly in the rest; and he is sent to attack *Azotus*, which is called *Ashdod* in Hebrew, and it means "fire of generating"; and the Assyrian king's general attacks those who serve generating and lust. And nicely the king of the Assyrians, *Sargon*, is called "prince of gardens," since he is devoted to pleasure and excess. After all, even Ahab king of Israel desired to convert Naboth's vineyard into a garden [cf. [1 Kgs 21:2–3](#)]. That man Naboth, when we interpret in accordance with the laws of tropology, preferred to die than to do this, lest his paternal inheritance and ancient possession should be converted into the delights of an impious king.

But the prophet is commanded to lay aside his *sackcloth* and *shoes* and to advance *naked* and *barefoot*, and to be a *sign* and a *wonder* for the Egyptians and Ethiopians, who persecuted God's people and were humble because of pride. For *Egypt* means "persecuting" and

<sup>225</sup> The lemma in bk. [5](#) has "f."

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 77 (136, 35–6).



“afflicting”; *Ethiopians* means “humble” and “dejected”; for “everyone who exalts himself will be humbled” [[Luke 14:11](#)]. They are the ones who are to be led into captivity and who will suffer torments *for three years*. We read of these years in the Psalms, “I thought of the ancient days, and I kept in mind the eternal years” [[Ps 77:5](#)]. We should not think that these are trivial sufferings, but they are “prolonged” over long periods of time.

Now the *young* and the *old* will go into the same *captivity* and *deportation* of Egypt, who were strengthened in their malice and attained to vices of mature age; *naked*, that all their crimes may lie exposed—“for there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed” [[Matt 10:26](#)]; and *barefoot*, because they were unable to eat the Lord’s Passover [cf. [Exod 12:11](#)]. The one who eats it has his loins girded, holds his staff in his hand, and stands with his feet shod, lest, while passing through the desert of this world, he be bitten by serpents [cf. [Num 21:6](#)]. At that time their *buttocks* will be *uncovered*, through which excrement is discharged, and all the *shame of Egypt* will be revealed. Consequently those who have set their *hope* in *Egypt* and in *Ethiopia* are *ashamed*, and see that their *glory* has been changed into *shame*, to such an extent that the *inhabitant of this island*, that is, of the world, who is not a stranger and a traveler, but who desired to have a perpetual possession of the world, says in his shame, “Is this the Egypt, and is this the Ethiopia for whose help we were hoping, to deliver us from the prince of that world? How then will we be able to escape, when they are captured in whom we were setting our hope?”

And take note of this, that before Azotus is captured, the prophet is clothed in sackcloth and has his feet shod. Consequently he indeed bewails those who have been wounded by the flaming darts of the devil [cf. [Eph 6:16](#)] and who serve lust; but nonetheless he himself advances with his feet shod, and is able to trample upon serpents and scorpions [cf. [Luke 10:19](#)], and he advances securely through the desert of this world, in which there are serpents and scorpions and a thirst for good things. But after Azotus has been captured, as a type of captivity of Egypt and of the deportation of Ethiopia, he advances barefoot and naked. For he was not able to stand or walk on the holy ground toward which he is hastening to go, clothed with sackcloth and with his feet covered with leather, since the Lord says, “Remove the shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground” [[Exod 3:5](#)].

22. ([21:1–3b](#)) *The burden of the deserted sea. As whirlwinds come from Africa, it is coming from the desert, from a hostile<sup>227</sup> land. (2) A grievous vision has been announced to me: he who is incredulous deals unfaithfully, and he who is a plunderer wreaks devastation. Go up, O Elam, besiege, O Mede; I have made all his groaning cease. (3) Therefore my loins are filled with pain, anguish has taken hold of me, as the anguish of a woman in labor.* Septuagint: “The vision of the desert. As a whirlwind should pass from the desert, coming from a desert, from the land, a terrible and a grievous vision has been announced to me. (2) He that is treacherous deals treacherously, and the unjust deals unjustly. The Elamites are against me, and the ambassadors of the Persians are coming. Now I will groan and comfort myself. (3) Therefore my loins are filled with anguish, pangs have seized me as a woman in labor.”

We have spoken briefly of what appears to us in accordance with history; now let us seize the heights of tropology. The “vision” or *burden* against the “sea” of this world is seen, and the

<sup>227</sup> The lemma in bk. 5 reads “errible.”

prophet sees with what great temptations this world is filled. Now to show that the world is called a “sea,” I am content with a single testimony and pass over many: “Those who go down to the sea in ships, doing work on the great waters, they have seen the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep” [[Ps 107:23–24](#)]. For those who work God’s work in this world and say with the prophet, “I have come into the depth of the sea” [[Ps 69:2](#)], they themselves see his wonders in the deep; and having been delivered from temptations and distresses, they say they have heard a “terrible” and *grievous* “vision.” Now this very “storm comes from the desert” where the Lord too was tempted [cf. [Matt 4:1](#)], and where Israel was exposed to the bites of the serpent and to the stings of scorpions [cf. [Deut 8:15](#)]; and when it comes, it passes through and dies down, and then the one who endures it understands that no one “deals treacherously,” except the “treacherous,” and no one “deals unjustly,” except the “unjust.” Therefore, it is our fault that we are swamped by the waves of the sea and that a severe storm overwhelms us: before the storm hit, we were “treacherous” and “unjust.” And as for what he says, “The Elamites are against me, and the ambassadors of the Persians are coming,” here is the meaning. *Elamites* means “despising,” *Persians* means “tempting.” Therefore, let them come, who are accustomed to “despise,” contemn, and “tempt”; but let me “groan,” and my groaning will be my “comfort.” Moreover, “my loins are filled with anguish,” and “pangs have seized me as a woman in labor,” so that I conceive and give birth because of fear, and I make the breath of salvation upon the earth [cf. [Isa 26:18](#)].

Now, according to the Hebrew, the *whirlwinds* and storm *come* rightly *from the desert* and *from a terrible land*, where God does not dwell, and where everything is earthly; and whoever is *incredulous* does things that are congruent with his own unbelief; and *he who is a plunderer wreaks devastation*. This is why he speaks boldly against his adversaries, *Go up, O Elam, besiege, O Mede. I have made cease all the groaning of the deserted sea and of the terrible land and of the very grievous vision that has been announced. For my loins, by doing penance, are filled, not as previously with pleasure, but with pain. No longer will I say, “My loins are filled with illusions”* [[Ps 38:7](#)]. For *anguish has taken hold of me*, and distress, as is accustomed to take hold of a *woman in labor*. The common translation (*vulgata editio*) and the Hebrew have many discrepancies between them on this passage. This is why we have briefly touched upon both versions, lest we leave behind an occasion for carping at us  $\phi\lambda\epsilon\gamma\kappa\lambda\eta\mu\sigma\iota\upsilon$  [to those who are fond of faultfinding<sup>228</sup>].

23. ([21:3c–5](#)) *I fell down when I heard it; I was troubled when I saw it. (4) My heart failed, darkness amazed me; Babylon my beloved has been set as a wonder to me. (5) Set the table, behold in the watchtower those who eat and drink; arise, O princes, take up the shield.* Septuagint: “I acted unjustly that I might not hear; I hastened that I might not see. (4) My heart wanders, transgression has flooded over me; my soul is occupied with fear. (5) Prepare the table; eat, drink, arise, O princes, prepare your shields.”

As a consequence of hearing about the very grievous vision, which the prophet saw coming from the deserted sea [cf. [Isa 21:2](#)], he says that he *fell down* and *was troubled*. And with his

<sup>228</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, [An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon](#), founded upon the seventh edition of Liddell and Scott’ [Greek English Lexicon](#) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 1932.

eyes nearly *darkened* and a mind that was *amazed*, he did not know what he was perceiving. For Aquila and Theodotion translated *Babylon* here as *darkness*, in order to signify that world that is placed in evil [cf. [1 John 5:19](#)]. Its princes are the rulers of this *darkness*, according to the Apostle Paul [cf. [Eph 6:12](#)]. At one time Babylon was dear (*amabilis*) to the prophet, or to God. It became a *wonder* in its destruction. This is why the prophet is commanded to *behold* very carefully the things that will come upon the world, while he *eats* at the Lord's *table* and is filled with his food. And through him it is said to all who believe, that when they *eat* and *drink* the body and blood of the Lord, let them be turned to the princes of the church, and let them hear with the apostles, *arise*, [cf. [Matt 26:46](#)] and let them *take up the shield* of faith from the armor of the Apostle Paul, against which shield they may be able to extinguish the fiery darts of the devil [cf. [Eph 6:16](#)]. This [has been said] in accordance with the Hebrew and with the interpretation that was begun concerning the world.

Let us move on to the Septuagint translation, which has many discrepancies from what is recorded above. The prophet chastises himself, or rather, under his own persona he confesses the error of others, who by following the killing letter [cf. [2 Cor 3:6](#)] despise the life-giving Spirit, and he says that he "acted unjustly," so that he did not "hear" the law spiritually, but instead "hastened not to see" God's mysteries, and he did not say with David, "Open my eyes and I will contemplate wondrous things from your law" [[Ps 119:18](#)]. For that reason his "heart wanders," and filled with Jewish superstition, he is "occupied" not with the love of God, but "with fear," so that he has a spirit of slavery unto fear, and not a spirit of adoption "by whom we cry: Abba, Father" [[Rom 8:15](#)]. This is why he is commanded to approach the "table" of spiritual foods. And let all "eat" on it who follow his example; and let them "drink," and let those who were lying in the letter "arise" in the spirit, when they have despised ancient error; and let them become "princes" and say with the prophet, "Lord, you have crowned us as with a *shield* of your good will" [[Ps 5:12](#)].

24. ([21:6-8](#)) *For these things has the Lord said to me: Go, and set a watchman, and whatsoever he will see, let him tell. (7) And he saw a chariot with two horsemen, a rider upon a donkey, and a rider upon a camel, and he beheld them carefully with much consideration. (8) And a lion cried out.* Septuagint: "For thus said the Lord to me: Go and set a watchman for yourself, and declare whatever you will see. (7) And I saw two mounted horsemen, a rider on a horse, and a rider on a camel. (8) Hear with much hearing, and call Uriah to the watchtower."

The prophet is commanded to *set a watchman* in his heart and *carefully to consider* the things that will come upon the world, and he *saw two horsemen, a rider upon a donkey, and a rider upon a camel*. Someone interpreted them in such a way that he called Christ the *rider upon a donkey*, in accordance with the Gospel reading and the prophecy of Zechariah [cf. [Matt 21:1-9](#); [Zech 9:9](#)]; and, on the other hand, he said that the *rider upon a donkey* was the opposing power, owing to the hideousness of that crooked animal. But others refer the two riders to the two covenants of the letter and spirit. And what is expressed in the Hebrew as *aria*, which Aquila and Symmachus translated as "lion" and "lioness," the Septuagint intended something or other recorded as "Uriah," which someone thinks means "light of the Lord," though light of the Lord, which is not found here, is written with different letters than *lion*, which is read here. And he wants that "watchman" whom the prophet is commanded to "set"

in his heart to be named “Uriah,” and through the interpretation of his name he refers the understanding to Christ, so that while he dwells among us [cf. [John 1:14](#)], we can see what things are coming. This indeed will be able to be applied also to the “lion” that is identified as a mystery of Christ by Jacob [cf. [Gen 49:9](#)] and by Balaam [cf. [Num 23:24](#)].

25. ([21:8b–10](#)) *“I am upon the watchtower of the Lord, standing continually by day, and I am upon my guard, standing whole nights.”* (9) *Behold, this man is coming, the rider upon the chariot with two horsemen, and he answered and said, “Babylon has fallen, she has fallen, and all the graven images of her gods are broken unto the ground.”* (10) *O my threshing and the son of my threshing floor, that which I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I have declared unto you.* Septuagint: “The Lord has spoken: I stood during the whole day, and I stood in the camp all night, (9) and, behold, he comes, the rider of the two-horse team, and he answered and said, ‘Babylon has fallen, has fallen, and all her images and her man-made things have been broken on the ground.’ (10) Hear, you who are left, and you who are in pain, hear what things I have heard from the Lord Sabaoth; the God of Israel has declared to us.”

The prophet *stands upon the watchtower of the Lord*, and being established in his light, he has a view of what will come to pass; and he has this *guard* and this duty delegated to himself, that he may see what will come to pass in the darkness of that world. *Behold*, he says, *that one is coming*, meaning that he has seen what follows, the Lord and Savior is coming, sitting on a *two-horse team* and joining one chariot out of two *horses*, or rather, animals, a donkey and a camel [cf. [Isa 21:7](#)].

To the longing prophet and to the one who desires to hear his words, he who is the *rider of the two-horse team answered and said, “She has fallen, Babylon has fallen,”* the confusion of the whole world, and she fell at my advent, when I assumed a human body; and she will fall utterly at the consummation of the world; *and all her graven images are broken on the ground.* The Septuagint translated this “images and man-made things,” since the Scripture indicates the various errors of the heresies, who as fabricators of idols worship things that they have fashioned out of their own heart.

And then follows from the persona of the prophet speaking, *O my threshing and the son of my threshing floor, that which I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I have declared unto you.* This has this meaning according to the Hebrew: O people, who are to be packed into my barn [cf. [Matt 3:12](#); [13:30](#)], whom on that account I have worn down by various distresses, in order to shake out the chaff from them and the finest wheat would be stored in my barns: the things that I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, are coming upon the entire world, I have announced to all of you who are in the world. But others say that it is still the previous speaker, namely that of the Lord and Savior, because he himself says to the apostles, “What things I have heard from the Father, I will announce to you” [[John 15:15](#)].

Instead of this, the Septuagint reads, “Hear, you who are left, and you who are in pain.” Therefore, the following meaning appears to me in accordance with their translation: O apostles —of whom Isaiah writes, “Unless the Lord had *left* us seed, we would be like Sodom and we would have become like Gomorrah” [[Isa 1:9](#)], the remnant of whom even the Apostle shows to the Romans that they are saved [cf. [Rom 11:5](#)]—“you who were left” from the Jewish people that you would be saved, and you “who are in pain” over the loss of your nation, of which even

elsewhere we read, “There is sadness in my heart and continuous pain for my brothers, who are the Israelites according to the flesh” [[Rom 9:2–3](#)], these things that I have heard from my Father, I am announcing to you [cf. [John 15:15](#)]. They are things that the God of Israel predicts will come upon you.

26. ([21:11–12](#)) *The burden of Duma. He calls to me out of Seir, “Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?”* (12) *The watchman said, “The morning is coming, also the night; if you seek, seek; convert, come.”* Septuagint: “The vision of Idumea. He calls to me out of Seir, ‘Guard the bulwarks. (12) I guard in the morning and the night. If you seek, seek, and dwell by me.’ ”

Everyone translated the Hebrew word *helai* as *to me*. If we want to read *heli*, it means “my God” or “my strong one.” And what we have expressed as “shouts” or “calls,” that is,  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\epsilon\iota$ , can be expressed as “Shout!” or “Call!” in accordance with the ambiguity of the Hebrew and Greek languages. And the meaning is, God, who is my *watchman*, *calls* me to repentance day and *night*, that leaving *Seir*, which means “hairy” and “shaggy,” I may return and dwell with him. *Duma* expresses either “likeness” or “silence,” but “Idumea” is rendered as “earthly.” Therefore, the Lord speaks to the chorus of apostles and commands it: “Call to me, those who are from Seir, that a multitude of Gentiles may serve me, which like Esau has nothing soft in it and light and smooth, but is hairy, fierce, and intractable [cf. [Gen 25:25](#); [27:11](#)]. And you, O apostles, after you have called the nations to me from Seir, ‘guard the bulwarks’ of the church, lest the enemy easily break through, lest a lion, roaring and prowling about [cf. [1 Pet 5:8](#)], who seeks an entrance by which he can enter, should tear to pieces and scatter the flock that has been enclosed within the church.” And the multitude of the church answered, “Not only in prosperity, but also in adverse circumstances, that is, in the *day* and in the *night*, I will keep your commands, O God.” God says to them, “If you truly seek me, demonstrate by works what you are seeking. Let it not suffice for you to have sought once, but always seek the one whom you have found, and in order that you may hold fast more perfectly, ‘forget your people and the house of your father’ ” [[Ps 45:10](#)]; desert the error of pagans and stay with me in the church.” We have said this in accordance with the Septuagint, which records “vision of Idumea,” that is, “earthly,” in the heading, in order to show that they are being called who previously were serving earthly works.

On the other hand, according to Aquila, who recorded “Duma,” that is, “silence,” or “likeness,” we can understand it in this way, that a multitude of Gentiles is being summoned to the “likeness” of the people of Israel, and where previously there had been the “silence” of the law of God, in that place there is the shout of confession, and the wild olive is inserted into the good olive tree [cf. [Rom 11:17](#)]. We also read in a parable in the Gospel that servants were sent, who invited the good and the bad, and they filled the householder’s banquet hall with anyone, since the first were unwilling to come [cf. [Matt 22:10](#)]. And the church is able to narrate that the Lord shouts to it “from Seir,” that is, from earthly places, and it summons itself to salvation, and says to the Lord himself, “O *watchman*, *what of the night*, you who rise and stay in darkness, you who are without sin in the sinful flesh? [cf. [Rom 8:3](#)]. Why was it your will to assume a human body?” The *watchman*, that is, the Samaritan in the Gospel, who carried the wounded man on his shoulders back to the stable [cf. [Luke 10:34](#)], responded, *The morning is coming*,

*also the night.* And the meaning is that for the multitude of Gentiles the sun of justice has risen [cf. [Mal 4:2](#)], and for the Jews darkness has come. This is in accord with what is said by the Lord, “I have come for the judgment of this world, so that those who do not see might see, and that those who see may become blind” [cf. [John 9:39](#)]. And the *watchman* himself, who had said, *Morning is coming, also the night*, says to the multitude of Gentiles, “If you seek me, seek more zealously. ‘Convert to me, converting sons, and I will heal your griefs, and come to me’ ” [[Jer 3:22](#)]. The passages are difficult, and though they are clear according to the history, we are forced to follow diverse conjectures according to anagogy.

27. ([21:13a](#)) *The burden in Arabia.* This is not found in the edition of the Septuagint translators, but what follows, “In the woods at evening you will sleep, in the paths of Dodanim,” is linked with the former vision, so that it reads, “If you seek, seek and dwell by me in the woods” [[Isa 21:12–13](#)].

*Arabia* in our language expresses “evening,” which is the beginning of the darkness of night; and all who start committing sins live in the “evening.” But the one who reaches the top stops at midnight. This is also why in Egypt the firstborn are killed at midnight [cf. [Exod 12:29](#)]; and the Apostle Peter denied the Lord three times before the rooster crowed, which is understood as midnight. But after the night has advanced, and day has begun to approach [cf. [Rom 13:12](#)], when the darkness of midnight has been overcome and the rooster resounds with the news of the light, he “wept bitterly” [cf. [Matt 26:34, 69–74](#)], and he understood his sin. And at that time he could say, “Weeping will tarry to the evening, and joy to the morning” [[Ps 30:5](#)]. This, for the time being, [has been said] concerning the present passage. However that may be, the name of *Arabia*, that is, of “evening” and the west, receives various interpretations in other passages of the Scriptures.

28. ([21:13b](#)) *In the woods at evening you will sleep, in the paths of Dedanim (Dodanim).* Septuagint: “In the woods at evening you will sleep in the way of Dedan.”

Those who have begun to be in evil and who travel down the path of sins do not *sleep*, and they do not stay in sown and cultivated fields, nor in meadows and grainfields that the Savior teaches are “white for harvest” [[John 4:35](#)]; and they do not tarry among fruit-bearing trees, but among infertile *woods*, where there are briars and thorns, and where wild beasts live. We read about *woods* of this sort also in the Book of Kings, that the forest, or *woods*, devoured more people than were killed with the sword [cf. [2 Sam 18:8](#)], when treasonous Absalom (*Abessalon*) rose up against his father. And they are rightly said to dwell on the “way” and on *paths*, since “evening” is the beginning of evils, and on the “way of Dedan,” which means “judgments.” For as many kinds of sins they have, so many sentences of judgments do they earn. Now “Dedan” can also be translated “great judgment.”

29. ([21:14–15](#)) *When you meet the thirsty, bring him water; you who inhabit the land of the south, meet with bread the one who is fleeing.* (15) *For they have fled from before the swords, from before the sword that hung over them, from before the bent bow, from before a grievous battle.* Septuagint: “You who inhabit the country of Theman, bring water to meet him who is thirsty; (15) meet those who are fleeing with bread, because of the multitude of the slain, because of the crowd of those who are wandering, because of the multitude of sword, and because of the multitude of bent bows, and because of the multitude of those who fall in war.”



You who are “in Theman,” which means “south” and “perfection,” and you live in that place of which it is written, “God will come from the south” [[Hab 3:3](#)], you who have been consummated and perfected, and you have the light of the knowledge of the Scriptures within you, meet with *bread* and *water* those who are *fleeing* from Arabia and from the woods, and do not wait until they come to you, but imitate that father in the Gospel parable who met his returning son [cf. [Luke 15:20, 22](#)]. And he, to be sure, gave him a robe, brought a ring; but you, bring *water* and *bread* to those *who are fleeing*, so that those who were weary and worn out might be propped up by your mercy and might pass through your residences more quickly. For they fled the swords of the heretics, the teaching of pagans, the blasphemies of the Jews; and since they saw that many were slain by their spears and very many had fallen in battle, they long to be delivered by your aid. This passage can properly be understood in opposition to those who by devoting themselves to leisure and idleness are content with their own salvation, and they do not reach out their hands to the penitent and to those who have converted.<sup>229</sup>

30. ([21:16–17](#)) *For thus says the Lord to me: Within one year, as if in the year of a hireling and all the glory of Kedar (Cedar) will be taken away, (17) and the remnant of the number of strong archers of the sons of Kedar will be diminished. For the Lord the God of Israel has spoken.*

The reason I am telling you to meet with water and bread those who are fleeing from the woods and from Arabia [cf. [Isa 21:13–14](#)] is because the Lord has promised that these things will happen. Just as *the year of a hireling passes* quickly, who daily expects nothing else but the wage for his labor, or at least is always at work and labor, to receive the wage for his labor, so *all the glory of Kedar*, which means “darkness,” of whom we also read in the Psalms, “I have dwelled with those who dwell in Kedar” [[Ps 120:5](#)], *will be swiftly taken away*; and the entire *number of archers*, that is, of various doctrines, who wounded those who stopped in the woods of Arabia [cf. [Isa 21:13](#)], will be reduced to nothing, after those who flee from the woods have been delivered and have received the water of saving baptism, and have eaten heavenly bread. For *the Lord* of all, and more specifically *the God of Israel*, in other words, the God of those who see with the mind, *has spoken* things that will be.

31. ([22:1a](#)) *The burden of the valley of vision.* Septuagint: “The word of the valley of Zion.”

In the book of Hebrew names, we have recorded that “Zion” means “watchtower,” which is situated on the heights and observes things coming from afar. “Zion,” therefore, applies to the church in accordance with the laws of tropology, as it does, for instance, in the following passage in the second Psalm under the persona of the Lord and Savior: “But I have been appointed king by him over *Zion* his holy mountain” [[Ps 2:6](#)]; and: “Those who trust in the Lord [are] like Mount Zion” [[Ps 125:1](#)]; and: “The Lord loves the gates of *Zion* above all the tabernacles of Jacob” [[Ps 87:2](#)]; and, more clearly, the Apostle: “But you have come to Mount *Zion*, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” [[Heb 12:22](#)].<sup>330</sup> Since this is the case, we ask why, in the present vision, it is called the “valley of Zion.” Even by the very coherence of the words, we are drawn to the spiritual understanding, so that we know that all the princes of perverted doctrines are living in the “valley of Zion.” They have fallen from the

<sup>229</sup> This may be directed against the Novatians (see bk [7](#), n. 41).

<sup>330</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 81 (144, 5–).

sublimity of meaning of the Holy Scriptures and have tumbled down to the lowly places. I think that even Solomon says something like this in the Proverbs: “Let the ravens of the *valleys* dig out the eye that mocks his father and despises the old age of his mother, and let the young eagles eat it” [[Prov 30:17](#)]. For as soon as the interpretation of heretics has mocked the Creator Father and has despised the old age of mother church, it is dug out by revolting and unclean birds, which refer to the contrary powers. For men of that sort cannot say, “I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, whence help will come to me” [[Ps 121:1](#)], but they are pressed down to the earth in the manner of brute beasts.

32. ([22:1b](#)) *For what is it with you also, that you too have wholly gone up<sup>331</sup> to the housetops?* Septuagint: “What has happened to you now, that you have all gone up<sup>332</sup> to the vain housetops?”

The present passage records more clearly what is asked about in the Book of Kings according to the Septuagint translators. What does it mean when Elisha says, “Where is the God of Elijah *affo*?” [[2 Kgs 2:14](#)]. For in place of what the Septuagint translated here as “now,” the Hebrew has *affo*. We translated it here as *also*. Aquila wanted to preserve the Hebrew idiom by recording ΚΑΙΠΕΡΤΟΙ, a conjunction that does not exist in Latin. But when he says, *For what is it with you also*, he is asking why she also ascends among the others, and lingers among the lowly by the opinion of the lofty ones. And the meaning is, Though the philosophers are puffed up, and all secular wisdom, discoursing concerning lofty things, despises the simplicity of the church, why do you also pursue lofty things? What the Septuagint translated *σημαντικωτερον* (more meaningfully) as vain *δωματα*, that is, “housetops,” was done in order to show that there is another kind of “housetop” from which the Savior prohibits descending [cf. [Matt 24:17](#)], which, however, is not a “vain housetop.” After all, even the Apostle Peter goes up on a “housetop” at the sixth hour of prayer [cf. [Acts 10:9](#)]. But now, in order to show the great variety of the heresies, he has named not one “housetop,” but many “housetops.”

33. ([22:2a](#)) *Full of clamor, a crowded city, an exulting city?* Septuagint: “The city is filled with shouting men, an exulting city.”

The teaching of the heretics is not concerned with understanding, but with talkativeness and shouting. This is why, because of the multitude of the deceived, it is called a *crowded city*, and *exulting* owing to its pride. For those who are inflated and puffed up boast that they have discovered things that are more sacred.

34. ([22:2b](#)) *Your slain have not been slain by the sword, and [your] dead not in war.* Septuagint: “Your wounded have not been wounded with the sword, nor have your dead died in war.”

The majority is tripped up by the deceptions of the heretics without any contest and dispute, and this constitutes an extremely large crowd. Therefore the *slain*, or as the Septuagint translated it, “the wounded” of the “valley of Zion” [cf. [Isa 22:1](#)], have not been *slain* and “wounded” by the “sword,” but by their own will they have passed over to the heretics. And in comparison with those who have been conquered after a combat, he is more wretched who

<sup>331</sup> The verb is singular.

<sup>332</sup> The verb is plural.

handed himself over of his own accord to be “wounded” and *slain*. Just as in martyrdom as well, the one who has been overcome and has surrendered after being punished is subject to a lighter punishment than him who has denied Christ without any compulsion and pain of tortures.

35. ([22:3a](#)) *All your princes have fled together, and have been bound hard*. On this passage we have followed the Septuagint translation, because it does not differ much from the Hebrew in meaning. On the other hand, that I may translate it word for word from the Hebrew, it is read among them as follows: “All your preeminent ones have migrated together, they have been bound from the bow.” And the other translators followed this version.

For all the *princes* of the heretics *have migrated* to the synagogue of Satan [cf. [Rev 2:9](#); [3:9](#)] from the church of Christ, and they have passed through *together*, discordant in their faithlessness, concordant in their passage, and they have been *bound from the bow* of which it is written in the Psalm, “Behold, sinners have bent their bow, they have prepared their arrows in the quiver, to shoot in the dark the upright of heart” [[Ps 11:2](#)]. And they throw the fiery javelins of the devil [cf. [Eph 6:16](#)], which equally “wound” and *bind*. And the reason they have been *bound hard* is because they have plugged up their ears, like the plugged up ears of a deaf asp, which wisely will not listen to the sounds of enchanters and of the enchanting magician [cf. [Ps 58:4–5](#)]. For this reason too the Apostle commands that a heretic is to be left alone, after one warning for his depravity, because he is depraved and condemned by his own judgment [cf. [Titus 3:10–11](#)]. “For they went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us” [[1 John 2:19](#)].

That prince of these fugitive *princes* is the one whom the same Isaiah calls a “fleeing dragon,” a coiled serpent [cf. [Isa 27:1](#)], who when it has put death-dealing words into the ears of the deceived, it *binds* them *hard* and does not allow them to escape from their bonds. The saint who has been delivered from them gives thanks in the Psalm: “My soul has been delivered like a bird from the snare of hunters” [[Ps 124:7](#)]. In another passage he rejoices that he has escaped and says, “You are my protector, and my refuge, my God, in him will I hope; for he will deliver me from the snare of the hunters, from the sharp word” [[Ps 91:2–3](#)], or “turbulent word,” which properly signifies the teaching of the heretics.

36. ([22:3b](#)) *All who have been found have been bound in you,*<sup>333</sup> *they have fled far off*. Septuagint: “And the mighty in you have fled far off.”

The prophet’s words are still against the “valley of Zion” [cf. [Isa 22:1](#)], whose inhabitants have gone up on “vain housetops,” and they have shouted with a confused clamor, and they have been wounded without battle; all their princes have fled and have been “bound hard” [cf. [Isa 22:1–3a](#)], and those who were “mighty” among them “have fled far off.” For to the extent that someone is more skilled in heretical depravity, so much the further does he withdraw from the Lord. Now as for what he says according to the Hebrew, *All who have been found in you*, we should take note of this, that even the heretics claim that they have *found* those whom they have deceived; but their “finding” spells perdition. Ultimately, they are gathered together and flee far off. That explanation in accordance with the diversity of the heresies does not please me—that there are also various distances between those who flee. For the Holy Scripture says that

<sup>333</sup> The lemma in bk. [5](#) has “ound together.”

all who have been found by the heretics are gathered together and have fled very far, since the Lord says, “He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters” [[Luke 11:23](#)]. This is why it is said of Moses, “And Moses alone will draw near to God, but the others will not draw near” [[Exod 24:2](#)]. For to his holy ones he is a “God near at hand, not a God far off, says the Lord” [[Jer 23:23](#)].

37. ([22:4–5](#)) *Therefore have I said, Depart from me, I will weep bitterly; do not be inclined to comfort me, for the devastation of the daughter of my people. (5) For it is a day of slaughter and of treading down, and of weeping to the Lord the God of hosts in the valley of vision, searching the wall, and magnificent upon the mountain.* Septuagint: “Therefore I said: Let me alone, I will weep bitterly; do not strive to comfort me for the contrition of the daughter of my race. (5) For it is a day of trouble, and of destruction, and of treading down, and wandering (*error*) from the Lord Sabaoth in the valley of Zion; they wander from the least to the greatest, they wander on the mountains.”

Both Samuel mourned for Saul [cf. [1 Sam 15:35](#)], and the Lord and Savior wept for Jerusalem [cf. [Luke 19:41](#)]; and the Apostle writes to the Corinthians, “Lest when I come to you again, my God will humble me, and I may be in mourning for many who sinned previously and did not repent” [[2 Cor 12:21](#)]. This is also why he speaks to others with feelings of compassion, “Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is scandalized, and I do not burn?” [[2 Cor 11:29](#)]. Therefore, the prophet as well, when he sees that the former people of vision are ascending vain housetops and are engaged in clamor, and that all their princes have fled and been bound with the chains of sins [cf. [Isa 22:1–3](#)], he bursts into tears and drives away those who offer comfort, and by his very bitter weeping he testifies that he is weeping not for the son, but for the daughter of his people, a *daughter* who has lost the dignity of manliness.

For the *day* of judgment and *of slaughter and treading down* will not be for Jerusalem, which means “vision of peace,” but for Jebus, its ancient name, which means “treading down.” It is a day of wailings too, or of “error,” as the Septuagint has translated it, “from the Lord Sabaoth,” not that the weeping and error is from the Lord, but by the occasion of the Holy Scriptures, which the Lord gave to be read, the occasion for “error” arises for them, who can say, “Why have you made us err from your way?” [[Isa 63:17](#)], and in another passage, “The Lord mingled a spirit of error for them” [[Isa 19:14](#)]. Hence they did not stop on the mountain of vision, but in the valley of Zion.

But this very *day*, which arises from the Lord of hosts in the *valley of vision*, in order that it may show the works of each [cf. [1 Cor 3:13](#)], *searches the wall* of the heretics, which they have constructed against the church like a very solid bulwark, and is *magnificent* and glorious, that is, their teachers, who boast that they are standing upon Christ as a *mountain*. We read of this elsewhere, “Come, let us go up on the *mountain* of the Lord and into the house of the God of Jacob, and he will declare to us his way” [[Isa 2:3](#)].

On the other hand, the Septuagint translated this, “They wander (*errant*) from the least to the greatest, they wander on the mountains.” We should understand this to mean that those who are greater are guilty of greater sin, and yet “from the least to the greatest” all “wander,” and “they wander on the mountains,” namely, on Moses, Jeremiah, and the other prophets, evangelists, and apostles. And since they live in the valley, it is surprising that they “wander on

the mountains.”

38. ([22:6–9a](#)) *And Elam (Aelam) took the quiver, the chariot of the horseman, and the shield stripped the wall. (7) And your choice valleys will be full of chariots, and the horseman will place themselves in the gate. (8) And the covering of Judah will be revealed, and you will see in that day the armory of the house of the woods. (9) And you will see the breaches of the city of David, that they have been multiplied.* Septuagint: “But the Elamites took their quivers, men mounted on horses and a gathering of fighters. (7) And it will be that your choice valleys will be filled with chariots, and horsemen will block up your gates. (8) And they will reveal the gates of Judah, and they will look in that day on the houses of the city, (9) and they will reveal the secret places of the houses of the citadel of David, and they saw that they are many.”

*Elam*, which means “their ascent,” or “Elamites,” as the Septuagint translated, whom we have read is rendered “despisers,” *took the quiver*, to “shoot in the dark at the upright in heart” [[Ps 11:2](#)], who are in a *chariot*, and the *horsemen* of men, to *strip the wall* of Zion and the support of the church by means of its own *shield* and attack. But *your choice valleys*, he says, and your lowly dogmas, O valley of Zion, *will be full of chariots*, which the Lord drowned with Pharaoh [cf. [Exod 14:28](#)], whose *horsemen* and “mounted men” *will place themselves in your gates*, in order not to allow those under siege and confined within you to get out. At that time the omnipotent God, through men of the church, *will reveal the coverings of Judah*, and all the secrets of those who have been established in the confession of the faith, and then you will see, O valley of Zion, on that day and in the bright light of truth, the entire *armory* of the Apostle [cf. [Eph 6:13](#)] and *of the house of the woods*, in which the throng of Gentiles stands, just as it is sung in the [131st Psalm](#), “Behold, we have heard it in Ephrathah, we have found it in the fields of the forest” [[Ps 132:6](#)]. But when the *covering* and *secret of Judah* will be *revealed*, which was previously concealed because of the mystery, and you *see the armory* of the church, then you will understand that you have gathered deceived peoples to yourself, the schisms *of the city of David*, which you have multiplied.

According to the Septuagint version these “Elamites” do not have one *quiver*, but many, and they consist of “mounts of men,” on whose souls they ride; and there is a great multitude preparing themselves to fight against the church. Accordingly all her “valleys” are “filled,” and the “horsemen block” their senses, and they provoke to combat by means of their struggle with men of the church. That is what “Judah” means. When the man of the church cites testimonies from the Scriptures and exposes all their falsehoods, the heretics will see the “houses of the city of David,” and they will recognize all the previously “secret places,” how all doctrines are in the “citadel of David,” which means “strong in hand,” that is, [in the citadel] of Christ. The passages are obscure, not merely according to history, but also according to anagogy. Therefore let those who are displeased with our explanation produce their own, so that we may be content with theirs, if it is true.

39. ([22:9b–11](#)) *And you have gathered together the waters of the lower pool, (10) and have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and broken down houses to fortify the wall, (11) and you have made a ditch between the two walls and the water of the old pool, and you have not looked up to the one who made it, nor regarded him that wrought it even at a distance.* Septuagint: “And they diverted the water of the old pool into the city, (10) and they broke down

the houses of Jerusalem to fortify the walls of the city, (11) and you made to yourselves water between the two walls within the ancient pool, and you did not look to him who made it from the beginning, and you did not regard its Creator.”

You yourselves who will see, or who do see, “the breaches of the city of David” [cf. [Isa 22:9a](#)], that is, of the church, which have been “multiplied” throughout the whole world, you who have *gathered together the water of your pool* and doctrine, not of the upper [pool], but of the *lower*, and *you have counted or broken down the houses of Jerusalem*, so that you could *fortify your wall*, you did not dig cisterns, which had life-giving and eternal waters [cf. [Jer 2:13](#)], but common *ditches* which are not able to hold water; and you have *made* them *between the two walls* of the New and Old Instrument, and you have neglected the water of the old pool, and you have not considered God, the giver of the law, and you have utterly neglected *him that wrought* the world. This is in accordance with the Hebrew.

However that may be, according to the Septuagint, the heretics have considered themselves, that they were many, and confident in this multitude, they have “diverted” the doctrine of the Old Testament from the city of God, which is the church, and they have “broken down the houses of Jerusalem,” to build assembly places for the wicked, and while they reject the Old Instrument, they have not followed the New, because the New is strengthened by testimonies from the Old Instrument. For this reason they “made to” themselves new “waters between the two walls” of the Old and New, waters that they think are “within” and hold greater mysteries than are contained in the Old Testament; and they “did not look to” God, who is the Founder of the Old Instrument, and they did not want to see its Maker “even at a distance.”<sup>334</sup>

40. ([22:12–14](#)) *And the Lord, the God of hosts, in that day called to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth, (13) and behold joy and gladness, killing calves and slaying rams, eating flesh, and drinking wine: “Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we will die.” (14) And [the voice] of the Lord of hosts was revealed in my ears: Surely (Si) this iniquity will not be forgiven you till you die, says the Lord God of hosts.*

On a daily basis *the Lord God of hosts* summons the heretics to repentance, who have dug a trench for themselves between two walls, despising the water of the old pool [cf. [Isa 22:9, 11](#)], and they have gathered together the water of the lower pool, which has waters not from heaven, but from earth; and he calls them *to weeping*—for “blessed are those who weep” [[Matt 5:5](#)], because “they will laugh” [[Luke 6:21](#)]*—and to mourning*, lest they should hear later, “We lamented for you, and you did not mourn” [[Matt 11:17](#)]; *and to baldness*, that they might shave all the works of death and remove from their body whatever is not living in the body; *and to the girding with sackcloth*, lest later on they be girded like Jerusalem with a belt of rope [cf. [Isa 3:24](#)]. But instead of weeping, mourning, baldness, and goat’s hair, they, on the other hand, had *joy and gladness*; and as if all things were terminated by death, they were killing calves and slaughtering rams, in order to eat flesh and drink wine, and they spoke the words of blasphemers: “While we are in the present world, let us overflow with delights; for the day of tomorrow, that is, the time to come, will be without sensation.” While they were saying these

<sup>334</sup> Notice how Jerome adds a phrase from the Hebrew version (“ven at a distance” to his exposition of the Septuagint reading of the text.



things, the Lord heard the blasphemous words and threatened that he will not forgive this iniquity, until they either die to sin and vices, or are dragged down to hell with their transgressions. Now indeed, this can be understood not only of the heretics, but of every sinner, who neglects his sins and out of hopelessness becomes worse. Caught in the net of pleasures, he joins blasphemy to sin, so that he thinks that all sensation of the living ceases at death. He speaks the words of Epicurus: "There is nothing after death, and death itself is nothing."<sup>335</sup>

41. ([22:15–25](#)) *Thus says the Lord God of hosts: Go, enter unto him who dwells in the tabernacle, to Shebna (Sobna) who is over the temple. (16) Why are you here, or as if you were somebody here, since you have hewed out for yourself a sepulcher here? Have you hewed out a monument (memoriam) in a high place, carefully a tabernacle for yourself in a rock? (17) Behold, the Lord will cause you to be carried away, as a rooster is carried away, and he will lift you up as a garment. (18) He will crown you with a crown of tribulation; he will toss you like a ball into a large and spacious land. There you will die, and there will the chariot of your glory be, the shame of the house of your Lord. (19) And I will drive you out from your station, and depose you from your ministry. (20) And it will come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim (Heliachim) the son of Hilkiah (Helchia), (21) and I will clothe him with your robe, and will strengthen him with your sash, and will give your power into his hand, and he will be as a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah. (22) And I will lay<sup>336</sup> the key of the house of David upon his shoulder, and he will open, and no one will shut, and he will shut, and no one will open. (23) And I will fasten him as a peg in a sure place, and he will be for a throne<sup>337</sup> of the house of his father. (24) And they will hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, diverse kinds of vessels, every little vessel, from the vessels of cups even to every instrument of music. (25) In that day, says the Lord of hosts, the peg will be removed that was fastened in the sure place, and it will be broken and will fall, and that which had hung on it will perish, because the Lord has spoken. Septuagint: "Thus says the Lord Sabaoth: Go into the chamber (*pastophorion*), to Somnas the treasurer (*quaestorem*), and you will say to him, 'Why are you here, (16) or what is there for you here, that you have hewn for yourself a sepulcher, and made yourself a monument (*memoriam*) on high, and have graven for yourself a tabernacle in the earth? (17) Behold, the Lord Sabaoth will cast forth and will crush the man, and will take away your robe and your glorious crown, (18) and will cast you into a great and unmeasured country, and there you will die. And he will bring your fair chariot to shame, and the house of your prince to be trodden down. (19) And you will be removed from your stewardship, and from your rank. (20) And it will come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant (*puerum*) Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, (21) and I will clothe him with your robe, and I will grant him your crown with power, and I will put your stewardship into his hands, and he will be as a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the inhabitants of Judah. (22) And I will give him the glory of David, and he will rule, and there will be none to contradict, and he will shut, and there will be none to open. [And I will give him the key of the house of David upon his shoulder; and he will*

<sup>335</sup> Cf. Epicurus, *Sent.* 2.

<sup>336</sup> Lit., "ive."

<sup>337</sup> The lemma in bk. [5](#) reads "hrone of glory."

open, and there will be none to shut; and he will shut, and there will be none to open.]<sup>338</sup> (23) And I will appoint him a prince in a sure place, and for a throne of glory of his father's house, (24) and every one that is glorious in the house of his father will trust in him, from the least to the greatest, every little vessel from the vessels of Aganath, and they will depend upon him. In that day, (25) thus says the Lord Sabaoth: The man who had been stable in a sure place will be moved, and will be taken away, and will fall, and the glory that was in him will be utterly destroyed, for the Lord has spoken.' ”

Isaiah the prophet is commanded to *enter unto him who dwells in the tabernacle*, which in Hebrew is expressed as *sochen*, to *Shebna (Sobna) who is over the temple*, or, as the Septuagint translated,  $\tau\alpha\mu\iota\alpha\varsigma$ , that is, “quaestor” and steward of the treasury of the house of God. Now *sochen* means either *tabernacle* or *pastophorium*, that is, a chamber in which the one who presides over the temple lives. Now what other is there who has dwelled in the tabernacle of the Jews and in the former house of God, except the word (*sermo*) and reason (*ratio*) of the Jewish law, which lived in the reading of the Old Instrument? And so, to this tradition and doctrine, it is said, *What are you doing here?* Why do you want to build a house for yourself in the killing letter [cf. [2 Cor 3:6](#)], and to fashion your tabernacle, which does not have a foundation, in the firmness of a *rock*, which must be called not so much a tabernacle and house as a *sepulcher* and *monument (memoria)*?

Now the reason I say to you that you should not labor in the hewing out of a sepulcher is because the Lord has transferred your priesthood, just as *geber* is accustomed to be transferred, which everyone translated as “the man” [cf. [Isa 22:17](#)]. But the Hebrew who taught us in the reading of the Old Testament translated it as *rooster*. He is saying, just as a *rooster* is transferred from one place to another on the shoulder of a carrier, so the Lord will easily carry you from your place, and you who once had the crown of the high priest and the sanctification in the thin sheet of gold, on which the name of God was written [cf. [Exod 28:36](#)], you will be *crowned* with *tribulation* and anguish. And just as if a ball is thrown onto a *spacious* downward slope, it cannot stand still, but it rolls off into the distance, so all your people will be dispersed unto the ends of the world. And *there you will die* with your letter [cf. [2 Cor 3:6](#)], and all your *glory*, and the renowned *chariot* in which you were previously being borne around; and the splendor of *the house of God* will be turned to *shame*. For the Lord will remove you *from your station* and *from your ministry*, that is, from the ceremonies of sacrificial victims, so that what is written to the Hebrews is fulfilled: “For when the priesthood is transferred, it is necessary that a transfer of law be made” [[Heb 7:12](#)].

But when you will have been expelled from your ministry, *I will call my servant (puerum) Eliakim*, to whom I said in another passage, “It is a great thing for you that you are called my servant (*puerum*)” [[Isa 49:6](#)]. Eliakim means “God rising again,” or “resurrection of God.” Therefore, that God rising again, who is the son of Hilkiah, that is, of “the Lord's portion,” will take your place, and will be *clothed with your robe*, and will be *strengthened by your sash*, so that what you had in the letter, he possesses in the Spirit; and he will be *father of those who inhabit Jerusalem*, that is, the “vision of peace,” which means the church, and *the house of Judah*, where there is the true “confession” of faith. This is why he says to the apostles, “*Little*

<sup>338</sup> The text in brackets is missing from Jerome's citation of the LXX here.

children, I am with you a little longer" [[John 13:33](#)]; and to another, "Son, your sins are forgiven" [[Matt 9:2](#)]; and to another, "Daughter, your faith has saved you" [[Luke 7:50](#)]. Also, *I will give to him*, he says, *the key of the house of David*, "who opens, and no one shuts, who shuts, and no one opens" [[Rev 3:7](#)]. And this very *key* will be *upon his shoulder*, that is, during the passion. This accords with what is written in another passage: "Whose sovereignty is on his shoulder" [[Isa 9:6](#)]. For that which he will have opened up by his passion cannot be closed, and what he will have enclosed in Jewish ceremonies, no other will open.

For *I will fasten* that *peg in a sure place*, where there is a gathering of the faithful, for which reason also those who believe in Christ are called faithful, and he will be *for a throne of the glory of his father's house*, that is, of the church; and they will *hang upon him all the glory of his father's house*. This is also why in the Gospel it is written, "All the people were *hanging* from him" [[Luke 19:48](#)]. Indeed, this happened not merely at that time, but it is fulfilled up to the present day, that they *hang various kinds of vessels* from him, as if from the word of God, wisdom, justice, and all things by which Christ is designated. Aquila translated this as *sasaim* and *sephoth*, which Symmachus rendered "grandsons" and "commingled ones." Thus both the apostles and all believers, that is, the sons of the sons and those comingled from all nations, *hang upon him*. From the *vessels of cups*, which Theodotion recorded as *aganoth*: for both the little and the great will believe in the Lord. I think that the *cups* are the apostles, filled with the life-giving waters, of which it is said, "Bless the Lord from the fountains of Israel" [[Ps 68:26](#)]. In these cups wisdom has mixed its wine [cf. [Prov 9:2](#)]. *And every instrument of music*, of those who at all times resound with the praises of God.

That which follows appears to contradict our interpretation. How would that *peg*, which had been *fastened in a sure place*, be *removed* and be *broken* and *fall*? And how would *what had hung upon it perish*? And how would this happen *because the Lord has spoken*? It is possible to resolve this, if we read the words of the Gospel, that in the last days the love of many will grow cold [cf. [Matt 24:12](#)]. Also the Lord himself says, "Do you think the Son of man, when he comes, will find faith on the earth?" [[Luke 18:8](#)]. Therefore, it is not that the *peg* will be *broken* and *fall* and *perish*, which is impious to say, but the *peg will be removed from the sure place*, that is, from the church, through the daily increase of impiety; and those who had previously hung upon him by faith, afterward will be *broken* by infidelity, and they will *fall* and *perish*. But this will happen in the last days, *because the Lord has spoken*.

Instead of *peg*, which in Hebrew is expressed as *iathed* and which is published by all similarly, the Septuagint alone translated this word above as "prince," but here as "man." And in the haste of our dictation, it has nearly slipped past us that *Shebna* (*Sobna*) means "convert now!" or "conversion." Therefore, the "prince" of the Jews is being told to be converted from the law to the gospel, and having forsaken the images of sacrificial victims, to transfer himself to the truth of the spiritual sacrifice.

42. ([23:1a](#) <sup>LXX</sup>) "The word of Tyre."<sup>339</sup>

Above,<sup>440</sup> in the book of historical commentary on the ten visions, we have expressed what

[LXX](#) Septuagint

<sup>339</sup> Note that Jerome uses the LXX for the lemma of this chapter.

<sup>440</sup> Cf. bk. [5](#).

appeared to us concerning the “burden” or “word” and “reception of Tyre” according to the Hebrew. Now, let us briefly run through the entire prophecy against Tyre in accordance with anagogy and the Septuagint version. “Tyre” is expressed in the Hebrew language as *Sor*, and in our language it is translated as “anguish.” Every soul, therefore, that is occupied with vices and depraved thoughts can be called *Sor*.

43. ([23:1b](#) <sup>LXX</sup>) “Howl, you ships of Carthage; for they have perished and will no longer come; from the land of the Citians she is led captive. (2) To whom are the dwellers in the island become like, the merchants of Phoenicia, passing over the sea (3) on great waters, the seed of merchants? As when the harvest is gathered in, these merchants of the nations.”

Instead of “Carthage,” the Hebrew has written *Tarshish*, which all translated similarly. Now *Tarshish* means “contemplation,” or “exploration of joy.” “Citians” too, which is expressed in Hebrew as *Kittim* (*Cethim*), means “sea freezing over”; and instead of “Phoenicia,” we read *Sidon*. And so, those ones are convicted who are surrounded by a crowd of evil thoughts, and who, according to the Apostle, when they want to become rich, fall into temptations and snares and many harmful desires [cf. [1 Tim 6:9](#)], which drag men into the abyss; and it is said to them that they ought to “wail,” knowing that all the business of this world will perish, and the “contemplation of joy” and gladness should be turned to mourning and tears. For this sea cannot be sailed any further, but everything is freezing over, and the colonies of the Tyrians will be led captive into punishments.

For the others who dwell “on that island” are “like” no one but “merchants,” or transporters who are borne around by every wind of doctrine [cf. [Eph 4:14](#)]. And they “cross” from one vice to another. Now we live “on an island” as long as we are pounded by the temptations of this world, and our “island” and little ship is struck on every side by the waves of the sea. But the “merchants” of this “island” are from *Sidon*, which means “huntress.” A large number of hunters dwell on it as well, of whom it is written, “He will deliver you from the snare of hunters” [[Ps 91:3](#)]; and in another passage the saint rejoices that he has been delivered from their plots, saying, “Our soul has been snatched like a bird from the snare of the hunters” [[Ps 124:7](#)]. But all the “merchants” of the Gentiles are compared with crops, which quickly wither, or with a river’s “harvests” that have no rain from heaven, but from earth; and therefore they will perish with the nations. Where we read “seed of merchants,” in Hebrew it is written, *seed sior*, which one understands as “of the Nile,” because it has rough waters by which the crops of Egypt are irrigated.

44. ([23:4](#) <sup>LXX</sup>) “Be ashamed, O Sidon, the sea said; but the strength of the sea says, ‘I have not travailed, nor brought forth, nor have I brought up young men, nor raised virgins.’ (5) But when it will be heard in Egypt, pain will seize them for Tyre.”

The sea of this world, in which small animals live with great ones, and the serpent, which God formed in order to make sport of [[Ps 104:26](#)], when it sees men captured by Christ’s hunters, who hunt from every mountain and hill [cf. [Jer 16:16](#)], men who previously had been captured by demons, it speaks to the power that opposes the hunters, which is the meaning of “Sidon,” and it says to it, “Be ashamed, O Sidon”; for “I have not travailed, nor brought forth,

nor have I brought up young men” captured by you, “nor have I raised virgins,” whose foolishness is condemned in the Gospel [cf. [Matt 25:1–13](#)]. For my travail and birth and bringing up and raising of virgins has been destroyed by the travail of Christ’s apostles, one of whom said, “My little children, for whom I am again *in travail*, until Christ is formed in you” [[Gal 4:19](#)]; and, “I gave you milk to drink, not solid food” [[1 Cor 3:2](#)]. And again, “I want to present you all to Christ as a chaste virgin” [[2 Cor 11:2](#)]. When “Egypt” will have “heard” this, which is expressed in Hebrew as *mesraim*, which means *εκθλιβουσα*, that is, “causing distress,” and “confining,” even she will be frightened, when she understands that she too will suffer the same things that Tyre has suffered. Though this may be related to all the vices, it can also be understood in respect to the diversity of the heresies: when one heresy has been captured, another trembles, and another perceives that he must be captured in the shame of the other. Now just as it is said of the Sodomites, “For if the signs had been done among them which have been done in Capernaum, they would have remained until today” [[Matt 11:22](#)], and it is added, “Nevertheless, it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the Sodomites than for you,” so also we learn about Tyre and Sidon when the Savior says, “Nevertheless, it will be easier for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for that city” [[Matt 15:22](#)]. This is also why the Cananite woman, who at the preaching of Christ understood that her daughter, that is, her soul, was being harassed by a very heavy demon, is said to have come forth from the borders of Tyre and Sidon [[Matt 11:23](#)]. For otherwise she could not have met the Savior, unless she had abandoned the borders of Tyre and Sidon.

45. ([23:6](#) <sup>LLXX</sup>) “Go to Carthage; howl, you who dwell in this island. (7) Is not this your insolence from the beginning, before she was given up?” And what follows: “Her feet will carry her afar off to sojourn,” has been added from the Hebrew and is marked in front with clear stars.

O Tyrians, “you who dwell” in anguish and linger “on an island,” you who have been exposed on every side to the waves of temptations, withdraw from it and cross over “to Carthage,” that is, to Tarshish, and hasten to true joy, bewailing ancient sins and old “insolence,” which you were either inflicting upon others, or you were suffering from others. But the reason I command this is because you will see your city of Tyre migrate from its own residence and intention to other borders, when it has laid aside ancient error and submitted its necks to the gospel of the Savior. Consequently, those who formerly dwelled in “anguish” draw back quite far and are sojourners and inhabitants of the teaching of the Lord and Savior.

46. ([23:8–9](#) <sup>LLXX</sup>) “Who has purposed this against Tyre? Is she inferior, or has she no strength? Her merchants were the princes of Canaan, glorious of the earth. (9) The Lord Sabaoth has purposed to destroy all the insolence of the glorious ones, and to disgrace every glorious thing on the earth.” The word “Canaan” has been added from the version of Theodotion, in place of which Aquila translated “merchants.”

Therefore, the Holy Spirit questions, or rather, confirms by means of a question, that the Lord “has purposed” these things “against the princes of Tyre.” Their whole industry is to seek wealth by means of merchandise. And just as in the Gospel we read of brokers of pearls who

desire to buy one pearl by selling everything [cf. [Matt 13:45–46](#)], and assuredly they are to be called “merchants” who are “glorious,” not “on earth,” but in heaven, so on the other hand, the “merchants” of Tyre, that is of “distress” and “anguish,” must be called “glorious on earth,” because whatever they do looks to the earth, and “princes of Canaan,” which means “rising in waves” and “shaken.” For they do not set their feet upon the rock [cf. [Ps 40:2](#)], and it cannot be said of them, “The rock is a refuge for hedgehogs” or “hares” [[Ps 104:18](#)]; but instead they endure what the just man nearly suffered: “But my feet were nearly *shaken*, my steps all but slipped” [[Ps 73:2](#)].

Therefore the Lord of hosts has “purposed” this counsel, to destroy the evil chains of the merchants, or rather, to dissolve the compacted injury through which they are puffed up before all things that have been subjected to Tyre. And as for what he has added, “And to disgrace every glorious thing on the earth,” the Lord is not the author of the disgracing, but he shows to be disgraceful what lies exposed to disgrace in and of itself. Indeed, in Leviticus we also read the following of priests: “With defilement he will defile him” [[Lev 13:44](#)]. This is without doubt speaking of the priest, not that the priest is the author of defilement, but that he shows that he who previously seemed clean to many has been defiled.

47. ([23:10–11a](#) <sup>LXX</sup>). “Work your land, for ships will not come out of Carthage, (11) and your hand does not prevail, which challenges kings at sea.” The Septuagint version of this passage is quite different from the other translators and from the Hebrew itself, but let us stick to our purpose.

Above he had said, “Go to Carthage, howl, you who dwell in this island” [cf. [Isa 23:6](#)]. Now he says the opposite, that “ships no longer come from Carthage” to “work your land.” For it was profitable to Tyre that ships abroad perish, so that it be forced to “work” its own “land,” of which it is said in Proverbs, “He who works his own land will be satisfied with bread” [[Prov 12:11](#)]. Thus it lives not from the uncertain danger of waves and shipwrecks, but from the fruit of their own labor, of which in the Psalms it is sung to the just man, “You will eat the works of your hands” [[Ps 128:2](#)]. In Hosea it is written that the ways of a prostitute are hedged in by thorns from the Lord, to keep her from being able to follow her lovers and to force her by necessity to return to her former husband [cf. [Hos 2:6–7](#)]. We notice this frequently even in the affairs of the world, that many who were unable to perceive God during prosperous times and the abundance of all things do understand him during times of scarcity. And they are converted to works of justice, after their “hand” has “not prevailed” to enjoy thoroughly the happiness of this world, the hand that previously was “challenging,” or, according to Symmachus, “troubling” kings at sea, kings whose heart is in the hand of God [[Prov 21:1](#)]. And would that even we too would “work our land” after despising the business of this sea, and that we would not await “ships of Carthage” or ships of Tyre, which were accustomed to go to Carthage. May we not be subject to the authority of the serpent, which lords over the sea [cf. [Isa 27:1](#)], but let us fix a firm step on land, or rather, let us hasten toward heavenly things and work our land, so that by planting seeds here, we may reap a harvest there. May our hand too, which previously was engaged in the business of the world, and in place of power and happiness was able to shake even kings, that is saints, from their station, become weak in the affairs of the sea, so that it



may be strong in the work of its land.

48. ([23:11b–12b](#)<sup>LXX</sup>) “The Lord Sabaoth has given a command concerning Canaan, to destroy its strength, (12) and they will say, ‘You will not at all continue to insult and injure the virgin daughter of Sidon.’ ”

Above we have shown that Tyre and Sidon are in the land of Canaan, by setting forth a testimony of the Gospel, in which it is read that the Canaanean or Syrophenician woman had come forth from the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and met the Lord and Savior [cf. [Matt 15:22](#); [Mark 7:26–30](#)]. Now every soul that has been set on the waves of the world and is borne around by every wind of doctrine [cf. [Eph 4:4](#)] must be called “Canaan,” which means “as if fluctuation” or “commotion.” This is why even to the old adulterer, it is said, “Seed of *Canaan* and not of Judah, beauty has deceived you” [[Dan 13:53](#)]. Therefore, it is beneficial to Tyre and its “anguishes” that the Canaanean “strength” perishes, so that it is said to its inhabitants that they no longer prevail to cause injuries and to overwhelm the virgin daughter of Sidon by iniquity. Whoever is caught by the devil in the disturbance of various vices and is handed over unto ignominious shame, so that he defiles his body with pleasures and baseness [cf. [Rom 1:24, 26–27](#)], that one is a son or “daughter of Sidon.” And let this be known, that “Sabaoth” is not found in the Hebrew, and on the other hand “virgin” has been added from the Hebrew.

49. ([23:12c–13](#))<sup>LXX</sup> “If you go to the Citians, you will not have rest there, (13) and if you go to the land of the Chaldeans, this also is laid waste by the Assyrians.” And what follows has been added from the version of Theodotion under asterisks: “Siim founded it, they established her ramparts, they raised her towers,” and without asterisks, he adds, “Her wall has fallen.”

“Citians” means “consummated” or “perfected blow.” “Chaldeans” in this passage means “as if fertile.” Assyrians means “convicting.” We have not been able to discover the etymological meaning of *Siim*, and the other translators have translated it by the term itself, as it is written in Hebrew. Therefore, it is said to Tyre that, although it strives to “go to the Citians” and to avoid the “blow” of their own anguishes, it is unable to find perfect “rest” even there. And, on the other hand, if it desires to “go to the Chaldeans” and to enjoy their fertility and abundance of all things, it may find even them deserted, with the Assyrians “convicting” their sterility. This accords with how even the Apostle hands over sinners to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme [cf. [1 Tim 1:20](#)]. They are handed over for the destruction of their flesh, that the spirit may be saved [cf. [1 Cor 5:5](#)]. Now the “Siim” have laid the foundations of the Chaldeans, whom I understand to be wicked demons who have raised up both “ramparts” and extremely arrogant “towers” of the Chaldean city against the knowledge of the Lord [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)]. But their entire edifice collapses in ruins, for it follows, “Her wall has fallen.” For “unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it have labored in vain” [[Ps 127:1](#)]. We often see in the world that some pass from one purpose to another—for instance, those who have tried out the military without success, move on to business; and, on the other hand, we see that lawyers chastise the weapons of warriors—they change their line of work in order to change their wretchedness—and nonetheless we see that by the dispensation of God to those who are glowing with health whom he deigns to save, all things happen in opposition. By this means that

through scarcity and misery, they are compelled to have confidence not in themselves but in their Creator.

50. ([23:14](#) <sup>LLXX</sup>) “Howl, you ships of Carthage, for your strength has perished.” The “ships of Carthage,” that is, of Tarshish, are commanded to “howl”; for it is not, as above, that “*they* have perished” [cf. [Isa 23:1](#)] or that “*they* will not come,” but their “strength has perished.” According to another interpretation, Tarshish is rendered in our language as “consummation of six” or “of gladness.” Now we read that in six days was made this world, which according to ecclesiastical traditions will be consummated later. Therefore, all good things of this world and all the labor of mortals are being compared to the uncertainty of ships, which will quickly perish, and all the strength of those who sail is being dissolved. This is also why in Solomon it is written, “The wise man has scaled strong cities, and has destroyed their fortifications” [[Prov 21:22](#)]. For whatever is composed with the skill of heretics and secular wisdom and contrary doctrines, the man of the church has destroyed and he shows that it is subjected under his feet.

51. ([23:15–18](#) <sup>LLXX</sup>) “And it will come to pass in that day, that Tyre will be left for seventy years, as the time of one king, as the time of a man. And it will come to pass after seventy years, that Tyre will be as the song of a harlot: (16) ‘Take a harp, go about, O harlot city, that has been handed over to oblivion; play well on the harp, sing many songs, that you may be remembered.’ But after the seventy years, God will visit Tyre, and she will be again restored to ancientness, (17) and she will be trade for all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth. (18) And her trade and her wages will be holy to the Lord; it will not be gathered for them, but for those who dwell before the Lord; all her trade, to eat and drink, in a collection, a memorial before the Lord.” The words “memorial before the Lord,” “upon the face of the earth,” and “as the time of man,” are not found in the Hebrew, but have been added in the Greek.

Now “for seventy years” Tyre, once hemmed in, is let go of, so that when the time of solitude has been fulfilled, the former song of harlots turns to the praises of God; and taking up a harp, let her have all her strings harmonious, so that after she has “sung well” and “sung many songs,” she is “remembered” by God, who was “handed over to oblivion” on account of fornication. Let her be “restored” to her original status, and let her have the wealth of the kings of the whole world, and let the “wages” of that one’s labor not be gathered for the Tyrians, but for those who live “in the sight of the Lord”; and let them “eat and drink,” and let them be filled with all good things, which have been collected for the joy of the feast by the labor of all. But if the divine words exhort Tyre to repentance and promise that her labors and wages are to be sanctified to the Lord, what sinner would not have hope of salvation? But this would only be if he has sung well and if all the strings of virtues, which had formerly been loose, are composed for the praises of the Lord.

We read in the forty-fourth Psalm, which among other things is spoken in a special way to the union of a bride and groom, that is, it pertains to the mysteries of the Lord and Savior and of the church, “Daughter of Tyre, with gifts the rich among the people will entreat your countenance” [[Ps 45:13](#)]; and the groom himself, on the other hand, speaks to the Tyrian bride, “Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline your ear, and forget your people and your father’s

house, because the king will desire your beauty” [[Ps 45:10–11](#)]. This is also why it is added to the description of her beauty, “The queen stood on your right hand, in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety” [[Ps 45:13–14](#)]; and again, “All the glory of the king’s daughter is within” [[Ps 45:13](#)]. But if the king has “desired the beauty” of the repentant Tyrian, and of the one who has the adornment of various virtues, how much more will her wages and trade belong, not to those who continue to live in Tyre, but to those who live in the presence of the Lord! Those who later repent will hear from the Lord and Savior, “Eat, friends, and drink and be inebriated, dearly beloved ones” [[Song 5:1](#)]. The faithful reader understands what it means to eat and drink and be sated with the collection of all the virtues.

Jeremiah [cf. [Jer 29:10](#)], Daniel [cf. [Dan 9:2](#)], and Zechariah [cf. [Zech 7:5](#)] teach that the temple was deserted for “seventy years.” Also in Ezekiel we read about Sodom, that it would be restored in its ancientness [cf. [Ezek 16:55](#)], and of Egypt, that after the desolation of the land of Egypt and the drying up of the seven rivers, it would receive its ancient fertility [cf. [Ezek 32:14](#)]. The numbers *seven* and *seventy*, which are recorded either of individual days or of seven decades, mean perfect and consummated repentance. Hence it is with justice that Tyre returns to its ancient condition when the time of repentance has been fulfilled.

I think that even the following words in the Proverbs of Solomon signify this “harlot” in mysterious language: “Do not pay attention to an evil woman; for honey drips from the lips of a *harlot* woman, who presses your mouth for a time, and afterward you will find her more bitter than wormwood” [[Prov 5:3–4](#)]. For she looks through the window of her house into the streets [cf. [Prov 7:6](#)], since it is a “broad and spacious road that leads to death” [[Matt 7:13](#)]. And any foolish young man she sees—for she does not dare to tempt the wise—and is passing by near the street corners, which have lost the straight line, she speaks to him in the darkness and twilight. And under the appearance of pleasure, she leads him to death, like a sacrificial victim [cf. [Prov 7:7–9](#)]. If she will have converted and will have “sung well,” and will have fulfilled the time of years for a perfect repentance, she will “eat and drink” and be sated. Let Novatianus listen and be quiet.<sup>441</sup>

<sup>441</sup> Novatian, a contemporary of Cyprian (d. 258), was the author of an important treatise *De Trinitate*, but also an anti-Pope and founder of the sect of the Novatians, which allowed no pardon for grave sins. Cf. [Jerome’ Ep. 42](#) to Marcella, [Vir III 70](#).

## [THE EIGHTH BOOK]

1. The sixth and seventh books above contain an allegorical interpretation of the fifth volume, which I dictated long ago making use of a historical exposition. The present work, that is, the eighth book, reverts to the initial mode of interpretation, so that it discusses continuously both history and tropology according to the two versions.<sup>11</sup> If this seems lengthy to you, O virgin of Christ, Eustochium, you should not impute this to me, but to the difficulty of sacred Scripture, and especially of the prophet Isaiah, who is wrapped in such great obscurities that in view of the importance of the subject matter, I would regard an explanation short which in and of itself is lengthy. Of course we are writing for the studious and for those who desire to know sacred Scripture, not for the fastidious and for those who become ill when confronted with details. If there are those who desire a river of eloquence and refined declamations, let them read Cicero (*Tullium*),<sup>22</sup> Quintilian,<sup>33</sup> Gallio Gabinianus,<sup>44</sup> and, to come to our own authors, Tertullian,

1 By “wo versions”he means the Hebrew and the Septuagint.

2 Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–3 BC) was the greatest of Latin orators and supreme master of prose style.

3 Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (AD 35–00) was a Roman rhetorician and teacher from Spain, appointed first professor of rhetoric at Rome by Emperor Vespasian. Tacitus and the younger Pliny were among his pupils, and he was admired by Juvenal. His speeches are lost, but his most important work has survived complete in ten books, *Institutio Oratoria, Education of an Orator*.

4 Gallio Gabinianus was a high-ranking Latin orator. Cf. [Tacitus, Dial. 26](#).

Cyprian,<sup>55</sup> Minucius,<sup>66</sup> Arnobius,<sup>77</sup> Lactantius,<sup>88</sup> and Hilary.<sup>99</sup> My purpose is that Isaiah be understood through my instrumentality, and not that my words be lauded under the pretext of writing on Isaiah.

2. (24:1–3) *Behold, the Lord will lay waste the earth, and will strip it, and will afflict its face, and scatter abroad its inhabitants. (2) And it will be as with the people, so with the priest; and as with the slave, so with his master; as with the handmaid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with him that calls for his money, so with him that owes. (3) With desolation will the earth be laid waste, and it will be utterly spoiled; for the Lord has spoken this word.*

The prophet has already delivered particular chastisements of individual nations,<sup>110</sup> of Judea [cf. [Isa 3:1](#)], Babylon [cf. [Isa 13:1, 19](#)], Philistia [cf. [Isa 14:29](#)], Moab [cf. [Isa 15:1](#)], Damascus [cf. [Isa 17:1](#)], Israel [cf. [Isa 1:3; 5:7](#)], Egypt [cf. [Isa 19:1](#)], the deserted sea [cf. [Isa 21:1](#)], Idumea [cf. [Isa 21:11](#)] and Arabia [cf. [Isa 21:13](#)], the valley of vision [cf. [Isa 22:1](#)], and finally Tyre [cf. [Isa 23:1](#)]. And we have commented on these things to the best of our ability. Now the prophet's words describe what the whole world will experience at the consummation. And he is not prophesying of individual nations, but of all of them equally. First, indeed, he speaks of what torments the impious will suffer and how in accordance with the gospel and the Apostle heaven and earth [cf. [Matt 24:35](#)] and the form of this world passes away [[1 Cor 7:31](#)], and sinners are led down to hell [cf. [Ps 31:17](#)], of whom it is written, "They will go into the lowest parts of the earth, they will be delivered into the hands of the sword, they will be the portions of foxes" [[Ps 62:9–10](#)].<sup>111</sup> Then, since there are many dwelling places with the Father [cf. [John 14:2](#)], in view

5 Cyprian was the bishop of Carthage (ca. 248–58) who wrote important treatises: *On the Lord's Prayer, On the Lapsed, On the Unity of the Church*, as well as *Epistles*. His biography, which is really a panegyric, was written by the deacon Pontius. He was beheaded in 258. See ANF 5.

6 Minucius Felix was a Christian apologist active in the last decades of the second century, whose single work *Octavius* survives as book 8 of Arnobius of Sicca's *Adversus Nationes* (due to the copyist's having mistaken the title for an ordinal number). See [Jerome, Vir III 58; Ep. 70.5](#).

7 Arnobius of Sicca (d. 327) was an apologist and author of *Adversus Nationes* in seven books, which Jerome says was composed at his bishop's request to prove the sincerity of his conversion. Cf. [Jerome, Vir III 79](#) and [80; Ep. 58.10; 70.5](#)

8 Lactantius (260–30) was a well-known Christian apologist of the beginning of the fourth century. His most famous work was *The Divine Institutes*. Cf. [Jerome, Vir III 80](#). V. Loi, *EEC* 1:470, writes, "ut despite the deficiencies of a theological thought which is neither acute nor systematic, despite the limits imposed on stylistic and linguistic originality by his deliberate imitation of Cicero, Lactantius has great importance in the history of Western literature and culture: he was the first Western writer who attempted a systematic exposition of Christian doctrine addressed to the cultivated classes of the Roman world."

9 Hilary of Poitiers (d. 368) was an important champion of orthodoxy admired by Jerome. See [Vir III 100](#).

<sup>110</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 84 (153, 32–54, 7).

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (154, 17–3).

of the quality of merits,<sup>112</sup> he speaks about how the saints are seized into the clouds to meet the Lord and they will always be with him [cf. [1 Thess 4:17](#)]. The Septuagint translated *earth laid waste* as “corrupted world,” and for *its*, that is, the earth’s, *face afflicted*, it likewise translated “and he will reveal its face,” so that the dead come forth from their tombs, or “he will strip it bare,” so that all its works are brought forth into the public, and its *inhabitants* are *scattered abroad* into various locations, having been appointed for rewards or punishments.

At that time there will be no distinction between the noble and ignoble,<sup>113</sup> *priest* and layman, *slave* and *master*, *maidservant* and *mistress*, rich and poor man, *lender* and the one who is overwhelmed with debt, *buyer* and *seller*. For everyone will stand on equal footing before the tribunal of Christ [cf. [Rom 14:10](#)], and there will be “no acceptance of persons with God” [[Col 3:25](#)]. Job too speaks of this with practically the same words: “Small and great are there, and the slave who does not fear his master” [[Job 3:19](#)]. Also the Savior, to whom all judgment has been delivered [cf. [John 3:22](#)], testifies to this in detail in the Gospel.

Therefore *the earth* will be *laid waste*, and all earthly works will be reduced to nothing, so that when the image of the earthly (*choicī*) has been abolished, the image of the superheavenly may remain. “For the first man is earthly, of the earth, the second is heavenly, from heaven; as is the earthly, so also are the earthly ones, and as is the superheavenly (*supercaelestes*),<sup>114</sup> such are the superheavenly ones. Consequently just as we have borne the image of the earthly, we will bear the image of the superheavenly” [[1 Cor 15:47–49](#)]. This is why the Apostle likewise says, “Flesh and blood will not possess the kingdom of God” [[1 Cor 15:50](#)]. It is not that the nature of bodies perishes, as the heretics claim, but that this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal puts on immortality [cf. [1 Cor 15:53](#)]. And all these things will happen because the Lord has spoken through the prophets of what will come to pass.

3. ([24:4–5a](#)) *The earth mourned, and faded away, and was weakened; the world faded away, the height of the people of the earth was weakened. (5) And the earth was killed by its inhabitants.* Septuagint: “The earth mourned, the world was ruined, the lofty ones of the earth mourned, (5) but the earth acted impiously on account of her inhabitants.”

“God resists the proud, he gives grace to the humble” [[Jas 4:6](#)].<sup>115</sup> This is why the first sentence is against those who are “lofty ones of the earth,” that all things that are now strong may be *weakened*, “on account of” those who have mixed blood with blood [cf. [Hos 4:2](#)] and like the blood of Abel, they have made the blood of those *killed* cry out to God [cf. [Gen 4:10](#)].

<sup>112</sup> For Jerome our heavenly reward depends on the merits we have acquired in this life. See [Adv Jov 2.21](#); [2.23](#); [2.33](#). J. P. O’onnell, [The Eschatology of St. Jerome](#), Dissertationes ad Lauream 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 125, notes that Jerome, in his attempt to prove the diversity of heavenly rewards, “ften contents himself with proving that in this life our merits are diverse. Such reasoning is valid only if the degree of our heavenly reward depends on the degree of merit we acquire in this life. Jerome even goes so far as to say that God would be unjust to give an equal reward to those with diverse merits.”

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 84 (154, 24–5).

<sup>114</sup> For other uses of this word, see [Tertullian, Anim. 23](#); [Res. Carn. 49](#).

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 84 (155, 13–5).



4. ([24:5b–6](#)) *Because they have transgressed (transgressi) the laws, they have changed the ordinance (ius), they have broken the everlasting covenant (foedus), (6) therefore a curse will devour the earth, and its inhabitants will sin; therefore they that dwell in it will rave, and few men will be left.* Septuagint: “Because they have transgressed (*praevaricati*) the law, they have changed the ordinances (*praecepta*), the everlasting covenant (*testamentum*), (6) therefore a curse will devour the earth, because its inhabitants have sinned; therefore the inhabitants of the earth will be poor, and few men will be left.”

Let the Jews listen, who boast that they alone have received the law of the Lord, that first all the Gentiles and the whole world received the natural law, and on that account afterward the law was given through Moses, because the first law was *broken*. The Apostle speaks of this: “For when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature those things that are of the law, they who do not have the law are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts” [[Rom 2:14–15](#)].<sup>116</sup> Therefore, those who will have observed these *laws* will attain rewards; those who have neglected them will endure what the prophetic words now threaten. And just as in the beginning God blessed every creature that he had made, so at the consummation of the world he will *curse* those who are earthly and have not been sojourners, but *inhabitants* of the earth, and have *sinned* on it, who, forgetful of their Creator, have *raved* against one another with mutual fury, and *few* will remain who have the image of the superheavenly; or, according to the Septuagint, “the inhabitants of the earth will be poor,” because they have caused their spiritual wealth to perish.

5. ([24:7–13a](#)) *The vintage has mourned, the vine has languished away, all those who rejoiced in heart have groaned. (8) The joy of timbrels has ceased, the noise of those who rejoice has ended, the melody of the harp is silent. (9) They will not drink wine with a song; the drink will be bitter to those who drink it. (10) The city of vanity is broken down, every house is shut up, no man comes in. (11) There will be a crying for wine in the streets; all gladness is forsaken, the joy of the earth has gone away. (12) Desolation is left in the city, and calamity will oppress the gates, (13) for it shall be thus in the midst of the earth, in the midst of the people.*

At the consummation of the world the recollection of past delights will supply the material for the torments. And this is why that rich man (*dives*) who had been clothed in purple at the banquet, and who had received his goods in his life, lifted up his eyes from hell and saw Lazarus at rest [cf. [Luke 16:19–25](#)]. And the Lord rebukes the rich and the luxurious and those who laugh, and he says in the Gospel, “Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation; woe to you who are filled now, for you shall hunger; woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep” [[Luke 6:24–25](#)]. Therefore, when the resurrection of the dead takes place, and the Day of Judgment arrives, at that time the wine and *vintage* will *mourn*, of which Moses says, “Their vine [is] of the vine of Sodom, and their [vine] branch [is] of Gomorrah, their grape [is] the grape of gall, and their cluster [is] one of bitterness; their wine is the fury of dragons, and the incurable fury of asps” [[Deut 32:32–33](#)].

At that time every *drink (potio)*, or as it says in Hebrew, “strong drink” (*sicera*), that is, drunkenness,<sup>117</sup> which upsets the state of the mind and does not permit men to stay awake, will

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (155, 21–8).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (156, 12–3).

be changed to bitterness, which temporarily passes for honey to those who are enjoying themselves, and on the last day will be found to be more bitter than gall [cf. [Prov 5:3–4](#)]. At that time the whole *melody of those who rejoice* and the *sound of timbrels and harp* will be turned to wailing and groaning. Let us hurl this testimony at those who luxuriate at feasts, not only with their gullets and drunkenness, but also with their ears, so that their strength of soul is weakened with respect to all their senses.

The *city of vanity* will be *broken down*, or every city, or spiritual Babylon, which sits on the seven hills clothed in purple, whose punishments we read about in John’s Apocalypse [cf. [Rev 17:9](#)]. And he has nicely called it *city of vanity*. For if it is said of heaven and earth and of all things that are earthly, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” [[Eccl 1:2](#)]; how much more must this be said about one city, which is a tiny part of the whole world? At that time the houses will remain empty, whose paneled ceilings are gilded [cf. [Hag 1:4](#)] and their walls are clothed with the inlaid work of marble and are resplendent with the gleam of cut ivory, while the poor are dying out in the cold without a roof and hovel.

*There will be a crying for wine in the streets*, not on the constricted and narrow road that leads to life, but on the broad and spacious one that leads to death [cf. [Matt 7:13–14](#)],<sup>118</sup> *for wine* and for the drunkenness of the error of those who “have slept their sleep and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands” [[Ps 76:5](#)]. For the *joy of the earth has gone away* into the heavens, and the former very well-known *desolation is left in the city, and the calamity of the inhabitants will oppress the gates* of the crowded roads, through which columns of people were pouring in. And in order that we might know clearly that this is being declared about the destruction of the whole world, he added, *It shall be thus in the midst of the earth, in the midst of the nations, or peoples.*

6. ([24:13b–15](#)) *As if a few olives that remained should be shaken off the olive tree, and grape clusters, when the vintage has ended, (14) these will lift up their voice and give praise. When the Lord will be glorified, they will whinny in the sea. (15) Therefore, glorify the Lord in instruction, the name of the Lord God of Israel in the islands of the sea.* The following words will show how much the Septuagint translation differs from the Hebrew truth in this passage. Septuagint: “As if one should shake an olive tree, so will they shake them, and if the vintage grows quiet, (14) these will shout out with a cry. And those who are left on the earth will rejoice together with the glory of the Lord. The water of the sea will be troubled; (15) therefore will the glory of the Lord be in the islands of the sea, the name of the Lord will be glorious, of the Lord God of Israel.”

With a few men left, when a curse will have devoured the earth [cf. [Isa 24:6](#)], and there will have been desolation in the city, and all these things will have happened *in the midst of the earth, in the midst of the peoples* and nations, there will be such a great scarcity of saints, of whom the Lord says in the Gospel, “Many are called, and few are chosen” [[Matt 20:16](#)], and the pressure upon the just will be so violent that even God’s elect will be tempted, if it is possible [cf. [Matt 24:24](#)]. Moreover, their scarcity is compared with the rarest berries of olives, which, when they will have been shaken and harvested, hardly a few remain at the tip of the branches, and just as *when the vintage has ended*, the poor, constrained by need, are accustomed to go

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (156, 6–).

around the bare vines and gather a few granules of grapes.

Those, therefore, who will have remained even after the vintage of the world, and who will have been able to escape the pressure of the hand of the persecuting antichrist, or the fires of impending punishment, will *lift up their voice* on high and will *give praise* to God. When the Lord comes in the glory of his Father with the angels, and they see him reigning in his majesty, then they will *whinny* in imitation of horses, delighted by the extent of their gladness, and they will *whinny* concerning the sea of this world.

*Therefore*, you who have now been instructed by the Holy Scriptures and know that such great joy and such great rewards are reserved for you, *glorify the Lord in instruction*, when you hear that it is written, “Let him who glories, glory in the Lord” [[1 Cor 1:31](#)], not in the land of Judea, but *in the islands*, that is, in the churches,<sup>119</sup> *of this sea* and world, in which [churches] *the name of the Lord God* is blessed and praised, formerly, *of Israel*, or “of man seeing God.”

According to the Septuagint, everything that we have understood of the saints can be referred to the impious,<sup>220</sup> that *when the vintage has ended*, then let those who have been appointed for punishment “shout out,” but let those who have passed through the number of the impious “rejoice in the glory of the Lord,” and let the “waters” of the peoples of this world be “troubled.”

7. ([24:16a–b](#)) *From the ends of the earth we have heard praises, the glory of the just one, and I said, “My secret to myself, my secret to myself, woe is me.”* Septuagint: “From the wings of the earth we have heard portents: hope for the just one, and they will say, ‘Woe to the prevaricators,’ ” and so on. The words, “My mystery to myself, my mystery to myself,” are not found in the Septuagint, but have been added in Greek from the translation of Theodotion. On the other hand, in place of what they recorded as “woe,” in order that it be joined to the following little verse, it is said in Hebrew *oi li*, which properly signifies “woe to me.” For *ends* too, which we have recorded for the sake of explaining the meaning more clearly, the Hebrew has *mechnaf*, which signifies “wing,” not *end*.

Those, therefore, concerning whom it was said above, “They will lift up their voice and give praise,” when they will have “whinnied” concerning the “sea” and “glorified the Lord in instruction” [[Isa 24:14–15](#)] and will have seen that the “name of the Lord God of Israel” is praised “in the islands of the sea” [[Isa 24:15](#)], then with a harmonious voice they will sing and say, “From the wings of the earth,” that is, from the prophets and from the saints of the Lord, who by receiving the wings of a dove are hastening toward the kingdom of heaven, “we have heard his praises” being declared, and that the *glory* or “hope” *of the just one* is not pointless, but everything is fulfilled in the events.

And so, when the saints say these things, and “whinny concerning the sea,” and lift up their voice and give praise, the prophet speaks to himself in the first person and says, When I heard these things and perceived that the prediction of the prophets had to be fulfilled in the overthrow of the world, I spoke to myself in the inner emotion of my heart. I am not able to tell all the things that I see. My tongue cleaves to my mouth, my voice is muffled by my pain. *Woe to me*, what a great sequence of punishments is being presented before my eyes! I see in the

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (157, 13–5).

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (157, 3–).

present what is coming in the future.

Now they are astray who think that this needs to be understood as spoken under the persona of God, since they are not following the order of events. And I marvel over the intention of the Septuagint in translating this as “portents,” rather than as “psalms” and “praises.” The Hebrew word is *zemiroth*. Perhaps the Seventy understood it is a sign and “portent” that, when the Jewish people have been excluded, the previously unbelieving crowd of Gentiles is saved.<sup>221</sup>

8. ([24:16c–18b](#)) *The prevaricators have prevaricated, and with the prevarication of transgressors they have prevaricated. (17) Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon you (te), you who are an inhabitant of the earth, (18) and it will come to pass that the one who will flee from the noise of the fear will fall into the pit, and the one who will extricate himself out of the pit will be taken in the snare.* Septuagint: “Woe to the prevaricators who prevaricate from the law. (17) Fear, and the pit, and the snare are upon you (vos) who dwell on the earth, (18) and it shall come to pass, that he who will flee from the fear will fall into the pit, and he who comes out of the pit will be caught in the snare.”

This is the cause of my mourning and groaning on account of which I said for a second time, “My secret is to myself, my secret is to myself” [[Isa 24:16b](#)], because all “have prevaricated from the law” of God, and the Lord’s punishment will not be postponed, and he is not predicting the future, but he is threatening and holding captive the *inhabitants of the earth*. And though they may have thought that they escaped, “they will fall” from one thing into another, and wherever they turn themselves, they will not escape the impending wrath of the Lord.

9. ([24:18c–20](#)) *For the floodgates from on high are opened, and the foundations of the earth will be shaken. (19) With breaking will the earth be broken, with crushing will the earth be crushed, with movement will the earth be moved, (20) with shaking will the earth be shaken as a drunken man, and it will be removed as the tent of one night, and its iniquity will be heavy upon it, and it will fall, and not rise again.*

No one will escape “fear and the pit and the Lord’s snare” [cf. [Isa 24:17](#)] for the very reason that *the floodgates from on high are opened*, or as the Septuagint translated it more clearly, the “windows of heaven.” Thus the Lord was looking down on all the sins of men, which previously he seemed to be ignoring in sinners, since he was not punishing them. But later, when the “windows” are *opened*, he saw all things of mortals; the *foundations of the earth were shaken*. This accords with what is written in another passage about God’s seeing: “He who looks upon the earth and makes it tremble” [[Ps 104:32](#)].

At that time the *earth will be broken, crushed, moved, and shaken*, in the manner of a *drunken man*, not that the earth itself would be reduced to dust and nothingness, but that all earthly things would pass away, and another manner of life would follow. And just as a *drunken man* does not know what he is doing, but with his nerves blunted by his inebriation, neither his feet nor his mind stand firm in their duties, so the whole *earth*, that is, all human beings who live on earth, will be drunk with the extent of their evils and punishments, and they will be amazed at everything that they will see.

And just as a *tabernacle of one night* and a tent is transferred from place to place, and the

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (157, 27–0).

traveler abandons the location of the previous tent, so that no trace of the past stage remains, so the figure of this world will pass away [cf. [1 Cor 7:31](#)], and the earth will be deserted, which is *weighed down* with its own *iniquity*. Its weight and very heavy load is described in Zechariah: “Which was sitting on a talent of lead” [[Zech 5:7](#)].

*And it will fall, he says, and not rise again.* He is not denying the resurrection of human beings and of all who live on earth, but saying that there will not be an earthly manner of life, in the conditions of the former life, when human bodies rise to this and when those things that they had previously laid down are clothed with bodies, so that they may receive from God either the good things or the evil things, which they did on earth [cf. [2 Cor 5:10](#)].<sup>222</sup>

10. ([24:21–23](#)) *And it will come to pass, that in that day the Lord will visit upon the army of heaven on high, and upon the kings of the earth who are on the earth. (22) And they will be gathered together in the gathering of one bundle into the pit, and they will be shut up there in prison, and after many days they will be visited. (23) And the moon will blush, and the sun will be ashamed, when the Lord of hosts will reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and will be glorified in the sight of his ancients.* What we have interpreted as *the moon will blush, and the sun will be ashamed*, the Septuagint translated “the brick decays and the wall falls.” But the words that follow will show the cause of this error.

The Hebrew language expresses the term *sun* in three ways: *semes*, *hamma*, which means “heat,” and *heres*, which signifies [οστρακον](#), that is, “potsherd” or “dryness.” Now *maor*, which is expressed in Greek as [φωστηρ](#), in Latin as “luminary,” is common to the sun and moon. On the other hand, moon is called *iareae*, which is expressed in Greek as [μηνη](#), because it makes a month in its cycle of thirty days, and *labana*, that is “white” or “gleaming.” In the present passage, then, the Septuagint translated *labana*, that is, moon, as “brick.” The latter word is expressed in Hebrew as *lebena*. Consequently they were fooled by the ambiguity of the word. On the other hand, for *hamma*, that is, “heat,” by which the sun is understood, they recorded “wall,” which is said in Hebrew as *homa*.

Now here is the meaning of this whole section. “The windows of heaven are opened” [[Isa 24:18](#)], so that while the Lord looks upon earthly sins, the whole figure of earthly works has gone past [cf. [1 Cor 7:31](#)] and fallen, and has not risen again unto its original state.<sup>223</sup> *In that day*, that is, on the Day of Judgment, *the Lord will visit upon the army*, or upon the adornment of *heaven on high*, so that he judges not only earthly things but also heavenly things. Now what the “adornment” or *army of heaven* is, we may learn from Moses, who writes, “Beware that when you look up to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars and all the adornment of heaven, you should be deceived and worship these things” [[Deut 4:19](#)].<sup>224</sup> Now the Lord will *visit* in accordance with an idiom of the Scriptures. He will treat them, as it were, as if they were an ailing militia and army of heaven, that needs both the sword and devices for cautery, in accordance with this: “I will visit their sins with a rod and their iniquities with scourges” [[Ps 89:32](#)]. For even in what follows, we read, “My sword is inebriated in heaven” [[Isa 34:5](#)], and in Job, “The stars are not clean in his sight” [[Job 25:5](#)], and, “He has found something perverse

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (159, 10–1).

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (159, 16–7).

<sup>224</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (159, 25–0).

against his own angels” [[Job 4:18](#)].

He will also *visit upon kings and princes of the earth*, the rulers of this darkness and spiritual [forces] of wickedness in the heavenlies [cf. [Eph 6:12](#)].<sup>225</sup> In Daniel, as well, it is written about these princes who are in charge of various provinces, “The prince of the kingdom of the Persians went forth to meet me” [[Dan 10:13, 20](#)], and the prince of the kingdom of the Medes [cf. [Dan 8:20](#)], “and the prince of the kingdom of the Greeks” [cf. [Dan 8:21](#)].<sup>226</sup> On the Day of Judgment, therefore, the Lord will gather these *princes* who did not keep their position [cf. [Jude 6](#)], like those who have been bound together *into one bundle*, and *he will cast them into the pit* of hell. Accordingly, against them as well is fulfilled what is written about the impious man: “He uncovered a pit, dug it out, and he will fall into the hole that he made” [[Ps 7:15](#)].<sup>227</sup> And *they will be shut up in prison*, in accordance with what the Lord says: “Go into the eternal fire, which has been prepared for the devil and his angels” [[Matt 25:41](#)].

Now what follows, *And they will be visited after many days*, seems to be giving approval to my friends who grant repentance to the devil and the demons, that after a long time *they will be visited* by the Lord.<sup>228</sup> But let them consider that Holy Scripture did not openly say “they will be visited *by the Lord*,” or “they will be visited *by angels*” but simply *they will be visited*. From this verbal ambiguity, both healing and punishment can be understood, that after the just have received their rewards, those ones *will be visited* with everlasting punishments. And yet it should be known that human frailty is not able to know God’s judgment, nor is it able to bear the verdict concerning the magnitude and measure of punishments, a verdict which has been left to the Lord’s choice.<sup>229</sup>

Then *the moon will blush, and the sun will be ashamed*. This accords with what the Apostle says: “For the creation itself groans together and suffers birth pangs” [[Rom 8:22](#)], when it sees that men who were enjoying its light did nothing worthy of God’s goodness, “who causes his sun to rise upon the just and the unjust” [[Matt 5:45](#)]. It is just as if a manager and steward, when his Lord comes, sees that the members of the household are subjected to various torments and have not fulfilled his commands. The Savior teaches more fully about this very passage in the Gospel:

The sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be moved, when the sign of the son of man appears in the sky; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn for themselves, and they will see the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven in power and great glory.  
[[Matt 24:29–30](#)]

We have learned about the overthrow of the *earth*, the visitation of the *army* of heaven, the

<sup>225</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (160, 13–5).

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (160, 4–0).

<sup>227</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 84 (160, 15–8).

<sup>228</sup> He means Origen and those among his contemporaries whom he regards as Origenists. To my knowledge, the only one of Jerome’s contemporaries who did approve of Origen’s uncertain speculation was Gregory of Nyssa.

<sup>229</sup> For a close parallel to this passage, see [18.33](#).



gathering of *kings* and princes into one *bundle*, and their expulsion into the *pit*, and their custody in *prison*, and after a long time a visitation of those who have been locked up, the blushing of the *moon* and shame of the *sun*. After all these things, the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in the heavenly Jerusalem, of which it is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews [cf. [Heb 12:22](#)].<sup>330</sup> And he will be glorified in the sight of his elderly, of the sort that the elderly Abraham was, who died at a good old age and was laid with his fathers [cf. [Gen 25:8](#)], the sort of elders Moses is commanded to choose [cf. [Num 11:16](#)], whom he knows are elders —“for a man’s grey hair is his wisdom” [[Wis 4:9](#)]—who imitate the ancient of days, whose long flowing hair is described as being white [cf. [Dan 7:9](#)], so that length of life may be shown. This can also be understood of ecclesiastical rank, but only if they do not destroy the office by their works.

11. ([25:1–5](#)) *O Lord, you are my God, I will exalt you, I will confess your name, for you have done wonderful things, faithful designs of old, amen. (2) For you have made the city a heap, the strong city a ruin, the house of strangers to be no city, and to be no more built up forever. (3) Therefore let a strong people praise you, the city of mighty nations will fear you, (4) because you have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, hope from the whirlwind, shade from the heat; for the breath (spiritus) of the mighty is like a whirlwind beating against a wall. (5) You shall bring down the tumult of strangers, as heat in thirst; and as with heat under a burning cloud, you will make the branch of the mighty ones to wither away.* Septuagint: “O Lord my God, I will glorify you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, an ancient true counsel, let it be done. (2) For you have made cities a heap, strong cities that their foundations should fall; cities of ungodly men will not be built for ever. (3) Therefore the people of the poor will bless you, and cities of men enduring iniquity will bless you. (4) For you have been a helper to every lowly city, and a shelter to them that were disheartened by reason of poverty. You will deliver them from wicked men. Shade of them that thirst, and breath (*spiritus*) for those enduring the iniquity of men, (5) as if fainthearted men thirsting in Zion, by reason of ungodly men, to whom you delivered us.”

There is a twofold explanation of this passage. The Jews think that these are the words of the saints and of believing people, when God will have done against the whole world what has been spoken above, and the predictions of all the prophets will have been fulfilled. They interpret the *city* that was overthrown as Rome, which would have to be completely destroyed, and they refer to Israel the *strong people* who *praise* the Lord, and to whom the Lord has become *strength in their affliction* and anguish. Israel is liberated from the persecution of the nations, as if in the most burning *heat* and in *thirst*. But others understand this better and more correctly as said under the prophet’s persona, in view of the passion of the Lord and Savior. He returns thanks to the Father that he *has done marvelous things* and has fulfilled in truth *designs of old*. While standing at the right hand they will hear, “Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” [[Matt 25:34](#)]. Paul, too, understood this and said, “Just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish” [[Eph 1:4](#)].<sup>331</sup> And desiring that what he prophesies come about, he

<sup>330</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 84 (161, 9–0).

<sup>331</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 85 (161, 20–6).

adds the Hebrew word *Amen*, which the Septuagint translated “let it be done.” And the Lord in the Gospel often uses this word: “Amen, amen,” that is, truly, truly, “I say to you” [[John 5:19](#)].

Now he follows up with the reasons why he *praises* and *confesses the name of the Lord*, and what are these *marvelous things* and *designs of old*, which he has shown to be true in fact: *For you have made the city a heap, the strong city a ruin, the house of strangers to be no city, and to be no more built up forever.* The once *strong city*, which became a *house of strangers*, is understood as Jerusalem. The Savior said of these *strangers* in the Psalm, “*Strange children lied to me, strange children grew old and fell away from their paths through lameness*” [[Ps 18:44–45](#)]. When this city will have been destroyed, it will *not be built up forever*. Consequently, let the kingdom of a thousand years [cf. [Rev 20:1–6](#)] and the dreams of a golden and bejeweled Jerusalem [cf. [Rev 21:2–21](#)] be silenced.<sup>332</sup>

Now when Jerusalem has been destroyed for her impiety, the *strong people* will *praise* God. But the following verse shows who the strong people are: *The city of mighty nations will fear you.* While the former people commit blasphemy, the people of the Gentiles *will fear you*—for “the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” [[Ps 111:10](#)]*—and the strong people will praise you, and the city of mighty nations will fear you, that is, the church gathered from the Gentiles, because you have been a strength to the poor one, to your Christ, of whom we read in the Psalms, “Blessed is he who has understanding concerning the poor and needy one” [[Ps 41:1](#)]; and in Zechariah, according to the Hebrew truth, the poor one, that is *hebion*, is described as sitting on the colt of a donkey [cf. [Zech 9:9](#)]*—a strength to the needy one in the distress of his own passion, hope from the whirlwind of the gallows, and shade from the heat, when he said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” [[Luke 23:46](#)]. For just as if a wind is forced *against a wall* and passes through, so the *whirlwind* of blaspheming Jews could not harm him. And to use another comparison, just as a *branch* is scorched by very intense *heat*, and droops, so you will cause *the tumult* and clamor *of strangers*, that is, those who have become estranged from you, *to wither away* and perish.**

I have not been able to discover the train of thought and logical coherence, not to mention the meaning,<sup>333</sup> of this passage as it reads in the Septuagint translation. What we have translated *as heat in thirst* is written in Hebrew as *basaion*. In Hebrew this means “impassible” or “thirst.” The reason is clear why the Septuagint erred in rendering “impassible” and “in thirst” as “in Zion.” It is on account of the similarity between the words *saion* and *sion*, which are spelled with the same letters.

12. ([25:6–8](#)) *And the Lord of hosts will make for all people in this mountain a feast of fat things, a feast of wine, of fat things full of marrow, of wine purified from the dregs. (7) And he will cast down headlong in this mountain the face of the bond with which all people were tied, and the web that he began over all nations. (8) He will cast death down headlong forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from every face, and the reproach of his people he will take away from the whole earth, for the Lord has spoken.* Septuagint: “And the Lord Sabaoth will do [this] for all the nations on this mountain: they will drink gladness, they will drink wine, (7) they will be anointed with ointment in this mountain. Deliver all these things to the nations, for this

<sup>332</sup> This is another jab at chiliasm, which I have briefly discussed in the introduction.

<sup>333</sup> Or, “...I do not speak of the meaning ...”

is the counsel upon all the nations; (8) prevailing death has devoured. And again the Lord God has taken away every tear from every face, and he has taken away the reproach of his people from all the earth. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” What we have translated as *the face of the bond with which all people were tied*, Aquila translated, “The face of the darkness of darkness over all people.” And though Aquila expressed “darkness” twice, Theodotion named “darkness” once, the other things similarly, for which Symmachus translated, “The face of the Lord who lords over all people.” Now with respect to what the Septuagint meant to say in this passage by “Deliver all these things to the nations,” it is clear to the reader that they have not recorded the words of Scripture but their meaning, because all the mysteries of the law and of the temple were to be transferred to the churches of the nations.

After the Lord’s passion, therefore, when he will have liberated him from thirst and “heat” and the “whirlwind” [cf. [Isa 25:4](#)], the Lord will make on Mount Zion *a feast of fat things*, not for the Jewish people, but for all nations, burnt offerings *full of marrow* and *wine of a vintage that has been purified of dregs*, so that he *falls headlong* and causes the face of *death* and of the chain with which all peoples were bound to be devoured. He will burst the net of death and the *web* that had captured all nations; and according to the Apostle, death will be swallowed up [cf. [1 Cor 15:54](#)] forever. Moreover, *the Lord will remove the tears from every face*, when, with death overcome, the kingdom of Christ will have come. And the *reproach* of the human race, which had been created in the image of the Creator [cf. [Gen 1:26–27](#)], will have escaped slavery of the devil and of death. It is no wonder if death is called a ruling mistress (*domina*) by Symmachus, when the blessed Apostle has said, “Death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam’s transgression” [[Rom 5:14](#)]. Some want the “lord of all people,” or the “face of darkness over all peoples,” and the *web that began over all nations*, to be understood of the antichrist, who is to be consumed on the Mount of Olives. We have also spoken of these things in the last vision of Daniel.

According to the Septuagint, a feast of “gladness” is being prepared “for all the nations on mount” Zion, in which “they will drink the wine” that the Lord promised he would drink with his saints in the kingdom of the Father [cf. [Matt 26:29](#)].<sup>334</sup> Moreover, “they will be anointed with ointment,” so that those who have been reborn in Christ may be made into a new people. This is why it is said, “Deliver all these things to the nations,” things that Israel was once celebrating as a type and image. “For this is the Lord’s counsel,” that all things be transferred to the “nations,” because “death” has been swallowed up, and every “tear” has been wiped away, and the “reproach” of the whole earth has been blotted out now that Christ’s empire has come in succession.

13. ([25:9–12](#)) *And he will say in that day, “Behold, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have patiently waited for him, we will rejoice and be joyful in his salvation,”* (10) *for the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain, and Moab will be trodden down under him, as straw is broken in pieces with the wagon.* (11) *And he will stretch forth his hands under him, just as a swimmer stretches forth to swim, and he will bring down his glory with the dashing of his hands,* (12) *and the bulwarks of your lofty men will fall, and be brought low, and be pulled down to the ground, even to the dust.*

<sup>334</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 85 (163, 7–).

When death has been swallowed up forever, the people of God who will have been delivered from the hand of death will say to the Lord, *Behold our God*, whom unbelievers thought was merely a man, *we have waited for him*, that is, we have believed in the words of him who has fulfilled his own promises, *and he will save us*. Therefore, having been snatched from the jaws of death by his aid, *we will rejoice and be joyful* in him, and his *hand* and power *will rest on this mountain* of which we read above: “When the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and will be glorified in the sight of his ancients” [[Isa 24:23](#)].

Now *Moab*, which means “from the father,” will be crushed in the manner in which *straw* is customarily *broken in pieces with a wagon*. He is saying this according to the practice of Palestine and of many regions of the east, which on account of the lack of meadow grass and hay prepare chaff for their animals to eat. Now there are two-wheeled carriages with iron tips, with wheels turning themselves through the middle in the manner of saws. They break the stalk into pieces and smash it into chaff. Therefore, just as chaff is crushed by means of serrated wagons, so *Moab will be trodden down under him*, either under the power of God, or in and of itself, so that nothing unscathed remains in it. And just as a *swimmer* is accustomed to *stretch forth* his whole body, so he will be dashed to the ground from his own power and will make a sound when he falls. Also, *all the bulwarks of its lofty men*, or of its “walls,” as is found in the Hebrew, *will fall and be brought low and be pulled down to the ground*, having been crushed *even to the dust*.

Therefore, although in general the prophet is writing a prediction that concerns the consummation of the world, nevertheless, lest he should seem entirely to neglect the present, the prophetic discourse names *Moab*, who was an enemy of Israel, so much so that he made them fornicate with the Midianites and be consecrated to the idol of Beelphegor [cf. [Num 25:1–3](#)], which means Priapus, against whom Jeremiah also speaks: “Chemosh (*Chamos*) will go into captivity, his priests and his princes together” [[Jer 48:7](#)], and again: “Moab will be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Bethel” [[Jer 48:13](#)], and the other things similar to these. And from one idol and the demon who was in charge of this idol, he is indicating that all the contrary powers are to be brought low and led down to Tartarus [cf. [2 Pet 2:4](#)] and crushed like dust. But if it will be this way, where is the devil’s repentance?<sup>335</sup>

14. ([26:1](#)) *In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah: the city of our strength, a savior will be set in it, a wall and a fore-wall*. Septuagint: “In that day they will sing this song over the land of Judea: ‘Behold a strong city, and he will place our salvation [as] a wall and surrounding wall.’ ”

When Moab will have been brought low and dragged down even to the dust [cf. [Isa 25:12](#)], and all enemies will have been laid out beneath Christ’s feet [cf. [1 Cor 15:26](#)], at that time *this song will be sung in the land of Judah*, or “Judea,” both of which translate as “confession.” Thus just as we have understood Zion and Jerusalem as the heavenly city [cf. [Heb 12:22](#)], so also we may understand the region of this city.<sup>336</sup> After all, saints in a foreign land, unwilling to sing a song of Judea, say, “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?” [[Ps 137:4](#)]. I think that

<sup>335</sup> This is polemic against Origen’s speculations, which Jerome had left unreproached in his earlier commentaries (such as on Daniel).

<sup>336</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 86 (166, 8–1).

this is the *song* of which in another passage as well the saints are commanded, “Sing to the Lord a new song” [[Ps 96:1](#)].

The song will be that which follows: *The city of our strength, a savior*. What is this city? That which cannot be hidden while situated on a mountain [cf. [Matt 5:14](#)] of which also in another passage it is written, “The force of the river makes glad the city of God” [[Ps 46:4](#)]; and again, “Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God” [[Ps 87:3](#)]. The founder of this city is he of whom the Father says, “He has built my city” [[Isa 45:13](#)], or rather, *the city of our strength is the Savior*, that is, Jesus.

*And there will be set in it a wall and a fore-wall, a wall of good works and a fore-wall of correct faith, so that it may be hedged in by a double bulwark.*<sup>337</sup> For it is not sufficient to have the *wall* of faith unless the faith itself is reinforced by good works [cf. [Jas 2:22](#)]. This *wall* and *forewall*, or “surrounding wall” is built out of living stones [cf. [1 Pet 2:5](#); [Zech 9:16](#)]. According to the prophet these form a circle upon the earth. That which we rendered *fore-wall*, Symmachus translated “firmament.” Thus the walls themselves are girded with fortifications and a palisade and a trench and with other walls, which in the construction of camps are customarily called little breastplates.

15. ([26:2–4a](#)) *Open the gates, and let the just nation that keeps the truth enter in. (3) The old error has passed away; you will keep peace, peace, because we have hoped in you. (4) You have hoped in the Lord for eternal ages.* Septuagint: “Open the gates, let the people enter in that keeps justice, that keeps truth, (3) that seizes hold of truth and keeps peace, peace, for in you, O Lord, (4) they have hoped for ever.”

This whole song that the saints will sing in the land of “confession” and of “praise” suddenly changes personas and is written as a question and answer, as it were. The people of God had said, “The city of our strength, the savior, a wall will be placed in it and a fore-wall” [[Isa 26:1](#)]. The Lord answered, or rather, commands, not to those who had said this, but to the angels who were in charge of the gates of the Lord’s city, to *open the gates* and *let the just nation enter* through them, *that keeps truth* or, as it says in the Hebrew, *hemunim*, which in our language is translated “acts of faith,” in the plural number, not singular.

Which gates are these which are opened by angels so that a just nation may enter in, not the Jewish people, who were rejected, which from [their] faith has received the name of faithful? Surely those of which the saint also speaks, “Open for me the gates of justice; when I have entered through them, I will confess to the Lord” [[Ps 118:19](#)].<sup>338</sup> But no one will be able to enter these gates except one who has been freed from the gates of death, and has said with the Psalmist, “You who raise me up from the gates of death that I may declare all your praises in the

<sup>337</sup> It is interesting to observe that the Protestant scholar, E. J. Young, who generally has the highest respect for Jerome’s scholarship, criticizes Jerome’s comment here, saying that “in the deepest sense” Jerome is correct when he asserts that Jesus the Savior is the city of our strength, and that there will be set in it a wall and a fore wall. But according to Young, Jerome’s next comment “is not justified,” namely, “wall of good works and a fore wall of correct faith, so that it may be hedged in by a double bulwark.” Cf. E. J. Young, [The Book of Isaiah](#), 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965–2), [2:205](#)n5.

<sup>338</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 86 (166, 29–0).

gates of the daughter of Zion” [[Ps 9:13–14](#)]. For when we are rescued from the gates of death, at that time we will be able to sing all the praises of the Lord in the gates of the daughter of Zion. And I think that just as the gates of death are sins, of which it is said to Peter, “The gates of hell will not prevail against you” [[Matt 16:18](#)], so the gates of justice are all the works of the virtues, [virtues] which the one who enters in will discover to be a single gate, of which it is said, “This is the gate of the Lord, the just will enter through it” [[Ps 118:20](#)]. And just as by means of many pearls one makes one’s way to the one pearl [cf. [Matt 13:45–46](#)], so by means of many ways and many gates we reach him who claims to be *the* way and *the* gate, through which we enter to the Father [cf. [John 14:6](#); [10:9](#)].

After God’s words, the people answered in Hebrew *ieser samuch*, which Aquila and Symmachus have translated similarly as  $\pi\lambda\alpha\sigma\mu\ \epsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\gamma\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu$ , that is “our error has been taken away,” or “our thinking has been strengthened,” which previously was wavering between you and idols. Consequently we are not borne around by every wind of doctrine [cf. [Eph 4:14](#)], but we believe in you with our entire mind, O Lord and Savior [cf. [Matt 22:37](#)]. In order to make the meaning clearer, we have translated this as, *The old error has passed away*.

And since “our thinking has been strengthened,” therefore you will preserve *peace* for us, which you promised to the apostles when you said, “My peace I give you, my peace I leave to you” [[John 14:27](#)]. And he says this not only once, but a second time, so that the repayment that is promised by repeated words may be assured. This accords with what the Apostle was also saying: “Rejoice, again I say, rejoice” [[Phil 4:4](#)]. But that person obtains this, concerning whom it is said in Leviticus, “A human human of the sons of Israel” [[Lev 17:13](#)], and in the Book of Numbers, “men men, whose wife has defiled the bed” [[Num 5:12](#)]. Thus the double human and the double man obtain double peace.<sup>339</sup> Now we earn peace, they say, because we “trust” [cf. [Isa 26:6](#)] in you with our whole mind.

After the words of the people and God’s response, which is followed again by the voice of the people, the prophet speaks to believers: *You have hoped*, or “Hope!” *in the Lord for eternal ages*, and the other things that follow.

According to the Septuagint, he “enters the Lord’s gates” who “keeps justice” by means of good works, and preserves or embraces “truth” in the truth of faith. Thus by means of good works and faith he attains to the peace that surpasses all understanding [cf. [Phil 4:7](#)], and he deserves to receive peace itself, because he believes in God who is the eternal recompenser<sup>440</sup>

<sup>339</sup> Jerome’ exegesis may depend on Origen’, which is also witnessed in his translation of Origen’ *Homilies on Ezekiel* ([3.8.1](#)). Origen follows the Jewish interpretative tradition in seeing a mystical meaning in the unusual LXX construction: *anthropos, anthropos* (“omo, homo” or “ir, vir”. [Philo, Gig 33](#), said that the repeated word was a sign that God means not the man who is compounded of soul and body, but the man whose life is one of virtue. Modern Hebrew scholars report that the construction corresponds to the Hebrew idiom, *îš îš*, according to which the repetition of single words is used to express a distributive sense (“very man”. See [Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar](#), ed. E. Kautzsch, 2nd ed. by A. E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), §123c.

<sup>440</sup> *Retributor*. For the use of the same word, see [Tertullian, Adv. Marc. 4.29.5, 16](#); Paulinus of Nola, *Ep. 2.4*.



of good works. This is also why it is written in another passage, “You have desired wisdom, keep the commandments, and the Lord will bestow it upon you” [[Sir 1:33 \(26\)](#)].

16. ([26:4b–6](#)) *In the Lord God mighty forever, (5) for he will bend down those who dwell on high. He will humble the lofty city, he will humble it even to the ground, he will pull it down even to the dust. (6) The foot will tread it down, the feet of the poor man, the steps of the needy ones.* Septuagint: “O great, eternal God, (5) you who have humbled and pulled down those who dwell on high, you will destroy strong cities, and bring them to the floor, (6) and the feet of the meek and lowly ones will trample them.”

And the prophet says these things, who answered on the basis of that passage in which he had said above, “Hope in the Lord for eternal ages” [[Isa 26:4a](#)], and he adds to it what we have now set forth: *In the Lord God mighty forever*, and the rest. For *Lord God mighty* the Hebrew has three terms, *ia*, *adonai*, and *sur*, which signify, respectively, “invisible,” “inexpressible,” and “strong.” The first of these is found in the last syllable of *alleluia*. And let the careful reader observe this, that in setting forth the testimony, sometimes we should divide the text, since the Septuagint version produces one sense, and the literal translation expressed from the Hebrew produces another. Therefore the prophet says, *Hope in the Lord in eternal ages, in the Lord God mighty forever*, whose help is *everlasting*.

*For he will bend down those who dwell on high*—“for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled” [[Luke 14:11](#)]*—those who boasted to have Abraham for a father [cf. [John 8:39](#)], and in response to the Lord’s reproach were saying, “We were not born of fornication” [[John 8:41](#)]. He himself will humble the lofty city, Rome, according to the Jews, Jerusalem, as we are convinced is more correct, which killed the prophets and stoned those who had been sent to it [cf. [Matt 23:37](#)], and ultimately killed the son of the householder [cf. [Matt 21:37–38](#)], so that when the heir had been slain his inheritance would perish. And it is not called a city, which in Hebrew is expressed as *ir*, but *caria*, which Aquila translated as  $\pi\omicron\lambda\iota\chi\eta\nu$ , and which we can call either a “little city” or a “village,” or a “town.” Jerusalem is frequently called by this term in the Scriptures. He has nicely recorded a double humbling: *He will humble, he will humble it*, first under the Babylonians, when the temple was destroyed, and a second time under Titus and Vespasian, whose collapse continues until the end.<sup>441</sup>*

*The foot will tread it down*, and he repeats this and adds, *The feet of the poor man*, doubtless Christ’s feet, of whom even above we said, “He has been made a strength to the poor man, a strength to the needy one in his distress” [[Isa 25:4](#)]. *The steps of the needy ones*, namely of the apostles, who by imitating the Lord’s poverty have even attained to the privilege of his virtue; those who when they are not received have shaken the *dust* from their *feet* upon it [[Matt 10:14](#)]. And because among the Savior’s words, it is said, “Everyone who exalts himself will be *humbled*, and he who *humbles* himself will be exalted” [[Luke 14:11](#)], we can refer this not only to human beings, but to the opposing powers too.

According to the Septuagint, the prophet is singing praises to God, that he might humble all the arrogant, and raze the fortifications of all the cities all the way to the ground, and that the “feet” of the saints and of the “meek” and humble might “tread” upon these things.

<sup>441</sup> One wonders what Jerome would say about the restoration of Israel to the Holy Land and Jerusalem in modern times.

17. ([26:7–9](#)) *The way (semita) of the just one is straight, the path (callis) of the just is straight to walk in, (8) and in the way of your judgments, O Lord, we have patiently waited for you; your name and your remembrance are the desire of the soul. (9) My soul has desired you in the night.* Septuagint: “The way (*via*) of the just ones is made straight, the way (*via*) of the just ones is prepared. (8) For the way of the Lord is judgment; we have hoped in your name and in the memory (9) for which our soul longs.”

The prophet is still speaking about Christ, of whom he had said above, “The foot will tread it, the feet of the poor man” [[Isa 26:6](#)]. *The way (semita) of this just one is straight*, therefore, or, to fashion a new word, “straightnesses,” which the Greeks call *ευθυτητας*, and we can call in a more Latin fashion “equities.” They are expressed in Hebrew as *mesarim*. On the one way of Christ, therefore, all justices are found, and for that reason he has tread upon it and worn it down with his own foot, so that whoever wants to walk down it may walk on a smooth course.

*In the way of the Lord’s judgments, the saints have patiently waited for him and “have hoped” in him, because hope does not disappoint [cf. [Rom 5:5](#)], and they held his name and remembrance in the desire of their soul, when they said, “My soul has longed to desire your judgments at all times” [[Ps 119:20](#)]; and again, “My soul desires and faints for your salvation” [[Ps 119:81](#)].* Now the one who has the name of the Lord as his desire, desires nothing else. And this should be noted, that the *desire* of God should not be in respect to the flesh, but in respect to the *soul*. This accords with what we read in another Psalm: “My soul has thirsted for the Lord God, mighty and living” [[Ps 42:2](#)]. “For the flesh desires against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh” [[Gal 5:17](#)]. These are opposed to each other, so that we do not do what we want [cf. [Gal 5:17](#)].

And in the Septuagint the words that follow, “in the night,” are placed in the subsequent section, whereas in the Hebrew they are in the former section. But that man is able to say, *My soul has desired you in the night*, who speaks confidently with the Psalmist, “Every night I will wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears” [[Ps 6:6](#)]. The *night* and darkness can be understood for tribulation and distresses. This is why even in another Psalm, the prophet repeats in his song, concerning the security of the just man, “The sun will not burn you in the day, nor the moon during the *night*” [[Ps 121:6](#)], that is, neither in prosperity nor adversity will you ever be moved from your position.

18. ([26:9b](#)) *Moreover with my spirit in my breast I will watch for you in the morning.* Septuagint: “My spirit rises to you in the night, O God, for your judgments are a light on the earth.”

We want both to follow the Hebrew and not utterly pass over the common (*vulgatam*) edition. Owing to this necessity of things, we are compelled to look for different meanings from the varying arrangement and words. Therefore, what is expressed according to the Septuagint in this section, “in the night,” as we have said, is the beginning of a section. In the Hebrew it is the end of what comes above it. Yet even according to the Septuagint it could be taken as the end of what is higher up, so that the sense would be, “My soul desires you in the night,” and afterward would begin, “In the morning my spirit rises to you, O God.” Now the reason it rises *in the morning* is “for your precepts are a light on the earth.” For while keeping your commands and having been illuminated by their light, of which it is said, “The precept of the Lord is clear,

illuminating the eyes” [Ps 19:8], I cannot fall asleep, but I desire you at all times and rise to you in my spirit.

And this must be noticed, that while we are still found in the “night,” we should desire God *in our spirit*, but after our *spirit* in our *breast* has moved itself *toward* God with its whole mind, let us wake up *in the morning* to him. And to speak more clearly: to the soul is joined night and desire, but to the *spirit* is joined *morning* and watches. On the other hand, he watches *in his spirit in his breast*, who is able to say, “From the depths I have called out to you, O Lord” [Ps 130:1].

19. (26:9c–10) *When you will do your judgments on the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn justice. (10) Let us have pity on the wicked one, but he will not learn justice; in the land of the saints he has acted wickedly, and he will not see the glory of the Lord.* Septuagint: “Learn justice, all you who dwell upon the earth. (10) For the wicked one has ceased, he will not learn justice upon the earth, he will not do the truth. Let the wicked one be taken away, that he may not see the glory of the Lord.”

Let us first speak in accordance with the Hebrew, and if we succeed in expressing the prophet’s meaning, then let us move on to the Septuagint translators.

As long as you do not carry out your *judgments upon the earth*, and do not pay back good things to the good and evil things to the evil, your *justice*, O God, is not known on earth. But when on the day of judgment you will have paid back to each one what he deserves on the basis of the quality of his works, at that time your *justice* will be known in the *world*, which previously seemed unjust to unbelievers. Thus too did one of the saints say, “But my feet were almost moved, my steps had nearly slipped, because I was jealous of the wicked when I saw the peace of sinners” [Ps 73:2–3].

The Lord responds to this, *Let us have pity on the wicked one*. Everyone translated this similarly except for the Septuagint. And the meaning is, let the *wicked one* rather attain to mercy and let him learn my clemency, while he himself likewise is saved.

And again, under the persona of human impatience, the prophet answered the Lord who was speaking, *And he will not learn justice*. And the meaning is, and how will he be able to know your *justice*, if he has only experienced clemency? And he gives the reasons why he wants him to learn God’s justice: because *in the land of the saints he has acted wickedly*, and he has fought continuously against your saints, he ought to feel the torments.

And again the Lord tempers his verdict and says, and “let him not see,” or *he will not see the glory of the Lord*. And the meaning is, instead of a universal punishment it is sufficient for him that *he will not see* me reigning in my majesty with my saints. Some<sup>442</sup> want the devil to be understood by wicked, that is, *resa*, of whom it is written in the ninth Psalm, “You have rebuked the nations, and the wicked one has perished, you have blotted out their name forever and in the age of age, the spears of the enemy have failed unto the end, and you have destroyed [their] cities” [Ps 9:5–6]. But we should understand *wicked* generally, either as “sinner,” or as one who does not hold to God’s standard.

According to the Septuagint, those who “dwell upon the earth” are commanded to “learn justice.” For “every man seems just to himself,” but “God knows the hearts of everyone” [Prov

<sup>442</sup> Probably Origen.

[21:2](#)], “who will repay to each one according to his works” [[Prov 24:12](#)]. And in another passage of the same book, it is said, “There are ways of a man that seem right, but the end of them looks to the depth of hell” [[Prov 16:25](#)]. This is why we need to “learn justice,” not to confide in one’s own judgment. For “there is a just man who perishes in his justice” [[Eccl 7:15](#)], not that he *is* just, but that he seems to be just to himself. But if Christ has become for us wisdom from God and justice, sanctification, and redemption [cf. [1 Cor 1:30](#)], by which things one is commanded to recognize justice, this is commanded so that they may “learn” Christ and come to know him. But the reason I am commanding you to “learn justice,” he says, is because the “wicked one” has been “taken away,” and his kingdom has been destroyed. While he was reigning “on the earth,” he was unable to know “justice,” or to “do the truth.” It is written elsewhere of “truth” that “grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” [[John 1:17](#)]. And since the “wicked one” does not “do truth on the earth,” he will be “taken away”; for he does not deserve to see the Lord reigning.

20. ([26:11](#)) *O Lord, let your hand be exalted, and let them not see; let them see and be confounded, the zeal of the people, and let fire devour your enemies.* Septuagint: “O Lord, your arm [is] on high, and they did not know it, but when they know they will be confounded; zeal will seize an untaught people, and now fire will devour the adversaries.”

What he had said above, “And he will not see the glory of the Lord” [[Isa 26:10](#)], can also be understood as follows: You are demanding, O prophet, that I not show pity to the wicked one, lest, if I be merciful to him, he who has acted wickedly in the land of the saints may begin to be ignorant of justice. I answer you: Will he therefore not see the Lord’s glory? Will he therefore not discern my triumphs, who ought instead to see me reigning, that he may know how much good he lacks? And this must be read with a rather subdued voice of one who is asking a question.

The prophet has responded to this, *Lord, let your hand be exalted*, and let it be stretched out to strike, that the wicked ones may not see you and enjoy the light of your glory, not even for the purpose of repenting.

The Lord answered him, *Let them instead see and be confounded, or, the zeal of the people, or zealous peoples, and let fire*, that is, of the people of the saints, *devour* and consume *your adversaries*, but the fire of repentance, which torments their hearts, because they destroyed such a Lord. This can also be understood concerning the Jews who did not know Christ, the arm of the Lord, and when they see him and have recognized the one they nailed to the gallows, “they will be confounded.” At that time “a people untaught” and ignorant of the law of God will be incited by the goads of “zeal,”<sup>443</sup> when they see that the Gentiles have succeeded in their place, and they will burn with the “fire” of regret, or with the pain of punishment, when they hear that which is written: “Go into the eternal fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels” [[Matt 25:41](#)].<sup>444</sup>

21. ([26:12](#)) *Lord, you will give us peace; for you have wrought all our works for us.* Septuagint: “O Lord our God, give us peace; for you have rendered all things to us.”

One should take note that he will *give peace* after he has “rendered” *our works to us*, and

<sup>443</sup> Or “ealousy.”

<sup>444</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 87 (168, 17–0).

how he sets forth the reasons why he demands *peace*. For they claim to have endured torments for all the *works* that they have *wrought* upon the earth, and that it is just that after the sufferings and tortures, they should attain mercy.<sup>445</sup> Or another possibility: since the consummation of the world is coming, and all things that you have spoken through the prophets have been fulfilled in reality, and you have “rendered” everything that you promised, grant to us the peace that surpasses all understanding [cf. [Phil 4:7](#)].

22. ([26:13](#)) *O Lord our God, lords besides you have taken possession of us; only in you let us remember your name.* Septuagint: “O Lord our God, take possession of us; O Lord, beyond you we know no other, we call upon your name.”

The reason we seek mercy and the peace that is to be granted after everything is because *lords besides you have taken possession of us*, namely the idols, or the demons who assist the idols; and we demand nothing else but that after very many errors we may be worthy, we who should *remember your name*. According to the Septuagint, which said, “O Lord our God, take possession of us,” they pray this in order that they may become God’s possession, after peace has been rendered to them.

We even read this about wisdom, which in Proverbs says according to the Hebrew, “God possessed me as the beginning of his ways” [[Prov 8:22](#)], although some copies render this wrongly as “creature” instead of “possession.” After all, what follows is this: “But he generates me before all the hills” [[Prov 8:25](#)]. For how can “generation” be applied to a “creature,” which fits instead to a possession? It is also written in Deuteronomy, “Is he not your father, who possessed you, and made you, and created you?” [[Deut 32:6](#)]. The following too should be taken into consideration: he did not say that the “Lord” or “God” “possessed you, and made you, and created you,” but “father.” Consequently the mildness of the name has mitigated the severity of his power.

And what follows, “O Lord, apart from you we have known no other,” does not exclude the Son, but joins to the Father; for he did not say, “We have known no other,” but “beyond you we have known no other.” Now since the Son says, “I [am] in the Father and the Father [is] in me” [[John 14:10](#)], [then] we have not known the Son “beyond” the Father, since we come to know him “in” the Father. After all we even name his name when we say in the Lord’s prayer, “Our Father who art in heaven” [[Matt 6:9](#)].

23. ([26:14](#)) *Let not the dying live, let not the giants rise again. Therefore you have visited and crushed them, and you have destroyed all their memory.* Septuagint: “For the dead shall not see life, neither shall physicians raise [them] up; therefore you have brought in and destroyed and taken away every male of them.” Symmachus is clearer in his customary manner: “The dead will not come to life, the giants will not rise. Therefore you have visited and crushed them, and you have destroyed all their memory.”

Let us first speak in accordance with the Septuagint. The question appears difficult how the “dead” do not “see life.” It is resolved as follows: they do not “see life” for as long a time as they are “dead.” Just as if we should say, “A blind man does not see light while he is blind, but if he has received healing, he will see light,” so also the one who is “dead” in iniquity and sins, before he comes to life in justice and the virtues, he will not be able to see him who says, “I am the

<sup>445</sup> This sounds like Origen’s interpretation.

life” [[John 14:6](#)]. This is also why he is called the God of the living, not of the dead [cf. [Matt 22:32](#)].<sup>446</sup> “For the soul that sins will die” [[Ezek 18:4, 20](#)]. We read in the letter that is written to the Hebrews, “Not laying again the foundation of repentance from *dead works*” [[Heb 6:1](#)]. But if sins are called “dead works,” why should not the virtues, on the other hand, be called living works?

As for what follows, “Neither shall physicians raise [them] up,” the sense is clear: the fables of the poets are being condemned, who boast that Virbius was raised up by Aesculapius.<sup>447</sup> But this has to be said not only concerning the dead, but concerning all disease, that apart from the mercy of God the art of healing has no force. But just as “unless the Lord has built the house, those who build it have labored in vain; unless the Lord has guarded the city, he who guards it will stand watch in vain” [[Ps 127:1](#)], so unless the Lord has cured the disease, physicians, who desire to heal the sick, labor in vain. Unless the Lord has preserved one’s health, even they who publish precepts for preserving health in their own books preserve it in vain. Moreover, one must always say, not only in respect to the healing of the body, but also of the soul, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, who heals all your diseases” [[Ps 103:2–3](#)].

On the other hand, those who continue dead in sin and who are not able to receive health to the soul by any art of medicine will be “destroyed and taken away” by the Lord; and whatever in them is strong, which is called “male,” will be completely “taken away.” This is why even Pharaoh does not want to kill the *female* sex, which is frail in and of itself and can easily perish, but all the *males* [cf. [Exod 1:16](#)]. For if a “male” becomes an adult and reaches the age of manhood, he is hard to kill.

According to Symmachus, “the dead will not come to life,” who, being dead to sin, are not able to give life to others, and praise is not comely in the mouth of sinners [cf. [Sir 15:9](#)]; and the “giants,” that is, *raphaim*, “will not raise” others, who themselves are called according to the Book of Genesis, “falling ones” [cf. [Gen 6:4](#)]. And the Lord *visits* them, so that *the entire memory* of the dead and of the *giants* is blotted out. For he alone raises the dead of whom it is said, “Just as the Father raises and gives life to the dead, so also the Son gives life to those whom he wills” [[John 6:21](#)]. We can identify the images of dead men as the “dead,” and the demons who attend to the images as the “giants.”

It ought not to cause us alarm why the Septuagint translated as “male,” and the other translators as “memory,” since in Hebrew both words are written with the same three letters, *zai, caph, res*. Now when we express “memory,” *zachar* is read; when we say “male,” it is *zochor*. And they think that Saul was deceived by this ambiguity of the word when he fought against Amalek and killed every *male* among them [cf. [1 Sam 15:8](#)]. For when God commanded that the whole *memory* of Amalek be blotted out under heaven [cf. [Exod 17:14](#); [Deut 25:19](#)], he interpreted this to mean “males” instead of “memory.” He was led astray not so much by a mistake as by his desire for booty. He did not know the following works of the Apostle: “Do not

<sup>446</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 87 (168, 32).

<sup>447</sup> Cf. [Vergil, Aeneid 7.761–2](#); [Ovid, Met 15.544](#). Aesculapius is the Latinized form of Asclepius, the Greek hero and god of healing. Virbius is a surname of Hippolytus, the son of Theseus king of Athens and Hippolyte, queen of the Amazons. According to Ovid, Hippolytus was restored to life by Artemis/Diana and carried off to her sacred grove in Aricia under the name of Virbius.



go astray, God is not mocked" [[Gal 6:7](#)].

24. ([26:15](#)) *You have been favorable to the nation, O Lord, you have been favorable to the nation. Have you been glorified? You have removed<sup>448</sup> all the ends of the earth.* Septuagint: "Bring more evils upon them, O Lord; bring more evils on the glorious ones of the earth." "Evils," which the Septuagint has recorded twice, is not found in the Hebrew; but since they had said above, "Therefore you have led in and destroyed and taken away all of their males" [[Isa 26:14](#)], having followed the same meaning, they added on their own "evils." Hence those who are "glorious ones of the earth" are overwhelmed by double evils.

On the other hand, in Hebrew the meaning is far different, and it agrees with the earlier discussion. The Lord had said, "Let us have pity on the wicked one" [[Isa 26:10](#)]. The prophet had responded, "And where is your justice, especially since he has wrought such great evils against your saints?" [cf. [Isa 26:10](#)]. The Lord says to this, "And he will not see the glory of the Lord" [[Isa 26:10](#)]. Again the prophet responds, "Let your hand be raised" to strike, and "let them not see" your glory, which they do not deserve to view [cf. [Isa 26:11](#)]. To which the Lord says, "Let them instead see it and be confounded" [cf. [Isa 26:11](#)]. Again the prophet says, "Lord, give us peace and take possession of us, we who remember your name. But do not let the wicked and the arrogant ones live; let them not rise again in glory, but utterly destroy their memory" [cf. [Isa 26:12–14](#)]. And he gives the reasons why he longs to see them perish. "You have been favorable to the nation, O Lord, you have been favorable to the nation. Have you been glorified?" [[Isa 26:15](#)]. And the meaning is, Often you showed pity to the nations, that is, to the human race, and you exercised a clemency toward them that surpasses belief. Have they come to know you? Have they *glorified* your name? Is it not the case, instead, that they have withdrawn further from you? For security produces negligence, negligence gives birth to contempt.

25. ([26:16](#)) *Lord, they have sought you in distress; in the tribulation of murmuring your instruction was with them.* Septuagint: "Lord, in tribulation I have remembered you; your instruction to us was in small tribulation."

Since you have often been despised, not glorified, while being favorable [cf. [Isa 26:15](#)], but on the contrary everyone has withdrawn from the knowledge of you, therefore, O *Lord*, strike them, so that they may seek you *in distress*, and *your instruction* may be *with them in the tribulation of murmuring*, when the weight of their evils presses down upon them so much that they do not even dare to shout confidently, but they silently swallow their grief.

According to the Septuagint, the prophet "remembers the Lord" in his "tribulation," in accordance with what is expressed in the Psalm: "Out of tribulation I have called upon the Lord, and he heard me in a wide place" [[Ps 118:5](#)]; and in another passage: "In my affliction I cried to the Lord, and he hearkened to me" [[Ps 120:1](#)]. This is also why the Apostle says, "We endure *tribulation*, but are not distressed; we suffer persecution, but are not abandoned" [[2 Cor 4:8–9](#)]; and in another passage, "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that will be revealed in us" [[Rom 8:18](#)].<sup>449</sup> Now if "small tribulation" teaches and corrects and chastises, how much more a great one, when we are reminded about our condition and call to remembrance the power of God.

<sup>448</sup> Or "enghtened" cf. [Isa 14:1](#).

<sup>449</sup> *Eus Is* 88 (169, 32–70, 4).

26. ([26:17–18b](#)) *As a woman who has conceived, when she draws near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and cries out in her pains, so have we become in your presence (a facie tua), O Lord. (18) We have conceived and been as it were in labor, and have brought forth; we have not made the breath (spiritum) of salvation on the earth.* Septuagint: “And as a woman in labor, when she draws near to the time of her delivery, she cries out in her pain, so have we become to your beloved. (18) Because of your fear, O Lord, we have conceived and have been in labor, and have brought forth; we have made the breath (*spiritum*) of your salvation upon the earth.”

Just as a woman drawing near to her time of delivery is forced to “cry out in pain,” so we ask you in distress, and “in the presence” of your fear, we “conceive” and “go into labor” and “bring forth” children, not of the flesh but of the Spirit (*spiritus*). Thus do we believe in you with our whole mind, and the one whom we have not perceived by his kindnesses, we learn by his torments. What the Septuagint has added, “So have we become to your beloved,” which the others translated as “so have we become in your presence, O Lord,” ought to be marked in front with an obelus.<sup>550</sup>

Now we can take the Lord’s “beloved” as Christ “because of the fear” of whom we “conceive and go into labor and bring forth, and we make the breath of salvation upon the earth.” An apostolic man can also say this, when he teaches the people and imitates the Apostle Paul: “My little children, for whom I again am *in labor*, until Christ is formed in you” [[Gal 4:19](#)]. But need there be any doubt that the Apostle Paul has “made the breath (*spiritum*) of salvation upon the earth,” who preached the gospel from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum [cf. [Rom 15:19](#)], and who, as a wise builder, laid the foundation apart from which no other can lay, which is Jesus Christ? [cf. [1 Cor 3:10–11](#)].

We will read this, then, either as, “Because of your fear, O Lord, we have received in the womb,” or according to the Hebrew, *In your presence (facie), O Lord, we have conceived and received in the womb*. Both are relevant to this. Thus from “fear” and remembrance of the Lord we conceive the word of God, and our heart is enlightened, of those who say, “The light of your countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us” [[Ps 4:6](#)], and, “Show your face (*faciem*) and we will be saved” [[Ps 80:3](#)].

27. ([26:18b–c](#)) *We have not wrought salvation on the earth; therefore the inhabitants of the world have not fallen.* Septuagint: “But the inhabitants of the earth will fall.”

A different translation is needed, so that it may have even a different meaning. According to the Hebrew it says this: Since *we have wrought* nothing worthy of your mercy, therefore the wicked have not fallen, but up to the present day they have greater influence and possess the earth. The Septuagint, on the other hand, asserts the following: While the saints “make the spirit of salvation upon the earth” [cf. [Isa 26:18](#)], let those who are “inhabitants of the earth” fall, although there is a big difference between earth (*terram*) and world (*orbem*), which in Hebrew is expressed as *thebel*, and in Greek as ΟΙΚΟΥΜΕΝΗ. Therefore, they will *fall*, all who have devoted themselves to their habitation on *earth* and have been founded with roots fixed in earthly works. And they will not fall who reside in the *world* and find rest in the church, which is the dwelling place of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

28. ([26:19](#)) *Let your dead live, let my slain rise again; awake, and give praise, you who dwell*

<sup>550</sup> Cf. [Jerome, Epp. 104; 108](#).

*in the dust, for your dew is the dew of the light, and you will pull down into ruin the land of the giants.* Septuagint: “The dead shall rise, and they shall rise from the tombs, and those who are on earth will rejoice; for your dew is their healing, but the land of the ungodly ones will fall.”

When the saints go into labor and bring forth the spirit, and when the inhabitants of the earth fall, since they have not wrought salvation on the earth [cf. [Isa 26:18](#)], those whom the Apostle calls “the dead in Christ” [cf. [1 Thess 4:16](#)], and who have been killed for the sake of the Lord’s name, will rise again in glory. And since their death is sleep, they are not said to “rise again,” as the Septuagint says, but to *awaken* and watch. This is also why the Lord describes the sleeping Lazarus as one who was on the verge of being woken up [cf. [John 11:11](#)].

All the martyrs and holy men, therefore, who shed their blood for Christ’s sake, and whose entire life was martyrdom, will *rise again* and *wake up* and *praise* their Creator God, those who now *dwell in the dust*, of whom it is also written in Daniel, “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will rise again, some to eternal life and some to reproach and eternal shame” [[Dan 12:2](#)].<sup>551</sup> And in John the Evangelist, we read, “The hour will come, and now is, when those who are in their tombs will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live ... and those who have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but those who have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment” [[John 5:25, 29](#)].

For the Lord’s *dew*—getting the better of the medicinal (*paeonias*) herbs of the poets’ fables<sup>552</sup>—will vivify the bodies of the dead. And just as dew gradually causes grass to grow from seeds that lie in the ground, and to mature into crops of their own kinds, so the Lord’s *dew*, which is recorded for his mercy, will be a *dew of very great light*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *oroth*. But the Lord *will pull down the land*, that is, the bodies, of the *rephaim*, namely of the giants and the “ungodly ones,” into eternal punishments. Finally, it was only the Septuagint that translated *rephaim* as “ungodly ones.”

And since we have read above, “The dead will not see life, nor will the physicians raise [them]” [[Isa 26:14](#)], which Aquila and Symmachus translated as *raphaim* and “giants,” we ask, what is the cause of the error that for the Hebrew term *raphaim* some have recorded “giants,” others “physicians.” If the Hebrew word *raphaim* has a *uau* following after the first letter *res*, it reads as *rophim* and means “physicians.” But if, on the other hand, it is written without the letter *uau*, it reads *raphaim*, and is translated as “giants.”

And at the same time, since he had said above, “The dead will not see life” [[Isa 26:14](#)], so as to show more clearly that the talk there was not about those who have died according to the law of nature by means of the separation of the soul from body, but about those who are dead

<sup>551</sup> O’onnell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, 77, comments on this passage, “wice in this short passage Jerome clearly shows his mind. First, he concludes from the use of *somnus* (sleep) in place of *mors* (death) that the dead will do more than rise; they will wake up and will watch. *Expergisci* (wake up) and *evigilare* (watch) indicate a continued period of wakefulness and activity; *resurgere* indicates only the act of rising. Secondly, Jerome concludes from the use of the word sleep that all martyrs and holy men will rise, be alert, and praise God their Creator. Here again it is a state of continued activity that Jerome has in mind.”

<sup>552</sup> Cf. [Vergil, Aeneid 7.769](#); [Ovid, Met 15.535](#).

in sin, now, on the other hand, he says to God, *Your dead will live*,<sup>553</sup> who have been killed for your sake, who are not dead in the absolute sense, as the Septuagint has translated it, but in accordance with the Hebrew, where it is said *hieiu methiecha*, they are called *your dead*.

29. (26:20–21) *Go, my people, enter into your rooms, shut your doors upon you, hide a little for a moment, until the indignation passes by. (21) For behold, the Lord will come out of his place, to visit the iniquity of the inhabitant of the earth against him, and the earth will disclose her blood, and will cover her slain no more.* Septuagint: “Go, my people, enter into your rooms, shut your door, hide for a little season, until the anger of the Lord passes by. (21) For, behold, the Lord is bringing wrath from his holy place upon the inhabitants of the earth, and the earth will disclose her blood, and will hide her slain no longer.”

Above, he had said of the saints, “The dead will rise again, and those who are in their tombs will rise again; for dew from you is their healing [[Isa 26:19](#)]; and, on the other hand, of the impious, “But the land of the impious ones will fall” [[Isa 26:18–19](#)]. Now he says to the saints, since a resurrection has been promised you, while the “anger” of God wreaks havoc among sinners and the impious, *enter into your tombs and hide yourselves*; for the time is short until the *indignation* of God passes by. Since indeed *the Lord is coming out of his place*, since “the merciful and gracious Lord” [[Ps 111:4](#)] and the most clement Father is compelled to strike his negligent children and make a change, so to speak, in his own judgment, *in order to visit* and bring in his wrath upon the inhabitants of the earth, of whom it is said in Hosea, “Cursing and lying and adultery and theft have been poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth” [[Hos 4:2](#)]. Moreover, in the Apocalypse we read of a third “woe” upon the inhabitants of the earth [cf. [Rev 8:13](#)]. On the other hand, the just, though they may seem [to be] on earth, yet their conversation is in heaven [cf. [Phil 3:20](#)], who are able to say, “I am a stranger and a sojourner on earth, like all my fathers” [[Ps 39:12](#)], and they enjoy the dwelling place of the Most High, of whom the saint says, “He who dwells under the protection of the Most High will abide under the shelter of the God of heaven” [[Ps 91:1](#)].

At that time *the earth will disclose her blood*. God speaks to Cain about this: “The voice of your brother’s *blood* cries out to me from the *earth*, which opened its mouth to receive the blood of your brother from your hand” [[Gen 4:10–11](#)]. This can also be understood of the martyrs, who shed their *blood* for Christ and who keep shouting under the altar of God: “How long, O Lord, do you not avenge our *blood* from those who dwell upon the earth?” [[Rev 6:9–10](#)]. Moses too speaks of them in the canticle: “For the *blood* of his children will be vindicated, and he will avenge and render vengeance to the enemies” [[Deut 32:43](#)].<sup>554</sup> The *earth* that had received it *will disclose* this *blood*, and *will not cover* the Lord’s *slain*, but it will bring it forth into the public in condemnation of those who have slain the martyrs. Let this be understood concerning the resurrection in the literal sense.

Now anagogically, the people of God are being instructed to *enter into their rooms*, or cells—for  $\tau\alpha\mu\epsilon\iota\alpha$  means both—to *close the door* of their room in accordance with the precept of the Gospel [cf. [Matt 6:6](#)], and to say with the prophet, “O Lord, place a guard on my mouth and a fortified door on my lips” [[Ps 141:3](#)]. Let God’s “people” be hidden “for a little season, until

<sup>553</sup> The Hebrew lemma had “et your dead live.”

<sup>554</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 89 (171, 35–72, 2).

the wrath of the Lord passes by,” so that they would do nothing for the sake of glory, but would enjoy a good conscience and wait for God, the only judge. Now there are cells that need to be closed and hidden away from those who have become rich in works and words [cf. [1 Tim 6:18](#)], prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice [cf. [Wis 8:7](#)], that the left hand may not know what the right hand is doing [cf. [Matt 6:3](#)], that we may thoroughly enjoy the resources of the law and the prophets and the gospel. Now, that all the days of our life are brief and few, Jacob says when he was past the age of one hundred years: “Few and evil are my days” [[Gen 47:9](#)]. But the “anger of the Lord” will “pass by,” which they treasure up for themselves who do not want to repent [cf. [Rom 2:5](#)]; which, after it passes by, the cells will no longer be closed, but what is written will be fulfilled: “There is nothing secret that will not be disclosed, and hidden that will not be manifested” [[Matt 10:26](#)].

And what follows, “For, behold, the Lord will bring in his anger from [his] holy place,” this signifies that God’s anger begins with the saints [cf. [Ezek 9:6](#)], or that all his vengeance is just and holy; it does not proceed from a disturbance of the mind, as usually happens among men, but out of the zeal to set right. Now the “earth of inhabitants” I imagine is the one concerning which it is written, “Let the earth hear the words of my mouth” [[Deut 32:1](#)], and “Give ear, O earth” [[Isa 1:2](#)], and again, “O earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord” [[Jer 22:29](#)]. For just as those who dwell on earth, so “those who are in the flesh, cannot please God” [[Rom 8:8](#)]. But the earth in this passage signifies the soul that lives carnally, and it will “disclose its own blood,” if it causes anyone to sin, and deserves to hear with Cain, “The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to me from the earth, which opened its mouth to receive the blood of your brother” [[Gen 4:9–10](#)]. On the day of judgment, then, all blood will be required [cf. [Matt 23:35–36](#)], and the earth will not hide its blood, and it will lead forth into public “the slain” whom it killed, either willingly or through negligence.

30. ([27:1](#)) *In that day, the Lord with his hard and great and strong sword will visit upon Leviathan the bar serpent, and upon leviathan the crooked serpent, and will slay the whale that is in the sea.* Septuagint: “In that day God shall bring his holy and great and strong sword upon the dragon, the fleeing serpent, upon the dragon, the crooked serpent, and he will slay the dragon that is in the sea.”

The Hebrews hand down the tradition that the devil, that is, the accuser, which is a Greek name, is called “Satan” in Hebrew, that is, “adversary.” This is why it is said in Zechariah, “Satan,” that is, the adversary, “stood at his right hand to be his adversary” [[Zech 3:1](#)]. And he is also called Belial, that is, “apostate,” “transgressor” (*praevaricator*), and “yokeless.” This is why the Apostle says, “What fellowship is there between Christ and Belial?” [[2 Cor 6:15](#)]. And wherever the Septuagint records “sons of pestilence” [cf. [1 Sam 2:12](#)], in Hebrew it is written “sons of Belial.” This also explains the following, which is sung in the Psalm concerning the mystery of the Savior: “The son of iniquity will not serve to harm him” [[Ps 89:22](#)]. In Hebrew, this is expressed as “son of Belial.” And he is also called by other names; for example, it is written in another Psalm, “You will walk upon the asp and the basilisk; you will trample upon the lion and the dragon” [[Ps 91:13](#)]. This “dragon” is called by a proper name in the Hebrew language: “Leviathan.”

He is also the great *whale* of whom it is narrated in mystical language in Job that he will be

captured by Christ: “Who will capture the great whale” [[Job 3:8](#)], for even there Leviathan is recorded for *whale*; and again, “But you will take the dragon with a hook, you will put a noose around its nose” [[Job 41:2](#)]; and immediately after this, “This is the chief of the formation of the Lord; made to be made sport with by his angels” [[Job 40:19](#) (14)]. And in the Psalm, “This great and wide sea, there are things creeping innumerable, small animals with great ones, this dragon whom you formed to make sport in it” [[Ps 104:25–26](#)].<sup>555</sup> The Apocalypse of John also writes of this, “And there was a battle in heaven; Michael and his angels fought with the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and they prevailed not, neither was their place found in heaven, and that great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, who makes the whole world go astray; and he was cast unto the earth, and his angels with him” [[Rev 12:7–9](#)]. And there it is said, “The accuser of our brethren is cast forth, who accused them before our God” [[Rev 12:10](#)]. And this must be noted, that both in the Psalm and in Job, the dragon, that is, the Leviathan, is said to have been made for this reason, that he would be made sport with by angels. This is also why the apostles receive authority to trample upon serpents and scorpions and upon all power of the enemy [cf. [Luke 10:19](#)].

Thus it is that from that passage where it was written, “Behold the Lord will demolish the earth and will strip it” [[Isa 24:1](#)]; or, according to the Septuagint, “Behold, the Lord will lay waste the world, and will make it desolate,” up to the present section, judgment has been announced against the world at the consummation of the world; and “the last enemy, death, will be destroyed” [[1 Cor 15:26](#)].<sup>556</sup> For this reason, the final verdict is against the devil, that a “holy, large, and strong sword” may be brought “upon” him; or, according to the Hebrew and the other translators, a *hard sword*. For it is not *cadesa* that is said here, as the Septuagint thought. If that were the case, it would signify “holy”; but *casa* is recorded, which is properly translated as “hard.” And this is why Kish the father of Saul is called “hard” [cf. [1 Sam 9:1](#)]. Now this word is used because of the mind of the one who experiences it. Some of our people understand the “holy” or *hard sword* of the word of God, of which the apostle says: “But the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any sharp two-edged sword” [[Heb 4:12](#)].<sup>557</sup> And this is why, in another passage, we read that a two-edged sword proceeds from the Savior’s mouth [cf. [Rev 1:16](#)].

But when at the end of the world a “holy” or *hard* and *great* and *strong sword* will have been *brought in* against *Leviathan*, who at the beginning of Genesis is called the wisest serpent beyond all the beasts that were on the earth [cf. [Gen 3:1](#)], he who was not accustomed to flee will flee. He is unaware of the following Scripture: “Where will I go from your spirit, or where will I flee from your presence?” [[Ps 139:7](#)].<sup>558</sup> A certain poet in his “Battle of the Giants”<sup>559</sup> nicely (*pulcre*) mocked Enceladus.<sup>660</sup> “Where are you fleeing, Enceladus? Whatever shores you reach,

<sup>555</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (173, 7–3).

<sup>556</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (172, 5).

<sup>557</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (172, 24–5).

<sup>558</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (173, 1–).

<sup>559</sup> *Gigantomachia*. This is the title of a poem by Claudian (AD 370–04), an Alexandrian Greek who lived at the Roman imperial court from about 395.



you will always be under the god.”<sup>661</sup>

Now this *Leviathan*, the “fleeing serpent,” is expressed in Hebrew as *bari*, which Aquila translated as *bar* (*vectem*), Symmachus as “enclosing,” Theodotion as “strong.” I think it is called a *bar* or “closing in” because it has enclosed many in its prison and subjected them to its authority, and it possesses nothing in itself that is straight, and therefore it is said to be *crooked*. And it cannot imitate the Lord’s rod of which it is written: “The rod of your kingdom is a rod of uprightness” [[Ps 45:6](#)].

“Whom the Lord will kill with the spirit of his mouth” [[2 Thess 2:8](#)], the former inhabitant of the *sea*, of the salty and bitter waves. Let those who say that the devil will repent and obtain forgiveness explain to us how they understand what is written here: “And he will slay the dragon,” or *whale*, that is in the sea.”<sup>662</sup> For in the second passage in the present section, in Hebrew it is not called *Leviathan* but *thennin*, which properly signifies *whale*. This is why the Hebrews say that *Leviathan* lives underground (*sub terra*) and in the upper world (*in aethere*), but *thennin* lives in the sea, which is a Jewish story.

Now Eusebius joins to the previous section what is said at the end of this section, *in that day*, so that the subsequent prophecy is not to be applied to this time period; but the Hebrews and the other interpreters [join it] to the following section, which we will now set forth.

31. ([27:2–3](#)) *In that day there the vineyard of undiluted wine will sing to it. (3) I am the Lord who keeps it, I will suddenly give it drink; lest there be a visitation against it, I keep it night and day.* Septuagint: “In that day a fair vineyard [is] his desire, that it may be his prince. (3) I am a strong city, a city which is under siege. In vain will I water it; for it will be captured by night, and by day the wall will fall.”

The Hebrew differs significantly from the Septuagint edition in this passage. Therefore, let us discuss the details as we have set them forth. The *vineyard* of which Isaiah says above, “My beloved had a *vineyard* on a horn in an abundant place” [[Isa 5:1](#)], we may learn how it ought to be understood because he himself teaches us: “For the vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth is the house of Israel” [[Isa 5:7](#)].<sup>663</sup> It is also sung in the Psalm about it: “You have transferred the vineyard from Egypt” [[Ps 80:8](#)], and so on. Also through Jeremiah [cf. [Jer 32:15–18](#)], it says that he drinks a very undiluted chalice to this [vineyard]. For when he had sent him to give a drink to all the nations, and the prophet willingly offered himself for this service, he is ordered to make Jerusalem drunk first. This is why he says, “You have deceived me, Lord, and I was deceived” [[Jer 20:7](#)]. Therefore, Jerusalem will drink, and the undiluted drink will declare that it is learning

<sup>660</sup> This is the name of one of the giants upon whom Jupiter hurled Etna; cf. [Vergil, Aeneid 3,578; 4,179; Propertius, 2, 1, 39; Ovid, Am 3, 12, 27; Ovid, Pont. 2, 2, 11](#).

<sup>661</sup> Jerome’s citation does not occur in Claudian’s poem as we possess it today. Maurice Platnauer, in [Claudian](#), trans. Maurice Platnauer, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 290, thinks that it is possible that the line belongs to a final portion that has been lost. “ut it is more likely that they come from some other poet’s work and that the abrupt end of Claudian’s poem is due not to loss but to the poet’s sudden death.”

<sup>662</sup> This must be directed against Origen’s conjecture that the devil could be restored to grace in the future ages.

<sup>663</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 90 (174, 29–2).

lamentation and weeping. And the Lord says that he has watched over it for a long time and has given it opportunity for repentance; and because it was unwilling to be converted, suddenly it must be made drunk, for he had done this during the *days* or the *nights*, so that it was always being *kept* by his help.

Now the Septuagint addresses the same beautiful vineyard in which were the law and the prophets, the priesthood and high priesthood, and the knowledge of God, since the Scripture says, "In Judea God is known, his name is great in Israel" [[Ps 76:1](#)]. Some think, in accordance with that translation, that this applies to the church, than which nothing is more beautiful, and of which it is said, "Glorious things are said of you, city of God" [[Ps 87:3](#)]. She is the "prince" of her own mother, and she says in the Song of Songs, "The sons of my mother fought against me" [[Song 1:5](#)], and she says, "I am a strong city, a city that is under siege." And he has nicely said, "is under siege," not "is overcome." And at once he adds concerning the synagogue, which has been turned from the head into the tail [cf. [Deut 28:44](#)], "In vain do I give it to drink" of my doctrines, for "it will be captured" into the darkness of its own error. And because it has not received the clear light, its "wall," that is, everything that it thought was its source of help, has "fallen by day"; and there will be no enemy [cf. [Isa 27:4](#)] who does not "capture" it, which we ought to understand of the contrary powers.

32. ([27:4-5](#)) *There is no indignation in me; who will give me a thorn and a brier in battle? Shall I march against it, shall I set it on fire together? (5) Or rather, shall I take hold of my strength? Will it make peace with me, will it make peace with me?* Septuagint: "There is no woman who will not have taken hold of it. Who will appoint me to guard the stubble in the field? Because of this enemy I have set her aside. On this account the Lord has done everything that he appointed. (5) I am burnt up; they that dwell in her will say, 'Let us make peace with that one, let us make peace with that one.' "

According to the Hebrew, the meaning here is, I who have always preserved my vineyard throughout the days and nights [cf. [Isa 27:3](#)], to keep the boar from the forest from ravaging it [cf. [Ps 80:13](#)], to keep the beasts from devouring it, am I not indignant, and do I not know how to strike the one who sins, and to pay back to each one what he deserves? Where Aquila recorded *thorn and brier*, *samir* and *saith* is written in Hebrew. These words mean "steel" (*adamantem*) and "locales full of thorn bushes." This is why he says, Who will show me that I am hard, and that I am overcoming my clemency, and that I am *proceeding* to the *battle* and combat with ferocity, that I am *marching against* the vineyard that I previously kept [cf. [Isa 27:3](#)], and that I *set it on fire* what I had previously hedged in with my wall [cf. [Isa 5:2](#)]? *Or* will my *strength* rather do this: I will postpone my anger and save by the clemency of the gospel those who were not kept by the authority of the law? Now according to the Hebrew, this needs to be read emphatically (εμφατικως): Who would make me hard and cruel that I would overcome my nature? For this is signified in the desert and *thorns*, that I destroy it and *set on fire*, as if in a *battle*, that which I have always preserved by my diligent care. *Or rather shall I take hold of my strength*, which doubtless is Christ, and of which we read, "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God" [[1 Cor 1:24](#)], so that he himself may make *peace* with me and reconcile the world?

The Septuagint contains the following meaning. We should interpret this as spoken under

the persona of the church: “I am a strong city,” a city walled in by many enemies, I who in vain have watered the synagogue [cf. [Isa 27:3](#)] that is hostile toward me; “for it will be captured at night, and its wall will fall” [[Isa 27:3](#)]. Moreover, there will be no hostile powers that do not “seize” it. Again I will say, What good is it for me to guard that which has “stubble” in it, not a crop? It is so uncultivated that it is full of briars and thorns. I wanted to save it, but because it behaves in a hostile manner toward me, I have withdrawn from it. And the sons of the apostle said in me and from me, “It was indeed necessary first to speak the word of God to you, but because you have rejected it and have judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles” [[Acts 13:46](#)]. On this account the Lord will do what he threatened, so that everyone in it burns, having been surrounded by a Roman fire; or at least they burn in their vices and sins, and they are unable to put out the fiery javelins of the devil [cf. [Eph 6:16](#)]. For “all who commit adultery” in their hearts [cf. [Matt 5:28](#)] are “like an oven” [[Hos 7:4](#)]. And those who first lived in it, after they cry out, “The city has been captured and burned,” will forgive it. And while reconciling the world to God [cf. [2 Cor 5:19](#)] they will say, “Let us make peace with that one, let us make peace with that one,” that is, with Christ. In their letters they always write, “Grace be with you and *peace* from God the Father and from Jesus Christ our Lord” [[1 Cor 1:3](#)]. In this same prophet, we read of them, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news of peace!” [[Isa 52:7](#)].

Some relate this passage to the churches, that they are indeed guarded by God, but many of them do not bear fruit, and therefore they are set on fire by the passionate flames of a good teacher, so that they shout out and confess their error, and later on they make peace with God, those who are truly called sons of Jacob [cf. [Isa 27:6](#)].

33. ([27:6](#)) *Those who march out from the root of Jacob, Israel will blossom and bud, and they will fill the face of the world with seed.* Septuagint: “Those who are coming, the sons of Jacob, Israel will bud and blossom, and will fill the world with his fruit.”

After the apostles preached the gospel in the whole world and said, “We will make peace” for Christ, “we will make peace” for him [[Isa 27:5](#)], those who will be in the heights from the seed of Jacob and who will have reached apostolic dignity will be called “sons of Jacob.” Then “Israel will bud and blossom,” when it sees that the whole *world* has been filled with the teaching of his sons, and has produced very abundant fruit, fruit which, while they remained in Judea, it had not brought forth.

34. ([27:7](#)) *Has he struck him according to the stroke of him that struck him? Or has he been slain, as he killed those who were slain by him?*

This passage is understood in two ways, either against Jerusalem, so that he is saying that it was not *struck* by God in such a way as she herself *struck* Christ and his apostles; or against the multitude of the Gentiles, that when they persecute and shed the blood of the Christians, the apostles and apostolic men no less will have concern for their salvation and will reconcile them to God.<sup>664</sup>

35. ([27:8a](#)) *In measure against measure, when it will be cast off, you will judge it.* Septuagint: “Quarreling and reproaching he will send them away.”

According to the Hebrew the meaning is this: As Jerusalem has done, so shall it receive;

<sup>664</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (176, 3–0).

according to the *measure* with which it measured, it will be measured back to it [cf. [Luke 6:38](#)]. And it will receive a heaped-up measure at that time when the time of judgment has come, and God has *cast it off*.

According to the Septuagint, what is said here depends on what comes above it [cf. [Isa 27:7](#)]. For Israel will not be struck as it struck, and will not be killed as it killed, Israel who was “quarreling” with the apostles and was “reproaching” its teachers, when it commanded them not to speak in the name of Christ [cf. [Acts 4:18](#); [5:40](#)]. On account of these things the Lord will *cast them off* and expel them from their own flock.

36. ([27:8b](#)) *He has meditated with his harsh spirit*<sup>665</sup> *in the day of heat*. Septuagint: “Was it not you who meditated with a harsh spirit, to slay them with a spirit of fury?”

According to the Hebrew this means, Jerusalem will receive back in the measure by which she measured; on account of this God has *meditated with his harsh* and violent *spirit*, or he has spoken against her *in the day of heat*, that is, in the time of persecution, when there is a more flaming day of indignation and punishments.

According to the Septuagint, it is said to Jerusalem herself or to Israel, “Was it not you” with your very “harsh” and cruel “spirit” and with the “fury” of your blasphemies, who desired to slay the Lord’s apostles and the teachers?

37. ([27:9](#)) *Therefore to these (super his) shall the iniquity of the house of Jacob be forgiven, and this is all the fruit, that its sin should be taken away, because he made all the stones of the altar as stones of ashes broken in pieces; the groves and temples will not stand*. Septuagint: “Therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be taken away; and this will be his blessing, when I remove his sin, when he makes all the stones of the altars shattered as ashes, and their trees and idols will not remain.”

He gives the reasons why the Jews, after they laid their hands on the Lord, will obtain pardon, if they are willing to repent, in order that the Savior’s prayer may be fulfilled: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” [[Luke 23:34](#)]. *Therefore*, he says, *shall the iniquity of the house of Jacob be forgiven*, and *its sin* will be *taken away*, so that the Jew who had prayed a curse upon himself by saying, “His blood be upon us and upon our children” [[Matt 27:27](#)], may deserve God’s blessing. For the gospel will be sown in the whole world through the apostles who were from the stock of Israel; and idolatry will be destroyed, and “altars” will be shattered to dust, *groves* will be burned, *temples* will fall, and knowledge of the Trinity will be preached under the mystery of the one God.

38. ([27:10](#)) *For the fortified city will be desolate, the beautiful city will be forsaken, and will be left as a wilderness. There the calf will feed, and there will he lie down, and will consume its branches*. Septuagint: “And their idols will be set on fire, as a grove, (10) and the flock that dwells far off will be left, as a deserted flock, and for a long time it will be for pasture, and there they will rest, (11) and after a long time there will be in it no green thing, because it has been parched.”

Jerusalem, a *city* once strong and *fortified*, because it did not receive the son of the householder, but said, “Come, let us kill him, because this is the heir, and the inheritance will be ours” [[Matt 21:38](#)], *will be desolate*. And she who was once *beautiful*, of whom it is said in

<sup>665</sup> Or “reath, wind.”

Ezekiel, “You ate fine flour and honey and oil, and you were made exceedingly beautiful” [[Ezek 16:13](#)], and in which he was living of whom it is written, “Beautiful in form beyond the sons of men” [[Ps 45:2](#)], *will be forsaken and will be left as a wilderness*. For the Lord says to the apostles, “Arise, let us go from here” [[John 14:31](#)]. *There the calf* (the Roman army) *will feed*, of which it is spoken in another place as well, using the term *boar*, “A boar from the forest has laid it waste, and a single wild beast has devoured it” [[Ps 80:13](#)].<sup>666</sup> *And there will he lie down, and will consume its branches* using the metaphor of a vineyard and of its slips, so that *no greenness remains in it*, no shoots, but the enemy devours everything.

According to the Septuagint, since they did not receive the good shepherd [cf. [John 10:11](#)], therefore they will be like an “abandoned flock,” and they will lie exposed to the bites of beasts and “no greenness” will remain “in” them, because drought will take possession of everything.<sup>667</sup>

39. ([27:11](#)) *Women who come and teach it will be destroyed in the drought of that harvest. For they are not a wise people; therefore he who made them shall not have mercy on them, and he who formed them shall not spare them*. Septuagint: “Come hither, you women who are coming from a sight; for they are a people of no understanding; therefore he who made them shall have no pity upon them, and he who formed them will not spare them.” In the Hebrew, what is said, *They will be destroyed in the drought of that harvest*, which the Septuagint translated as, “There will be in it no green thing, because it has been parched,” is joined to the next section; according to the Septuagint it is joined to the former sense.

Let us speak, then, first according to the Hebrew. When the time of Jerusalem’s *drought* and reaping and, to be perfectly frank, devastation has come, a hoard of synagogues from the whole world will rush together in order to bewail Jerusalem and console it for its evils. Or, he is speaking openly about the women who with breasts exposed strike their bleeding arms,<sup>668</sup> and the Lord’s prediction is fulfilled: “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but lament for yourselves and for your children” [[Luke 23:28](#)]. And to learn songs of lamentation from *women* is a great misfortune of the people, as was the censure of the people of Israel when in the Book of Judges the Lord accomplished salvation by the hand of the woman Deborah [cf. [Judg 4:9](#)]. Moreover, at the time of the approaching captivity, since the men were silent, the woman Huldah prophesied [cf. [2 Kgs 22:14–20](#)]. Now for this reason, the *women will be destroyed*. They were done in by the lengthy journey, weakness, hunger, and squalor, and they will show the wretched people that *they are not a wise people*, and they have not understood their own Creator, since, when he was neglected and despised by them, *he will not have mercy* on his handiwork and *he will not spare* his own creation.

According to the Septuagint, it is said of Mary Magdalene and another Mary and other women [cf. [Matt 28:1, 9](#)],<sup>669</sup> who were the first to see the Lord rise again, and they grasped his feet and deserved to hear from him, “Do not be afraid, go, announce to my brethren to go to Galilee and there they will see me” [[Matt 28:10](#)]. Concerning those women, well in advance of

<sup>666</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 90 (177, 2).

<sup>667</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (176, 35–77, 1).

<sup>668</sup> Jerome’s phrase “leeding arms” is found in [Quintilian, Decl 10.8; 10.18](#).

<sup>669</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 91 (177, 6–4).

their birth, the prophetic words are declaring beforehand and calling them, “from a sight” of the Lord’s passion and resurrection, to preach the gospel and, according to the Hebrew, to teach Jerusalem, or the land of Israel, that he is Lord and God [cf. [John 20:28](#)]. For though the “people” of Israel did not “have” wisdom at that time, when the Lord suffered, and the prophetic prediction was fulfilled, “Save me, O Lord, for the holy man has failed” [[Ps 12:1](#)], and, “They have all turned aside, they have become unprofitable together, there is none who does good, no, not one” [[Ps 14:3](#)], they are called “women from a sight.” This is so that they may announce to the apostles what they themselves have seen. But Israel, of whom it is said, “Israel has not known me, and my people have not understood” [[Isa 1:3](#)], has provoked to bitterness their own most clement Creator and maker. Thus he never “has mercy on them.” These things are said piously, to be sure, but it is difficult to explain how they are congruent with the other things, and how they may be applied to the time of the consummation of the world.

40. ([27:12a](#)) *And it will come to pass in that day the Lord will strike from the channel of the river even to the torrent of Egypt.* Septuagint: “And it will come to pass in that day the Lord will fence off from the trench of the river even to Rinocorura.”

If he had not added *in that day*, by which we are shown that these things that he is about to say must be joined to what comes above, we could explain the meaning of this section on its own; but now, everything must be related to what is above. Since “the fortified city will be desolate,” and the once “beautiful [city] will be left as a wilderness,” and there “the calf will lie down and consume the shoots” of the vineyard [cf. [Isa 27:10](#)], and everything will be parched; since “there are no people who have understanding,” and on account of their foolishness they have not obtained any mercy from their Creator [cf. [Isa 27:11](#)], therefore, *the Lord will strike*, or “fence off,” *from the channel*, or “stream” *of the river even to the torrent of Egypt*. Consequently, in all of Judea, which was once the promised land, no word of doctrine is found, no knowledge of the Scriptures. And the Apostle speaks about this: “That we should not pay attention to Jewish fables and the commandments of men, who are turned away from the truth” [[Titus 1:14](#)]; and again: “For there are also many disobedient, vain talkers, and seducers, whom it is necessary to rebuke, especially from the circumcision” [[Titus 1:10–11](#)].

Now historically we can say that the *channel* or “stream” of the river is the Euphrates, just as also in the seventy-first Psalm, it is written, “He will rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth” [[Ps 72:8](#)]. Others think it is the Jordan. And this should be noted, that within the confines of Judea, it is called a *river*; within the borders of Egypt, it is called a *torrent*, which has troubled waters, and not continual flow. The Septuagint translated the *torrent of Egypt* as “Rinocorura,” which is a town on the border of Egypt and Palestine. They were expressing not so much the words of the Scriptures as the sense of the words.

Now what we have expressed as *he will strike*, which the Septuagint translated as *συνφραξει*, that is, “fence off,” Aquila and Theodotion translated as *ραβδισει*, which can be understood either as “he will strike with a rod” or “he will recount the number of his flock with a rod.” Thus it is understood not in a bad sense, but in a good sense.

41. ([27:12b](#)) *And you will be gathered together one by one, O children of Israel.* Septuagint: “But all of you, gather the children of Israel one by one!” *O children of Israel*, he says, which Symmachus translated “house of Israel,” when your adversaries have been struck down by the



“stream of the river even to the torrent of Egypt” [cf. [Isa 27:12a](#)], that is from the Euphrates to the Nile, either you yourselves are *gathered* to faith in the Lord, one by one, since the multitude of the Jews did not believe—by which he is signifying that few of the Jews would believe in the Lord and Savior—or possibly, O apostles and apostolic men, since the multitude of Jews does not believe, you, bring back to the sheepfold of the Lord those whom you can from the entire world, as it were the sickly sheep, and “gather” them with the people of the Gentiles. Thus is fulfilled what Paul and Barnabas say to the Jews: “It was indeed necessary first to declare the word of God to you, but because you have judged yourselves unworthy of salvation, behold we are turning to the Gentiles” [[Acts 13:46](#)].

42. ([27:13](#)) *And it shall come to pass, that in that day a noise shall be made with a great trumpet, and those who had been lost will come from the land of the Assyrians, and those who had been outcasts in the land of Egypt, and they shall adore the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.* Septuagint: “And it shall come to pass that in that day that they shall blow the great trumpet, and the lost ones in the region of the Assyrians shall come, and the lost ones in Egypt, and shall worship the Lord on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.”

On the basis of this passage, the Jews make empty promises to themselves that at the consummation of the world, when their own remnant (*helimmenus*) has come, the scattered people would be gathered from the Assyrians and from the land of Egypt, and would come to Jerusalem. And *they will worship their Lord* after the temple has been built. By no means can this stand according to the letter. For those who will believe in Christ will be called not only from the Assyrians and from Egypt, but from the entire world. Therefore, this signifies that at the last trumpet, according to the Apostle Paul [cf. [1 Thess 4:16](#)], all who had been lost among the Assyrians and in Egypt would come to the Lord. And he did not say that all of the children of Israel, but all *who had been lost*, by which he means the multitude of the Gentiles. This means that those who have been tangled up in idolatry and magic and the arts of philosophy would come to faith in Christ and worship him in the church. Now the “great trumpet” can be understood as the word of the Gospel. We also read about this word in this same prophet: “Go up upon a high mountain, you who bring good tidings to Zion, lift up your voice, you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem” [[Isa 40:9](#)]. Therefore, the holy mountain and Jerusalem is that one about which we have often spoken: “You have come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the church of the firstborn ones, who are written in the heavens” [[Heb 12:22–23](#)]. Up to this point it has been spoken about the consummation of the world, from that passage where we began to comment, “Behold the Lord will lay waste the earth and will strip it” [[Isa 24:1](#)], which is contained in the present book. Now, with Christ’s help, or rather, inspiration, let us move on to the ninth book, which will contain the beginning of another prophecy.

1. We are dictating a commentary on the prophet Isaiah at intervals, while occupied with various annoyances. This is why we are now moving on to the ninth book, having completed the eighth, after a considerable interval of time, not without the raillery and detraction of the envious, who without knowing what they hear or say, dare to judge what they do not understand, and to despise sooner than approve. They regard themselves as learned and eloquent if they detract from all writers. Let us despise their jealousy and garrulous murmuring, requesting God's help and saying with the imprecation of the Psalmist, "Scatter the nations that want wars" [[Ps 68:30](#)]. For the Lord's place is in the peace [cf. [Ps 76:2](#)] that surpasses all understanding [cf. [Phil 4:7](#)], which the prophet also desires when he cries out, "Lord our God, give us peace; for you have rendered to us all things" [[Isa 26:12](#)]. But let us now set forth the section of Isaiah, and with Moses let us enter the cloud and the thick darkness [cf. [Exod 20:21](#)], so that our countenance may be glorified [cf. [Exod 34:29](#)], and, according to the Hebrew, his face was "horned." And may the thunder and lightning be heard and turn red [cf. [Exod 19:16](#)], which the common rabble was unable to see.

2. ([28:1-4](#)) *Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, and to the wilting flower of the glory of his joy, who were on the summit of the very fertile valley, erring with wine. (2) Behold the Lord is mighty and strong, as a storm of hail, a destroying whirlwind, as the rush of many waters overflowing, and sent forth upon a spacious land. (3) The crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim will be trodden underfoot. (4) And the wilting flower of the glory of his joy, who is on the summit of the valley of the fertile ones, will be as a hasty fruit before the ripeness of autumn, which when he who sees it will behold, as soon as he takes it in his hand, he will eat it up.* Septuagint: "Woe to the crown of injustice, the hirelings of Ephraim; the flower falling from glory upon the summit of the fertile mountain, you who are drunk without wine. (2) Behold, the Lord's anger is strong and severe, as hail that is driven downward where there is no shady shelter, and that wilts violently; as a great body of water sweeping away the soil and making room for itself. (3) The crown of injustice, the hirelings of Ephraim, will be trodden down with the hands and with the feet, (4) and the flower that fell from the hope of glory will be on the top of the high mountain, as the early fig, which the one who sees it, before he takes it into his hand, will desire to eat it up."

First let us speak according to history, then according to tropology, and finally according to the prophetic prediction. The divine word is speaking against the ten tribes that were reigning in Samaria and were called "Ephraim" owing to Jeroboam, who was from the tribe of Ephraim [[1 Kgs 11:26](#)]. He calls them a *crown of pride*, because compared with the two tribes that were called Judah, they were loftier both in number and strength. He also calls them *drunkards of Ephraim*, who do not understand their own Creator, but instead of the Lord they worship golden calves in Dan and in Bethel [cf. [2 Kgs 10:29](#)]. They were once in the *flower* and *glory* of the Lord, when they were ruled by David and Solomon, and worshiped God in the temple of Jerusalem among the twelve tribes. They were *on the summit of the very fertile valley*, which in Hebrew is expressed as *gesemanim*—now this signifies the place where the Lord was betrayed [cf. [Matt 26:36](#)]*—upon the summit of this valley*, where the temple of the Lord was situated. They were drunk with the wine of *error* and insanity, wine that Jeroboam mixed for them. For this reason he threatens them with the Lord's punishment, that just as a *storm of hail* crushes everything,

and *the rush of over flowing waters* seizes whatever it finds in its path, so it is being destroyed by the army of the Assyrians, and what was left over is transferred to the mountains or cities of the Medes [cf. [2 Kgs 17:6](#)]. But he compares the *glory* of the ten tribes to a *crown* of various flowers, which had such great beauty that just as if someone, upon seeing the προδρομον (early) [cf. [Isa 28:4](#)]<sup>11</sup> fig on a tree before the summer and autumn comes, *eats it up as soon as he takes it in his hand*, so also, when the Assyrian sees the ten tribes, he devastates and *eats them up*, and leaves absolutely nothing behind of the original people in Samaria. Let this be said briefly according to history.

Let us move on to the allegorical meaning, in accordance with the exposition of Hosea the prophet, where we have applied to the heretics Ephraim, Joseph, Samaria, and the ten tribes. They were cut off from the main body of the twelve tribes and abandoned the Lord's temple. Those who are truly a "crown of injustice" according to the Septuagint translation, blaspheming the Lord, do everything for the sake of "hire"; they have fallen "from the glory" of the Lord, and they do not follow the fineness of the manna [cf. [Exod 16:14](#)] and ecclesiastical humility. Instead they pass their time "drunk, without wine," on the most "fertile mountain." On account of this, the "strong and severe anger of the Lord," which will punish them, is compared with "falling hail," which falls not on the roofs but on the heads of mortals; and [it is also compared] with the flooding of many "waters," which "sweep away" whatever it finds in its way. This "crown of injustice" is called "hirelings of Ephraim," who, according to the Apostle, for the sake of base gain [cf. [Titus 1:11](#)] have fallen from the "flower," "hope," and "glory" of their former faith, and continue in pride, and they are the devil's sweetest food, who "eats them up" daily [cf. [1 Pet 5:8](#)].

In accordance with this prophecy, we can say that he would call the scribes and Pharisees who were blaspheming the Lord a "crown of injustice."<sup>22</sup> And they are called "hirelings of Ephraim" on account of Judas, who being from the tribe of Ephraim and from Scarioth, a village belonging to the same tribe, sold the Lord for a price [cf. [Matt 26:14–16](#)]. We think that with respect to the "flower" of apostolic "glory" that truly "fell upon the" very "fertile mountain," of which it is said, "Jacob ate and drank, and he was filled and grew fat (*impinguatus*), and the beloved one kicked back" [[Deut 32:15](#)], or according to the Hebrew, *upon the valley of the fertile ones* (pinguium), that is, *ge semanim*; in this [valley] even the name of the place in which Judas betrayed the Lord is signified [cf. [Matt 26:36](#)]. Now the valley is called *fertile* or *of the fertile ones* on account of its abundance and on account of the scribes and Pharisees, who arrested the Lord there [cf. [Mark 14:43](#)]. It is written of them in the Psalm, "Fat (*pingues*) bulls have besieged me" [[Ps 22:12](#)]. In this section, this *valley* is described for a second time as *of the fat ones*, that is, *ge semanim*, and I am surprised at how the Septuagint at first called it a "fertile mountain" and later a "high mountain." Now the betrayer was drunk not with "wine," but with covetousness [cf. [John 12:6](#)] and with the incurable "anger" of asps [cf. [Deut 32:33](#)], and the devil's food, which entered into him after the morsel [cf. [John 13:27](#)] and was completely "eaten up," because his prayer was turned to sin [cf. [Ps 109:7](#)], and not even his repentance had the

1 The Greek word literally means "unning ahead," "oing in advance," "eing a precursor." [Pliny, NH 16.113](#), uses it of early figs.

2 Cf. *Eus Is* 92 (178, 19–2).

fruit of salvation [cf. [Matt 27:3-5](#)]. The Hebrew word *secchore* is ambiguous and means either “drunkards” or “hirelings.” This is why even Issachar means “there is hire,” and *sachar* means *μεθυσμα*, that is “drunkenness,” and the other translators rendered it “drunkards”; the Septuagint alone translated it “hirelings.”

3. ([28:5-8](#)) *In that day the Lord of hosts will be a crown of glory and a garland of joy to the residue of his people, (6) and a spirit of judgment to the one who sits in judgment, and strength to those who return from war to the gate. (7) But these also have been ignorant through wine, and through drunkenness have erred; the priest and the prophet have been ignorant, through drunkenness they are swallowed up with wine, they have gone astray in drunkenness, they have not known the one who sees, they have been ignorant of judgment, or wonderfully. (8) For all tables were full of vomit and filth, so that there was no more place.* Septuagint: “In that day the Lord Sabaoth will be the crown of hope, which has been woven of glory, to the remnant of the people. (6) They will be left in the spirit of judgment for judgment and for strength, to hinder slaying. (7) For these have been deceived through wine; they err because of strong drink, the priest and the prophet have gone out of their minds because of strong drink, they are swallowed up by reason of wine, they have staggered through drunkenness; they have erred through strong drink, this is their vision. (8) A curse will devour this counsel, if in fact this counsel is for the sake of covetousness.”

After the whole land of Samaria, that is, of the ten tribes, is destroyed by the Assyrian flood, and the crown of pride of the drunkards of Ephraim is trodden under feet [cf. [Isa 28:3](#)] and eaten up in the manner of a timely fig [cf. [Isa 28:4](#)], at that time *to the residues of the people of Israel*, that is, of the two tribes Judah and Benjamin, *the Lord himself will be a crown of victory and a spirit of judgment to the one who sits in judgment.* Doubtless this refers to Hezekiah the king of Judah. *And he will be the strength of those who return from combat out of the entire devastated region and have shut themselves into the city.* In this same prophet we will read about this, when 185,000 armed soldiers of the Assyrian’s army are destroyed by the striking angel [cf. [Isa 37:36](#)]. But *these* too, that is, Judah and Benjamin, were drunk *through the wine of idolatry.* They have shown contempt for their duty to worship at the temple, they have venerated the images of demons, they *have not known the Lord who sees*, who observes all things. For *all their tables* and their entire religious worship *were full of vomit and filth, so that they filled everything, not only in the temple, but on mountain tops and wooded locales, with the filth of idolatry.* And thus the Lord had *no more place* to dwell among them. Let this be said according to the letter.

On the other hand, let us follow the former understanding according to tropology, and let us not leave the Septuagint translators untouched. For when heretics are “eaten up” by the mouth of the devil, those who have ascended the very fertile mountain of pride [cf. [Isa 28:1](#)], “the Lord will be a crown of glory” for those who linger in the church and are few in number compared with the multitude of the very many who go astray. But he will be “in the spirit of judgment for judgment,” because the Lord will wash the filth of the sons and daughters of Zion by a spirit of judgment [cf. [Isa 4:4](#)]; but if anyone has blood, he will be cleansed not by a spirit of judgment but by a fire of burning [cf. [Isa 4:4](#)]. And he will be “strength” for the people, and he will “hinder” them from being “slain” by those who are drunk with the “wine” of dragons [cf. [Deut](#)

[32:33](#)] and “have erred through strong drink.” We have often said that wine is what comes from vines, but “strong drink” is every drink that is capable of causing inebriation and of overthrowing the state of the mind. Aquila translated it in the strict sense as “drunkenness.” That “strong drink” is made either from wheat, barley, or millet. It is also made from the juice of fruit trees and the fruit of palms and from any other kind. Therefore, both the “priests and the prophets” of the heretics “have gone out of their minds through strong drink”; they have been “swallowed up by reason of wine.” Prisca, Maximilla and their Montanus were like this, not knowing what they were saying.<sup>33</sup> They are drunk “with wine” when they wrongly understand and twist the Holy Scriptures, through “strong drink” when they make use of secular wisdom and the little snares of the dialecticians, which deserve to be called not so much chains as “visions,” that is, certain shadows and images, which quickly go away and disappear. “A curse” will take hold of a “counsel” of this sort, those who think that piety is a means of profit [cf. [1 Tim 6:5](#)], and who do everything “for the sake of covetousness.” Even the Apostle spoke about this “vision”: “Giving heed to spirits of error and doctrines of demons, which speak falsehood in hypocrisy” [[1 Tim 4:1–2](#)].

A third explanation is that, after the Lord has overthrown the scribes and the Pharisees, and their associate Judas the traitor, who was a thief from the beginning [cf. [John 12:6](#)]<sup>4</sup>—for he carried the money box for the poor—at that time there may be a “hope” and a “crown of glory” for those who believe in the Lord from the Jews. Doubtless he means the apostles whom he spared to preach the gospel and he did not allow them on the spot to shed their blood for Christ. For all the scribes and Pharisees were drunk with “wine” and “strong drink,” of which things we have spoken above, both “priest” and false “prophet.” But their little snares and plots came to nothing, because even Judas himself, who committed betrayal, did it for the sake of money, and the priests who corrupted the traitor by their money [cf. [Matt 26:15](#)] did it out of fear of their own rejection [cf. [John 11:48](#); [Mark 15:10](#)]. For he made a whip from cords and expelled from the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep, and on his own authority he overturned the seats of those selling doves and the tables of the money changers [cf. [John 2:15](#)], saying to them, “It is written: My Father’s house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a house of business” [[Matt 21:13](#)], or, “a den of thieves” [[John 2:16](#)].

According to anagogy, that Hebrew word that we have expressed as *For all their<sup>44</sup> tables were full of vomit and filth, so that there was no more place*, can be applied to the heretics and to the scribes and Pharisees. Consequently we may say that all their teaching and all their mysteries are full of vomit and filth, so long as they do not digest the food of the Holy Scriptures

3 Montanus, a native of Ardabau, a village in Phrygia, in the late second century (155–60), originated a schism that took its name from him (Montanism) and spread far and wide. It even won Tertullian for an adherent in 207. He claimed to be a prophet and a mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit. Prisca and Maximilla were two of his female disciples who outdid him in prophesying. Allegedly, both had been previously married and left their husbands. The sect initiated new fasts after Pentecost, to which Jerome alludes in [Com in Mt 9.15](#). In his [Ep. 55.3](#) to Marcella, Jerome summarizes the teachings of the Montanists and says that they keep three Lents in the year, as opposed to Catholics, who have one. NPNF2, [6:56](#).

4 The lemma lacks “heir.”

and do not cause it to be life-giving to the entire body; but they have emitted what is premature and stinking, so that God finds *no place in them*. Now I am surprised at Theodotion's intent. What is expressed by the Hebrew word *cisoa*, which Aquila translated as "vomit of filth," and Symmachus merely as "vomit," he expressed as *εμετουδειςαλια*, that is "vomit of *disalia*." I have not been able to find an occurrence of this word in Greek, unless perhaps he fashioned a new term for a new reality, since indeed it has been composed even by the Hebrews. For "vomit" is expressed as *si*, and "filth" as *soa*. Therefore, whatever causes nausea and vomiting can be called *δειςαλια*.

4. (28:9–13) *Whom shall he teach knowledge? And whom shall he make to understand the hearing? Those who are weaned from the milk, who have been driven away from the breasts; (10) for command, command again; command, command again; expect, expect again; expect, expect again, a little there, a little there. (11) For with the speech of the lip, and with another tongue he will speak to this people. (12) To whom he said, "This is rest, refresh the weary one, and this is my refreshing," and they would not hear. (13) And the word of the Lord shall be to them, Command, command again; command, command again: expect, expect again; expect, expect again, a little there, a little there, that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. Septuagint: "To whom will we report evils? and to whom will we report a message? Those who have been weaned from the milk, who have been drawn away from the breast. (10) Expect affliction on affliction, wait for hope upon hope, yet a little, yet a little, (11) because of the mockery of the lips, because of another language, for they will speak to this people, saying to them, (12) 'This is the rest to him that is hungry, and this is the grief (*contritio*),' and they would not hear. (13) And the word of the Lord shall be to them affliction on affliction, expect, expect, hope upon hope, yet a little, yet a little, that they may go and fall backward, and they be crushed and be in danger and be taken."*

Who is worthy of the Lord's teaching, he says, who is worthy of the words of the Savior who says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" [[Matt 11:15](#)], so that what he has accumulated in his ears, he understands in his heart? Who they indeed are, the following verse shows: *Those who have been weaned from the milk, who have been driven away from the "breast,"* who are not nourished on the milk of infancy, but eat solid food [cf. [Heb 5:12](#)], who have been driven away from the breast together with Isaac, because of which joy "Abraham made a great feast" [[Gen 21:8](#)]. Those who deserve to hear the Lord's mysteries and to understand what things of which the priest and prophet were ignorant, having been made drunk and swallowed up with wine. They have gone astray and have not known him who sees [cf. [Isa 28:7](#)], because all their tables are full of vomit and filth [cf. [Isa 28:8](#)]. When the prophets report the things that are coming, the people usually spoke torments to those who were threatening them, since they had not carried out what had been commanded. They derided the prophets with insults: *Command, command again, command, command again*, that is, Instruct, instruct, command what we ought to do. And when they have taken advantage of God's patience, who postpones his wrath in order to show mercy, they were even accustomed to mock them and to say under the persona of prophets, *Expect for a little while, expect for a bit*; the things that we have predicted as coming will come. Now all these things were being said by the people, since they did not believe God's words.



And immediately the prophet adds, By no means will God speak to you in these words, so as to instruct you in what you ought to do, and to hope for things that are coming. Instead he will speak to you by means of his present anger, he who had previously said to the people, *This is my rest, refresh the weary one*. I have labored for a long time, in no one have I found rest. “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head” [[Luke 9:58](#)]. And this is my refreshment, that at some time I may rest among you. Those *who would not hear* have also despised my warnings. For this reason, that which they were accustomed to say in mockery to the prophets, *Command, command again, command, command again, expect, expect again, expect, expect again, a little there, a little there*, and in derision of my patience, so long as they think that I am threatening things that I will never carry out, they will perceive these things being fulfilled in reality, as they *go* to destruction and *fall backward* with an incurable downfall (οπισθοτονω) [cf. [Deut 32:24](#)].<sup>55</sup> They never advance to what is before them, and they are not able to say with the Apostle, “Forgetting what is past, we are stretched forth to what is ahead” [[Phil 3:13](#)]. But they are *broken* and *ensnared*, and *taken*, either by the Babylonian or by the Roman army.

What we have expressed as, *Command, command again; command, command again; expect, expect again; expect, expect again, a little there, a little there*, is written in Hebrew as *sau lasau sau lasau cau lacau cau lacau zer sam zer sam*. A very filthy heresy is accustomed to use these words among all its simple and deceived people, in order to make an error out of the novelty of the words, namely, that the one who knows these words and remembers them during sexual intercourse (*in coitu*)<sup>66</sup> without any doubt would reach the kingdom of heaven. We read in the Apostle, “In other tongues and on other lips I will speak to this people, and not even so will they hear me, says the Lord” [[1 Cor 14:21](#)]. It appears to me that this was taken from the present section in accordance with the Hebrew. And we have observed this in the Old Testament (*testamento*)—apart from a few citations that Luke alone makes use of, who had more knowledge of the Greek language,<sup>77</sup>—wherever anything is expressed from the Old Instrument (*instrumento*), they record it not according to the Septuagint, but according to the Hebrew, following no one’s translation, but rendering the sense of the Hebrew in their own words.

Symmachus, Theodotion, and the Septuagint have perceived different things from this passage, and since it would take too long to speak about everything, let us briefly skim over the Septuagint translators, who are read in the churches. When the Jewish people were rejected, together with their priests and prophets, who were made drunk by strong drink and went astray [cf. [Isa 28:7–8](#)], a curse consumed their counsel, which they formed for the sake of covetousness, “to whom will we report” the coming “afflictions” for the sake of Christ? “To whom” [will we report] “the evils” for the sake of which a crown of virtues is being prepared? Surely to “those who have been weaned off of milk, who have been drawn away from the

5 The Greek word refers to a disease in which the body is drawn back and stiffens, tetanus; cf. [Homer, Od 2.24](#).

6 Or “n the assembly.”

7 In *Hebrew Questions on Genesis* (46:26–7), Jerome says that tradition has it that Luke, being a proselyte, was ignorant of Hebrew.

breast.”<sup>88</sup> Doubtless this signifies the apostles. “Expect affliction on affliction”: but he is speaking to the chorus of the apostles and of all believers, that it should prepare itself not for one but for many “afflictions.” Accordingly, when it has been subjected to affliction and pressed down, it might again hope and have “hope upon hope.” But if the things that have been promised are “a little” bit late, they should be disbelieving; for “a little and a little,” and the things that have been promised will come. “For indeed affliction produces patience, patience testing, testing hope, but hope confounds not” [Rom 5:3–5].<sup>99</sup> And this very affliction will become double “because of the detraction of the lips,” and because of the blasphemies of persecutors with which they rage with rabid mouths against the people of God. On the other hand, the apostles and apostolic men will “speak to the” Jewish “people, saying,” “This is rest to the one who is hungry” for justice [cf. Matt 5:6], “and this is the grief (*contritio*)” and narrowness (*angustia*) that leads to life [cf. Matt 7:14]. The impious “would not hear” those preaching these things. This is why what was being said to the people of God, Endure “affliction,” endure “affliction,” “expect, hope, expect hope, yet a little, yet a little,” will be converted to punishment for those who “would not hear” the Lord’s words, so “that they fall and go backward,” and they run into the “danger” of a siege and of death, and they are “taken” without any end of their miseries.

Now the Hebrew word *dea*, which all the translators rendered as *knowledge*, the Septuagint alone translated as “evils.” This is a clear mistake. For the letters *deleth* and *res* are distinguished by a small curve; so if *dea* is read, it means *knowledge*; if *rea*, it means an evil, not from the evil that is the opposite of good, but from distress (*angustia*).

5. (28:14–15) *Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scornful men, who rule over my people who are in Jerusalem. (15) For you have said, “We have struck up a covenant with death, and we have made a pact with hell (inferno); when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it will not come upon us, for we have placed our hope in falsehood, and by falsehood we are protected.”* Septuagint: “Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you afflicted men, and you princes of this people who are in Jerusalem, (15) because you have said, ‘We have made a covenant with hell, and a pact with death; if the rushing storm should pass, it will not come upon us, since we have made falsehood our hope, and by falsehood we will be protected.’ ”

By the fact that they are called *scornful men*, the present section demonstrates what we said above, that the “princes” of the Jews were accustomed to speak to the prophets with derision: “Command, command again, expect, expect again” [Isa 28:10] and other things similar to these. By such words it is shown that they had not believed in the words of the prophets, but they held their prophecy in contempt. But it is the scribes and Pharisees who *rule over the people of God in Jerusalem*, whom the Septuagint calls “afflicted men” and “princes of the people in Jerusalem.” For they said, not by their words but by their deeds, “We are like the other nations, we have a *pact* and a *covenant with hell* and *with death*; once and for all we have despaired of salvation.” At least the captivity will come after a long time, since you say: “Yet a little, yet a little, expect, expect again” [Isa 28:10]. Therefore, since we will have died, we will not feel this *scourge* of captivity and this “storm.” For we have once and for all believed in “falsehood,” that is, in vain did we have “hope” in God and in his law; and therefore “we are

8 Cf. *Eus Is* 93 (181, 14–5).

9 Cf. *ibid.* (181, 23–4).

protected by falsehood, since we dead ones have avoided the threatening captivity.”

Aquila and Symmachus translated the Hebrew word *sot* as *scourge*; the Septuagint as “storm.” Moreover, everyone translated *chazab* as *falsehood*, in which the Jews placed their hope, the father of which, according to the Evangelist John, is the devil [cf. [John 8:44](#)].

6. ([28:16–20](#)) *Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will lay a stone in the foundations of Zion, a tried stone, a corner [stone], a precious [stone], founded on the foundation; he who believes, let him not hasten. (17) And I will set judgment in weight, and justice in measure, and hail shall overturn the hope of falsehood, and waters shall overflow its protection. (18) And your covenant with death shall be abolished, and your pact with hell shall not stand. When the overflowing scourge shall pass, you shall be trodden down by it. (19) Whenever it shall pass through, it shall take you away, because in the morning at daybreak it shall pass through, in the day and in the night, and only vexation alone will give understanding to what you hear. (20) For the bed is straitened, so that one would fall out, and a short covering cannot cover both.* Septuagint: “Therefore thus says the Lord: Behold, I will lay in the foundations of Zion a precious stone, a choice, a corner[stone], a noble [stone], for its foundations; and he who believes will not be ashamed. (17) And I will set judgment in hope, but my mercy in weights, and those who believe vainly in falsehood, since the storm will not pass by you, (18) and it will not take away your covenant of death, and your hope in hell will not continue, if the coming storm should pass through, you will be trodden down by it; (19) when it shall pass by, it shall take you; in the morning it shall pass by; in the day and in the night there shall be an evil hope. Learn to hear, (20) you who are in distress: we cannot fight, but we are ourselves weak, so that we may be gathered.”

I had told you, he says, “Hear the word of the Lord, you scornful men” [[Isa 28:14](#)], or “afflicted princes of my people,” and do not have a covenant with death nor a pact with hell, you who despise my precepts and have placed your hope in falsehood, and who boast, nay rather, despair and say, “We are protected by falsehood” [[Isa 28:15](#)]. Therefore “the Lord gracious and merciful, patient and abundant in mercy” [[Ps 145:8](#)], says that he will *lay in the foundations of Zion*, for you who are unwilling, a *chosen, tried, precious cornerstone*, of which also the apostle speaks, “As a wise builder, I have laid the foundation” [[1 Cor 3:10](#)], and again, “For another foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus” [[1 Cor 3:11](#)].

That stone is called a stone truly and two times, just as in Leviticus too there is talk of a “man, man,” the word being used twice [cf. [Lev 15:2](#)].<sup>110</sup> It is called a *cornerstone*, since it has united the people of the circumcision with the Gentiles [cf. [Eph 2:11–22](#)]. There is also talk of it in the Psalm: “The stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner” [[Ps 118:22](#)]. Now these builders and stonecutters are those who are now called “scornful men” and “princes of the people that is in Jerusalem” [[Isa 28:14](#)]. We also read about this stone in Daniel, that it was cut from a mountain without hands and it filled the whole world [cf. [Dan 2:34–35](#)]. This refers to the dispensation of the divine offspring who assumed a human body, and to the fullness of divinity that dwelled bodily in him [cf. [Col 2:9](#)].<sup>111</sup>

<sup>110</sup> See n. at [8.15](#).

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 93 (184, 24–6).

Upon this stone, which is called by another term, rock, *petra*, Christ has built his church [cf. [Matt 16:18](#)],<sup>112</sup> and according to the Hebrew he founded it with a firm *foundation*. The one who believes in it “will not be ashamed,” or according to the Hebrew *will not hasten*, namely, lest the coming of Christ may seem to have come late to him. For if he is late, according to Habakkuk, no one loses hope, because the one who is coming will come and will fulfill his promises [cf. [Hab 2:3](#)]. God also promises to *set* himself in him, *a judgment of weight*—“for the Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son” [[John 5:22](#)]*—and justice*, or “mercy” *in measure*, that he may render to each one according to his works [cf. [Ps 62:12](#)] and temper justice and mercy to each one, in accordance with what we read in the Psalms: “Mercy and truth have met together, justice and peace kissed each other” [[Ps 85:10](#)].

The *hail* of my punishment, he says, will *overturn* your *hope* too, and *falsehood*, that is the devil, father of all falsehood [cf. [John 8:44](#)], and a powerful *storm* and an abundance of *waters* will destroy the *protection* under which you thought you would be safe, so that the friendship and *covenant* that you had with *death* and with *hell*, that is, with the devil, perish forever. And the *scourge* or “storm” of which he had said, *When the overflowing scourge shall pass, it will not come upon you*, it will come, *and you will be trodden down by it*, that is, you will endure with a mind of desperation all torments that you thought you would never experience. For it will always rush upon you, and both in prosperity and adversity, you will feel the Lord’s wrath, and a cruel death will ravage you. What should I say about penalties? The dread of punishment *alone* and the fear of torments will correct you leading to salvation and *will make you understand* your evils, and when you have been *vexed*, then you will take note that my prophets have spoken the truth.

And what follows, *For the bed is straitened, so that one would fall out, and a short covering cannot cover both*, has that meaning that we read about in the Apostle: “You cannot drink the chalice of the Lord, and the chalice of demons; you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord, and of the table of idols” [[1 Cor 10:21](#)]; and elsewhere: “What participation has justice with injustice? What fellowship has light with darkness? What concord has Christ with Belial? What part has the faithful with the unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols?” [[2 Cor 6:14–16](#)]. Now he is speaking using a metaphor about a very chaste husband who says to his adulterous wife, “A single bed cannot have room for me and an adulterer together with you, and a short blanket is unable to cover both a husband and an adulterer.” Therefore, O Jerusalem, to whom he speaks also in Ezekiel under the persona of a fornicating wife [cf. [Ezek 16:15–63](#)], and whom at the beginning of Hosea he calls a whore and an adulteress [cf. [Hos 1:2; 3:1](#)], if you want to be united in my embraces, get rid of your idols; if you serve idols, you cannot have me. This has been said in accordance with the Hebrew. The Septuagint version of this reads, “Learn to hear, you who are in distress, we cannot fight, but we are weak ourselves, so that we are being gathered.” I am utterly at a loss to know what meaning this contains and how it is linked with what comes above, unless perhaps the divine word is speaking to the princes of the people, and exhorts them to have hope in God and not in death and hell, and to learn to hear the predictions of the prophets; and they answer that they are unable to fight against the opposing powers because of the “weakness” of the men, and they are not being

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (183, 15–0).

gathered among the people of God.

7. (28:21–22) *For the Lord shall stand up as in the mountain of divisions, he will be angry as in the valley of Gibeon (Gabaon). [Is this] so that he may do his work? His work [is] strange. [Is this] so that he may perform his work? His work is strange to him. (22) And now do not mock, lest your bonds be tightened; for I have heard from the Lord the God of hosts a consummation and a cutting short upon all the earth.* Septuagint: “The Lord shall rise up as a mountain of ungodly men, and shall be in the valley of Gibeon; he shall perform his works with wrath, a work of bitterness, and his wrath shall deal strangely as it were, and his bitterness [shall be] strange. (22) Therefore do not rejoice, neither let your bonds be made strong; for I have heard of things consummated and cut short by the Lord God Sabaoth, which he will execute upon all the earth.”

The Lord promised to lay a precious stone in the foundations of Zion, that hail would overturn the falsehood and hope of the ungodly, and that a powerful storm would destroy the covenant with death and the pact with hell [cf. [Isa 28:16–18](#)]. Since the scornful princes were unwilling to receive it, the Lord demolished his enemies, just as [he did] formerly against the Philistines when David was reigning *on the mountain of divisions*, which in Hebrew is called *farasim*—and this is where the place received its name from—and *just as in the valley of Gibeon*, under the ruler Jesu (*Hiesu*) [cf. [2 Sam 5:20](#)], when his trust in the God who was dwelling within himself said, “Let the sun stand in Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Aijalon (Elon)” [[Josh 10:12](#)], and the sun stood for the length of one day [cf. [Josh 10:13](#)], and many of the foreigners perished; so the Lord will be angry with the scornful and the ungodly.<sup>113</sup> *[Is this] so that he may do his work?* Hardly; for it is not the Lord’s work to destroy those whom he created, which pertains to cruelty more than to clemency, but to do a *strange work*. And again he asks the same thing with different words: *[Is this] so that he may perform his work?* It is not his work to punish sinners, but foreign and estranged from him, that he who is the Savior should punish.

Since then the Lord will rise up from his patience, and will not spare, just as he did not spare in the mountain of *Farasim* and in the valley of Gibeon, I warn you, O scornful men, not to laugh at my prophets; do not think that what they declare will come to pass, if you do not continue in your mockery, the bonds of your sins are tightened—“for each one is tied up by the cords of his own sins” [[Prov 5:22](#)]—or, the time of your captivity is arriving, even supposing the Lord postponed this for such a long time, now he will fulfill in reality and consummate and cut short the bonds, captivity and punishment, or the final day of judgment. And so, I the prophet declare to you those things that I knew would come about *upon all the earth* from the Almighty *Lord God*, in order that you may prevent the wrath that is threatening by means of repentance.

According to the Septuagint the Lord himself is said to be about to arise “as a mountain of ungodly men” and to be “in the valley of Gibeon, to perform his works,” which are all one “work of bitterness.” Let this not appear to be blasphemous; for he did not say that the Lord will *be* “a mountain of ungodly men” but “*as a mountain*,” which to the ungodly and to those who endure it seems to be very heavy. It is just as if a negligent son or some sick person thinks the father or the physician is cruel, if they restore them to discipline and health by means of beatings and cautery. For the Lord will rise and be in the valley of Gibeon for the sake of those who, when

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (184, 25–0).

they stand in a humble place because of sins, are raised up in pride on account of a swollen mind—for Gibeon means “hill”—so that he “performs his works,” which are works of bitterness, when he is compelled to change his clemency, and becomes bitter instead of sweet.<sup>114</sup>

Therefore, you who will endure these things one day, do not rejoice now with that rejoicing with which also the rich man rejoiced, who was clothed in purple at the feast and neglected the poor man Lazarus [cf. [Luke 16:19–21](#)], lest perhaps your bonds be tightened. For the Lord will do these things and will carry out his judgment in reality. I have heard this and have proclaimed everything to you. And as for what he added, “upon all the earth,” understand the borders of Judea according to history; according to anagogy, the borders of the whole world.

8. ([28:23–29](#)) *Give ear, and hear my voice, hearken, and hear my speech. (24) Shall the ploughman plough all the day to sow, shall he break up and hoe his ground? (25) Will he not, when he has leveled its surface, sow black poppy (git), and scatter cumin, and put wheat in order, and barley, and millet, and vetches in their bounds? (26) For he will instruct him in judgment, his God will teach him. (27) For the black poppy shall not be thrashed with saws, neither shall the wagon wheel turn about upon cumin, but the black poppy shall be beaten out with a rod, and cumin with a staff. (28) But bread shall be broken small. But the thrasher shall not thrash it forever, neither shall the wagon wheel hurt it, nor break it with its hooves. (29) This also has come forth from the Lord God of hosts, to make his counsel wonderful, and magnify justice. Septuagint: “Give ear, and hear my voice; hearken and hear my words. (24) Will the ploughman plough all the day? Or will he prepare the seed before he prepares the ground? (25) When he has leveled its surface, will he not then sow the black poppy and cumin, and will he again sow wheat, and barley, and millet, and spelt (*far*) in your borders, (26) and will you be instructed by the judgment of God and rejoice? (27) For the black poppy is not cleansed<sup>115</sup> with harsh treatment, nor will a wagon wheel pass over the cumin; but the black poppy will be beaten out with a rod, and the cumin is eaten with bread; (28) for I will not be angry with you forever, neither shall the voice of my bitterness crush you. (29) And these signs came forth from the Lord. Take counsel, exalt vain comfort.”*

He is now speaking to the same people to whom he had said above, “Hear the word of the Lord, you scornful men, who rule over my people that are in Jerusalem” [[Isa 28:14](#)]. He commands them to *listen* to his voice and *hearken* to his *speech* carefully. Does a farmer always *plow*, he says, so that he casts seed? Does he not first *break up the ground* and turn over his furrows with a plowshare, and break apart the lumps of earth that are lying there with a rake and a hoe? Thus when he has leveled the top surface of the land and first softened the hard soil, then he scatters his black poppy or cumin, and sows wheat, barley, millet, spelt in his borders, in accordance with the variety of land types and seasons; for not everything is sown at the same time. For “spelt,” which the Greeks call ζεαυ, some understand *vetch*. And God educates this farmer, that is, sower, naturally, by his judgment, and teaches him to know what kind of cultivation to apply to which kind of seed.

Finally, when harvest time has arrived, the black poppy and cumin, which are weaker seeds, are not ground up by the wagon wheels, which are driven around like iron-plated saws and are

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (184, 33–9).

<sup>115</sup> Or “runed.”



dragged over the harvested crops; but they are beaten out with a rod and staff, which are commonly called scourges. The bread, however, that is, the wheat from which bread comes, is ground up by the iron wheels, and its whole stalk is crushed into chaff. Nevertheless, it is not always *thrashed* and crushed, nor is it at all times *broken* by the *wheels' hooves*, which is expressed in Hebrew as "by their horses." Thus he has preserved the metaphor for what remains, since he had spoken of *hooves of the wheels*. Because he has named hooves and horses, some want herds of mares to be shown, which are accustomed to be let out to open spaces to trample the crops, but Scripture was unable to speak of what the province of Judea did not have. This however, that is, that the black poppy and cumin are shaken out with a staff and rod, and the grain, barley, and spelt, perhaps also the millet, are crushed by iron wheels, and not forever, is God's judgment, who shows his marvelous plan to all and demonstrates the greatness of his justice to everyone.

We have said these things as a paraphrase, in order to more easily understand the meaning of these things that are said. God governs the human race in a variety of ways: at one time he punishes, at another he shows mercy; sometimes he chastises, at other times he defends; that is, now he plows, now he sows; he harvests the mature crop and tramples in open spaces what has been cut, and he governs his world as he wills. The black poppy and cumin, that is, all the nations that have not received knowledge of him and have not possessed the precepts of his law, he corrects with a *rod* and *staff*; but the grain, that is the Jewish people, he will torment with great punishments. For "to whom more is entrusted, more is demanded from him" [[Luke 12:48](#)]; and "the slave who knows his master's will and has not done it, he will beat with many blows" [[Luke 12:47](#)]; and in another passage it is written, "The powerful will suffer powerful torments" [[Wis 6:6](#)]. Nevertheless, he will not torment them *forever*, for it is one thing to be ungodly, something else to be a sinner.

What we have interpreted with reference to Jews and Gentiles, others set forth about the people and priests, because the common crowd is chastised on the day of judgment with a *rod* and *staff*, like the *black poppy* and *cumin*, but the priests who had the key of knowledge [cf. [Luke 11:52](#)] are tormented with great punishment, and this happens by the Lord's judgment, who shows his marvelous plan to all and the truth of justice, so that he may exact more from those who have received more [cf. [Luke 12:48](#)].

I do not know what the Septuagint intended when it rendered what we have translated as, *The black poppy shall be beaten out with a rod, and cumin with a staff*, as "but the cumin is eaten with bread."<sup>116</sup> Finally, even the ancient translators from Greece, when discussing the Hebrew, were silent about these words, possibly because they had nothing to say.

Now as for the passage that we have recorded in accordance with the Hebrew, *But the thrasher shall not thrash it forever, neither shall the wagon wheel hurt it, nor break it with its hooves*, the Septuagint did not translate this word for word, but in accordance with the meaning: "For I will not be angry with you forever, neither shall the voice of my bitterness crush you." They were showing the refreshment that was coming to the sinners after the torments, and that *this also has come forth from the Lord*, as signs and marvels. This is why sinners, who must be punished later on, are commanded to "take counsel, and exalt" their own "comfort,"

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 94 (187, 5–0).

not “vain comfort,” as was added in the Septuagint, but simply “comfort.” For God would never have commanded them to exalt their own “vain comfort,” which would not have been beneficial to them.<sup>117</sup>

9. (29:1–8) *Woe to Ariel, to Ariel the city which David conquered. Year is added to year, the solemnities have been disclosed. (2) I will make a trench about Ariel, and it shall be in sorrow and mourning, and it shall be to me as Ariel. (3) And I will make a circle round about you, like a sphere, and will cast up a rampart against you, and raise up bulwarks to besiege you. (4) You will be brought down, you will speak out of the earth, and your speech shall be heard out of the ground, and your voice shall be from the earth like that of the python, and out of the ground your speech shall mutter. (5) And the multitude of those who fan you will be like thin dust, and as ashes passing away, the multitude of those who have prevailed against you. And it shall be at an instant suddenly. (6) A visitation shall come from the Lord of hosts in thunder, and with earthquake, and with a great noise of whirlwind and tempest, and with the flame of devouring fire. (7) And the multitude of all nations that have fought against Ariel shall be as the dream of a vision by night, and all that have fought, and besieged and prevailed against it. (8) And as he that is hungry dreams and eats, but when he is awake, his soul is empty, and as he that is thirsty dreams and drinks, and after he is awake, is yet faint with thirst, and his soul is empty, so shall be the multitude of all the Gentiles, that have fought against Mount Zion. Septuagint: “Woe to the city of Ariel, which David besieged. Gather fruits year by year; eat, for you will eat with Moab. (2) For I will grievously afflict Ariel, and her strength and her wealth shall be mine. (3) And I will make a circle over you like David, and will raise a mound around you, and set up towers all around you. (4) And your words shall be brought down to the earth, and your words shall sink down to the earth. And your voice will be as those who speak out of the earth, and your voice shall be weakened to the ground. (5) And the wealth of the ungodly shall be as dust from a wheel, and the multitude of those who have oppressed you as ashes that are seized, and it shall be suddenly in a moment (6) from the Lord Sabaoth. For there shall be a visitation with thunder, and commotion, and a loud noise, a powerful tempest, and devouring flame of fire. (7) And the wealth of all the nations that have fought against Ariel, and all they that have fought against Jerusalem, and all who have been assembled against her, and have distressed her, shall be as one who sees a dream in the night. (8) And they will be as those who are hungry and eat in their dreams, and when they have arisen, the dream is vain, and as a thirsty man dreams as if he drank, and having arisen is still thirsty, and his soul has hoped in vain, so shall be the wealth of all the nations, which have fought against the Mount Zion.”*

What we have translated as *woe* is written in Hebrew as *oi*, which is expressed among them

<sup>117</sup> This passage suggests to some scholars that Jerome adhered to the doctrine of “ercyism,” i.e., the view that all believing Christians will eventually be delivered from punishment. J. P. O’onnell, [\*The Eschatology of St. Jerome\*](#), *Dissertationes ad Lauream* 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 158, thinks that Jerome does not indicate that the punishment to be meted out to the two groups mentioned here is anything more than earthly punishment. “ence, this passage is not usually referred to by those who discuss Jerome’ teaching on the eternity of hell and need not detain us.”

sometimes in the vocative case.<sup>118</sup> Hence he is not lamenting for *Ariel*, but calling to it, although it should be understood as a lament in the present passage. Also, *Ariel* means “lion of God.” And for *city*, which Aquila translated as *πολιχνην*, that is, little town or village, they read in Hebrew as *cariath*. It signifies a village in the strict sense, and in the Syrian language is expressed as *cariatha*. This is also why a villa of forests is called *Cariathiarim*. Finally, even in what is higher up, where we read, “How has faithful Zion become a harlot *city*” [[Isa 1:21](#)], the word *city* is written as *cariath*, that is, villa, which we can call a “little city,” to express Aquila’s translation literally.

Therefore the once very powerful Jerusalem is being called *Ariel*, that is, lion of God; or, as others think, the temple and altar of God that was in Jerusalem.<sup>119</sup> Now Symmachus translated what follows, *that David besieged*, as “fortress of David”; Theodotion translated it as “encircling blockade of David.” It reads in Hebrew as *hana*. A very learned Hebrew explained this to mean “a dwelling place.” If therefore we read, *that David besieged*, we should refer it to that time when David captured Zion, when the blind and the lame offered resistance [cf. [2 Sam 5:6](#)], and Joab was the first to climb to the tops of the houses [cf. [1 Chr 11:6](#)]. But if, on the other hand, we follow Symmachus and Theodotion, this should be understood to mean that David restored and fortified it, *year was added to year*, or “subtracted,” as Aquila translated, *and the solemnities have been disclosed*. For when the temple was overthrown and the Jewish religion was taken away, all of their festivals perished.

And the Lord says that he is *making a trench around Ariel* by means of the Babylonian army, and that *it will be in sorrow and mourning* when it is destroyed by them. And again, under Jeshua (*Hiesu*) son of Jehozadak the high priest (cf. [Ezra 2:2](#); [Neh 7:7](#)), and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel [cf. [Hag 1:1, 12](#)], and Ezra and Nehemiah, when Haggai and Zechariah prophesied, *it shall be as Ariel*, because it contains the image of the ancient temple, but it does not have its splendor and adornment.

Second, the Lord also threatens to make *a circle about Ariel* in a *sphere* and to *cast up a rampart against* her, and to *raise up bulwarks to besiege* her, and let that which he himself says in the Gospel while lamenting Jerusalem be fulfilled: “If you had known the things that are for your peace, for the days shall come upon you, and your enemies will encircle you with a trench, and lay siege, you will be brought down to the ground” [[Luke 19:42–44](#)]; and: “Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the nations till the consummation of the time of the Gentiles” [[Luke 21:24](#)].<sup>220</sup>

For the prophet is now saying these same things using different words, that the one who has been *brought down speaks out of the earth*, and her *speech is heard out of the ground* and her voice is *like a python from the earth*, and she *mutters* like sparrows *from the ground*. Thus by these words he is signifying a *νεκρομαντιαν*<sup>221</sup> of magi, by means of which they are said to call up souls and to hear the thin voices of shades, or rather, of demons. Finally, Aquila has

<sup>118</sup> In Latin the vocative case is the case of direct address.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 95 (187, 25–7).

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 95 (189, 3–).

<sup>221</sup> The Greek word signifies an oracle of the dead, or the place where ghosts were called up and questioned.

translated *python* as magi, which is expressed in Hebrew as *cheb*, which the Septuagint translated, “those speaking from the earth.” By these words the downfall of the temple is proclaimed, which will continue until the consummation of the world. For what has collapsed into ashes is never set up again.

But such a great army of Roman power will entrench you that it is compared with the countless *dust* and *ash* that flies through the air. This is why he compares to *dust* and *ash* not the feebleness of those who have fought against them, but the *multitude*, which is equated to the countless sands. And this will be *at an instant suddenly*, so that in the midst of peace sudden wars arise under Nero, and the *Lord of hosts visits Jerusalem in thunder and in an earthquake and in the whirlwind of a tempest and in the flame of devouring fire*, through which he indicates that the temple is to be burned.

Now when the Romans had conquered the Jews and had overthrown Jerusalem under Titus and Vespasian, they offered for sale in the Capitolium<sup>222</sup> the booty from the former vessels of God. And they thought that what they had done was accomplished by the power and authority of their own deities, not by the wrath of God, as if they will possess all wealth *in a dream* and in a *vision of the night*.<sup>223</sup> And just as *one who goes to sleep hungry* in his dreams thinks about eating, and *one who is thirsty* drinks rivers down his gullet that is parched with thirst, and when he wakes up, his thirst is even more severe, which was mocked by the empty drink, so the *multitude of all nations* subjected to Roman power *that fought against Mount Zion* will have their wealth as if in a shadow and a cloud and in a *dream of the night*, wealth that they will abandon when their destruction comes due.

In the passage where we recorded, *All who have fought and besieged and prevailed against it*, the Septuagint has translated, “And all who have fought against *Jerusalem*,” which is not found in the Hebrew. Also, in the beginning of this section, where we have said, *Year has been added to year*, or “subtracted,” they translated, “Gather fruits,” or “products year by year; eat, for you will eat with Moab.” And the meaning is, Before the acceptable year of the Lord [cf. [Isa 61:2](#)] and of his preaching comes,<sup>224</sup> or rather, two years, of which we read in the canticle of Habakkuk according to the Hebrew, “You will be known in the midst of the two times” [[Hab 3:2](#)], sow to yourselves in tears that you may reap in joy [cf. [Ps 126:5](#)]. It is written in the Gospel according to John that the Lord entered Jerusalem during three Passovers, which amount to two years [cf. [John 2:13](#); [6:4](#); [11:55](#)]. But what follows, “For you will eat with Moab,” is not found in the Hebrew. We can say of this that if they do not gather for themselves the fruit of repentance, they might begin to eat with those who do not enter the Lord’s church forever [cf. [Deut 23:3](#)]. The other things in which the Septuagint seems to be discordant are clear, and from those things that we have expounded, the interpretation of these things is easy.

I know that I have read that Ariel means “my light of God,” which is a completely different word. For here the first syllable is written with *aleph* and *res*; but “light,” which is expressed in Hebrew as *or*, has a letter in between the *aleph* and the *res*, namely *uau*, which is not found in the present word. And everything that is now being said against Ariel pertains to the heretics,

<sup>222</sup> See n. at [5.35 \(14:22–3\)](#).

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 95 (189, 17–7).

<sup>224</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (188, 11–4).

who think that their own doctrine is the light of God, and they must be “conquered” by the true “David”; and all their *solemnities* must be removed, and their present joy must be exchanged for future grief, for those whom God commands to repent, lest they begin to eat with the Moabites and be like the pagans. For he himself will “assault” Ariel and will “encompass” all their power and “wealth” with his own army, and with his “towers,” that is, teachers of the church, he will “bring down to the earth her words,” so that they do not set their mouths against heaven [cf. [Ps 73:9](#)], but they are written in the earth [cf. [Jer 17:3](#)] and speak from the earth, and they become “like dust” struck up “from a wheel,” and “all the wealth” of the ungodly are compared to a “point and moment of time,” when he visits them in his majesty, descending in a “whirlwind” and a “tempest” and in the “fire” of punishment; and they will understand that all their “wealth” and the ostentation of their words and the tricks of their arguments are compared with the “dream of one eating and drinking in vain,” those who have “fought against Jerusalem,” the vision of peace, or against “Ariel,” the strongest lion, and ultimately against “Mount Zion,” upon which the city of the church is situated and cannot be hidden [cf. [Matt 5:14](#)].

10. ([29:9–12](#)) *Be astonished, and wonder, waver, and stagger, be drunk, and not with wine; you are being moved, and not with drunkenness.* (10) *For the Lord has mingled for you the spirit of a deep sleep; he will shut up your eyes, he will cover your prophets and princes, that see visions.* (11) *And the vision of all shall be unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which when they give it to one who knows letters, they will say, “Read this,” and he will answer, “I cannot, for it is sealed.”* (12) *And the book will be given to one who does not know letters, and it will be said to him, “Read,” and he will answer, “I do not know letters.”* In place of *spirit of deep sleep*, the Septuagint translated “remorse” (*compunctionem*), Theodotion “departure of mind,” Aquila  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\phi\omicron\rho\omicron\nu$ , that is “heavy sleep.” The Hebrew expresses this as *thardema*, which Scripture records God sent upon Adam, when the woman was made from the rib of his side [cf. [Gen 2:21](#)]; also, by means of this same term Jonah is described in the ship as snoring in his sleep [cf. [Jonah 1:5](#)].

Now after the overthrow of Jerusalem and of the temple, that is, of Ariel, every prophecy is against the scribes and Pharisees, who while having the key of knowledge do not themselves enter, and they do not allow others to enter [cf. [Luke 11:52](#)]. And they are commanded to become *drunk* and to be *moved* and to *stagger* with stupor and by a marvel, or rather, according to the Septuagint, by the dissolution of their whole body and by a departure of the mind, wavering *not with wine and strong drink*, but with a *spirit of deep sleep* or of “remorse” of the Lord, so that by understanding their own evil, they may at some time repent and say with the prophet, “I writhed in weakness while a thorn is infixed in me” [[Ps 32:3](#)].

Know then, O scribes and Pharisees, you who are *princes* of the Jews, that the Lord is giving back to you your reciprocal influence.<sup>225</sup> For you were unwilling to understand the Lord and Savior when you heard him, and you *shut* your *eyes*, lest you should see him, and you made your ears heavy lest you should hear [cf. [Isa 6:10](#); [Zech 7:11](#)]. Therefore he too *will shut up your eyes*, which are the *prophets*, through whom you saw the knowledge of God, or *he will shut up your eyes* and those “of the prophets,” who are “your princes.” For “the law and the prophets

<sup>225</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 96 (190, 15–7).

were until John the Baptist” [[Luke 16:16](#)] so that to you who do not see, they may see concerning whom the words below report, “And in that day the deaf will hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see and rejoice” [[Isa 29:18–19](#)]. For the Lord has come in judgment, so that the Jews who see may not see, and those who were blind, namely the people of the nations, may see and gaze upon the Lord [cf. [John 9:39](#)].

This is why it is significant that he did not say that the *vision of all* the prophets is *sealed to all who read*, but, he says, it will be sealed to *you* to whom I am now speaking, to whom I am announcing ahead of time these things that are coming, or, according to the Septuagint, he will shut forever the eyes of your princes who boasted that they saw hidden and “secret things.” And, he says, all of Holy Scripture will be shut and sealed to you, that you who think that you *know the letters* of the law and of the prophets, and meditate day and night with an unwearied mouth on the books of the Scriptures, may not understand what you are reading, just as it is written in the Apocalypse of John, “Who is worthy to open the book and break its seals? [[Rev 5:2](#)]. And when no one was found who would open the seals [cf. [Rev 5:4–5](#)], he says that he wept and at least merited the words of God to himself: “Do not weep, behold, the lion from the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered, so that he may open the book and break its seals” [[Rev 5:5](#)]. Now the lion from the tribe of Judah is the Lord Jesus Christ, who breaks the seals of the book, not strictly of one book, namely of the Psalms of David, as many think, but of all the Scriptures, which are written by one Holy Spirit and for this reason are called one book. Ezekiel testifies to this in mystical speech, that it was written inside and out [cf. [Ezek 2:9](#)], in the meaning and in the letter. Moreover, the Savior speaks of this in the Psalms: “In the chapter of the book it is written about me” [[Ps 40:7](#)], not [in the Book] of Jeremiah or Isaiah, but in all of Holy Scripture, which is called one book. Therefore, to the teachers of the Jews up to the present day, who are unable to read and to open the seals and to unfold the mysteries of the Scriptures, if you give this book to an untaught people, who are being devoured by their own teachers [cf. [Ps 14:4](#)], they will admit that they *do not know letters* and therefore cannot read. And of the two evils, it is a lesser one by far to admit ignorance of the law than to boast of wisdom and not to be able to know what is being said.

11. ([29:13–14](#)) *And the Lord said, Because this people draws near with their mouth, and with their lips glorifies me, but their heart is far from me, and they have feared me with the commandment and doctrines of men; (14) therefore, behold, I will proceed to cause an admiration in this people, by a great and wonderful miracle; for wisdom shall perish from their wise men, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.* Septuagint: “And the Lord says, This people draws near to me with their mouth, and with their lips honors me, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching the precepts and doctrines of men. (14) Therefore, behold, I will proceed to remove this people; for I will remove them, and I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will hide the understanding of the prudent ones.”

The Lord used this testimony against the Pharisees in the Gospel of Matthew, saying, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your traditions?” [[Matt 15:3](#)];<sup>226</sup> and again, “Hypocrites, well has Isaiah prophesied of you, saying, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me, but in vain do they worship me, teaching

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 96 (191, 4–5).



doctrines, the precepts of men' " [[Matt 15:7–9](#)]. Here we should take note of what we have warned about on many occasions, that the evangelists and apostles have not translated word for word, nor have they followed the authority of the Septuagint translators, whose version was being read at that time, but as Hebrews and as those instructed in the law, they made use of their own words without loss of meaning.<sup>227</sup>

Now the Jewish people *draws near to God with their mouth and lips* because they boast that they possess the worship of the one God and that they despise idols, *but their heart is far from him*, because they did not receive the Lord Jesus Christ [cf. [John 1:11](#)]. For he who does not receive the Son does not receive the Father [cf. [John 5:43](#)]. And at the same time we may learn how someone *draws near to God* or how one becomes *far from him*, who also says through Jeremiah, "I am a God who draws near, and am not far off, says the Lord" [[Jer 23:23](#)]. But let us draw near to God with our mind, not body, just as also we read about Moses, "Moses alone drew near to God; but the rest did not draw near" [[Exod 24:2](#)]. For he was praying to God in spirit and truth [cf. [John 4:23](#)], and was approaching him in mind and spirit. But those of whom it is written that they are taken from the womb and are educated from childhood till old age [cf. [Isa 46:3–4](#)], and they meditate on the law of God day and night [cf. [Ps 1:2](#)], let them not *draw near to God*, because they accept the traditions of the Pharisees and scribes, which cause them to be *far from God*; and they are whitewashed sepulchers, which appear on the outside to be beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones [cf. [Matt 23:27](#)]. They are the ones who have chosen Barabbas and have rejected the Lord [cf. [Matt 27:21–23](#)].

For this reason he threatens that he will "proceed," according to the Septuagint, not to "remove" them to the Assyrians and Babylonians, but to scatter them into the whole world. According to the Hebrew, he says that he will cause a *great admiration* for the Jewish people and a *wonderful miracle, to destroy the wisdom* of those who have not received the power of God and the wisdom of God [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)], and to hide and conceal the *understanding of the prudent ones*, namely in order that they not find him who is contained in the letter. When writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul recorded a testimony from this passage: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the prudent I will reject" [[1 Cor 1:19](#)]. He explained the same meaning with different words, not that God is hostile to wisdom, of which he is the Father, and through which all human wisdom exists; but he has recorded this with an added word, as it stands in the Hebrew: "of the wise ones" of the people and "of their prudent ones," that is, of the Jewish people. And in fact God has done a *great miracle* among the people after the coming of the Lord and Savior, so that at one and the same time he burned Jerusalem, and destroyed the temple, and all the knowledge of their teachers was removed, when that was fulfilled that was said above, "For behold, the sovereign, the Lord Sabaoth shall take away from Jerusalem and from Judah the valiant man and valiant woman, the whole strength of bread, and the whole strength of water, the giant and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the cunning man, and the old man and the captain over fifty, and the admirable counselor, and the wise builder, and the prudent hearer" [[Isa 3:1–3](#)], and the other

<sup>227</sup> Modern scholars do not necessarily agree with Jerome's assessment here. R. Gundry, [Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art](#) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 305, says that the quotation in [Matt 15:7–](#) "ollows the basically Septuagintal text of Mark."

things that the prophetic discourse has composed.

12. ([29:15–16](#)) *Woe to you who are deep of heart, that you hide counsel from the Lord, whose works are in darkness, and they say, “Who sees us, and who knows us?”* (16) *This thought of yours is perverse, as if the clay should think against the potter, and the work should say to its maker, “You did not make me.” And the thing fashioned should say to him that fashioned it, “You do not understand.”* Septuagint: “Woe to those who make counsel deep, and their works will be in darkness, and they say, ‘Who sees us, and who will know us, and what we are doing?’ (16) Will you not be counted as clay of the potter? Shall the thing made say to its maker, ‘You did not make me wisely?’ Or the thing fashioned to him that fashioned it, ‘You did not make me?’ ”

Even now the word of God is being directed against those same ones of whom he had said above, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and the understanding of the prudent ones I will reject” [[Isa 29:14](#); cf. [1 Cor 1:19](#)], or, as the prophet writes, “I will hide.” They are wise in themselves and prudent in their own sight [cf. [Isa 5:21](#)]. Of them the following text can most justly be understood: “Those who search with searching have failed” [[Ps 64:6](#)], since it is written about the wisdom of God, “For if someone has become perfect among the sons of men apart from your wisdom, he will be *reputed* as nothing” [[Wis 9:6](#)]. Therefore, those who think that God does not know their counsels, since *their works are in darkness*, also say, *Who sees us and who knows us?*

Now both the wise men of the age say these things, and the teachers of the heretics, and the Jewish Pharisees, that no one understands them. They fail to remember that it is said to God, “For darkness will not be dark with you, and night will be illumined as day, and as its darkness, so also its light” [[Ps 139:12](#)]. Adam and Eve were deceived by this error. Upon hearing the sound of the feet of the one walking in the paradise of God, they hid themselves under the tree in which was the knowledge of good and evil [cf. [Gen 3:8](#)]. Cain too, by a similar piece of folly thought that God did not know, when he said, “If you cast me out today from your face, I will be hidden” [[Gen 4:14](#)]. And it is said through Amos concerning the ungodly and sinners, “If they hide themselves from my eyes in the depth of the sea, there will I command the dragon, and he will bite them” [[Amos 9:3](#)].

For this reason, although someone may be wise and in possession of a rather ardent turn of mind, if he does not have God’s wisdom and teaching, we should say of him, “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it have labored in vain; unless the Lord guards the city, he who guards it has watched in vain” [[Ps 127:1](#)]. We may similarly compare this person: Unless the Lord adds knowledge, he labors in vain who thinks that he is a wise man; unless the Lord guards our heart with all vigilance [cf. [Prov 4:23](#)], he watches in vain who thinks that this can be preserved by his own diligence.

He says, *This thought of yours is perverse*, that you think that the *maker* does not know what he made, and that the Creator does not know the creature, *as if the clay and the work should say to its own potter and maker, You did not make me*, or, “You did not make well,” and *you do not understand and the thing you made*. The Apostle makes use of this testimony with different words to the Romans, where he discusses the deep knowledge of God and wants to

silence a calumnious objection of men:<sup>228</sup> “O man, who are you to answer back to God? Does the thing fashioned say to him that fashioned it, ‘Why have you made me?’ Or has not the potter power over the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, another unto dishonor?” [[Rom 9:20–21](#)]. In all of this, the principle must always be observed that the evangelists and apostles have translated into Greek from Hebrew with no loss of meaning, as it seemed good to them.<sup>229</sup>

13. ([29:17–21](#)) *Is it not yet a very little while, and Libanus shall be turned into Carmel (Chermel), and Carmel shall be esteemed as a forest? (18) And in that day, the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and out of darkness and gloom the eyes of the blind shall see. (19) And the meek shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel, (20) for he that did prevail has failed, the scorner is consumed, and they are all cut off who watched for iniquity, (21) who made men sin by word, and supplanted the one reproving [them] in the gate, and they turned aside the just [man] in vain.*

Let the Jews and the friends of a mere simple history reply, those who do not seek the fruit on the tree, but the foliage only and the shadow of words, which quickly withers and perishes. Seeing that in comparison with eternity, the interval of time is brief and short from Isaiah’s times to the dispensation of the flesh that was assumed at the advent of the Lord and Savior, how could it be that at his coming Libanus, a Phoenician mountain, is turned and transferred into Mount Carmel, which is called *Chermel* in Hebrew, and is on the border of Palestine and Phoenicia overlooking Ptolemais?<sup>330</sup> We grant that there is another mountain in the Holy Scriptures called Mount Carmel, on which Nabal of Carmel lived as a foolish and cynical man [cf. [1 Sam 25:2–3](#)]. His wife’s name was Abigail, who married David after her husband died [cf. [1 Sam 25:38–42](#)]. For while the former husband was alive, she was not able to take the true David, lest she be called an adulteress, if she should belong to a different husband [cf. [Rom 7:3](#)]. Moreover, how would *Carmel (Chermel) be esteemed as a forest* and as unfruitful wood? When they find themselves unable to speak to this matter, let them hear that Libanus, which means “whitening,” refers to the Gentile people, who are washed in the Lord and purged of their former filth. Under the persona of the church the whole world goes up and leans upon the Savior, and of him it is said in the canticle, “Who is this who comes up all white, leaning on her kinsman?” [[Song 8:5](#)]. And it is that people who are transferred to *Carmel*, that is, to the knowledge of circumcision, in order to recognize the mysteries of spiritual and true circumcision, and they take the place of the former Jewish people; but those who were unwilling to receive Christ are *esteemed as a forest* and as sterile trees, which are not able to praise the Lord with the fruit trees [cf. [Ps 148:9](#)].

But *when Libanus is turned into Carmel, and Carmel into a forest, then those will hear and*

<sup>228</sup> In [Ep. 120.10](#) to Hedibia (see [appendix 3](#)), Jerome had interpreted these verses as the objection of Paul’ opponents, not Paul’ own view, in close dependence upon Origen, *CRm* ad loc. John Chrysostom agreed in his *Homilies on Romans*.

<sup>229</sup> Modern scholarship would disagree with Jerome and judge that the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles of Paul normally quote the OT directly from the LXX. Cf. K. Jobes and M. Silva, [Invitation to the Septuagint](#) (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 193–9.

<sup>330</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 96 (191, 36).

speak *who were* previously *deaf* and unable to hear the words of the prophetic book, of which we have said above that all Holy Scripture is called one book. For Ecclesiastes says, “The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails deeply fastened in, which have been given by councils from one shepherd” [[Eccl 12:11](#)]. The Savior says to them, “*Effetha*, which means, Be opened” [[Mark 7:34](#)]. And what we have rendered as, *Out of darkness and gloom the eyes of the blind shall see*, the interpretation of this is easy. Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus translated, “The eyes of the blind shall see darkness and gloom,” to show that Christ’s mysteries must be disclosed to the Gentile people, who were previously blind. This accords with what is said, “Dark water in the clouds of the air” [[Ps 18:11](#)]. And in the same Psalm, it is written of God, “He made darkness his hiding place” [[Ps 18:11](#)]. Also, in Proverbs we read, “For by the hearing of these things a wise man will be wiser, and a prudent man will gain direction and will understand a parable, and a dark speech, the sayings and riddles of the wise” [[Prov 1:5–6](#)]. Finally, even Moses, in order to understand and see God, entered into a cloud and gloom [cf. [Exod 20:21](#)], of which it is said in the Psalm, “Gloom is under his feet” [[Ps 18:9](#)].

Now when the previously *blind* either will have viewed each of the mysteries, or, from their blindness and darkness, will have lifted up their eyes to see, so that the true light [cf. [John 1:9](#)] arises for those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death [cf. [Isa 9:2](#)], then the *meek* will add joy in the Lord, of whom it is written, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” [[Matt 5:4](#)], or the *poor*, whose leader says in the Psalms, “This poor man called out, and the Lord heard him” [[Ps 34:6](#)]; and, “He who has judged the poor of the people and saved the sons of the poor” [[Ps 72:4](#)]; of whom it is said to the Jews, “You have spurned the counsel of the poor man” [[Ps 14:6](#)]. So then, let “the one who boasts boast in the Lord” [[1 Cor 1:31](#)], and poor men or those who have lost hope and been despised by men, who had no knowledge of the former law, will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel, who says, “Be holy, for I am holy” [[Lev 11:44](#)].

And there is complete rejoicing, since *he that did prevail has failed, the scorner is consumed*, or the proud and arrogant one, who had said, “I will act in strength, and in wisdom I will remove the boundaries of nations, and will spoil their strength” [[Isa 10:13](#)], who was scorning everyone, to such an extent that even the holy one said, “My loins are filled with deceits” [[Ps 38:7](#)], and *they are all cut off*, or “destroyed,” *that watched for iniquity*, for whom destruction does not sleep [cf. [2 Pet 2:3](#)] because of the evil watches. *Who made* the whole human race *sin by word* of blasphemy, so that they denied the word of God and set their own mouth against heaven [cf. [Ps 73:9](#)].<sup>331</sup> Now he means demons (not the men themselves), who were making men sin in speech, blaspheming by various doctrines. *And they supplanted the one reproving them in the gate* and “judgment,” to the extent that it was in them; and they caused them to *turn aside* from justice, who was “in the gates” of the daughter of Zion, having been lifted up from the gates of death [cf. [Ps 9:13–14](#)]; and he chastised those who hated *the one reproving* “in the gates” [cf. [Amos 5:10](#)]. These things that we have understood of the devil and his angels [cf. [Matt 25:41](#)], the Nazarenes think have been said against the scribes and Pharisees, because the δευτερωται<sup>332</sup> *failed*, who previously were *scorning* the people by the

<sup>331</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (192, 28–93, 2).

<sup>332</sup> Cf. [3:14a](#). The Greek word means interpreters, especially Jewish scribes. Cf. [Eusebius, PE 11.5](#) (513C; M21.825B). M. J. Hollerich, [Eusebius of Caesarea’ Commentary on Isaiah: Christian](#)

very bad traditions, and they stayed awake night and day to deceive the simple. They caused men to sin against the word of God, so that they denied that Christ is the Son of God.

14. ([29:22–24](#)) *Therefore thus says the Lord to the house of Jacob, he who redeemed Abraham: Jacob shall not be confounded, neither shall his countenance now be ashamed, (23) but when he shall see his sons, the works of my hands, in the midst of him sanctifying my name, and they shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall praise the God of Israel, (24) and those who erred in spirit shall know understanding, and they that murmured, shall learn the law.* Septuagint: “Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the house of Jacob, which he separated from Abraham: Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall he now change countenance, (23) but when they shall see their sons, my works, they shall sanctify my name for my sake, and they shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel, (24) and they that erred in spirit shall know understanding, and the murmurers shall learn obedience.” And what follows, “And the stammering tongues shall learn to speak peace,” needs to be marked in front with an obelus.

When, he says, the deaf hear the words of the book and the eyes of the blind see [cf. [Isa 29:18](#)], and Libanus has turned into Carmel, and Carmel is esteemed as a forest [cf. [Isa 29:17](#)], so that the meek and poor rejoice in the Lord [cf. [Isa 29:19](#)], and the proud and the scorner fail [cf. [Isa 29:20](#)],<sup>333</sup> then *Jacob will be confounded*, who is not now in the meantime confounded—but he is signifying the times of Isaiah—and *his countenance will be ashamed*, so that shame and confusion become the occasion of salvation, especially when *he shall see his own sons*, the apostles and apostolic men, who came from the Jewish race, carrying out the Lord’s miracles in the midst of the nations, and *praising* the name of Christ to the Gentiles, and saying, “Our Father, who is in heaven, *sanctified* be your name” [[Matt 6:9](#)]. For they will *sanctify the Holy One*, who has arisen from Jacob, and they will teach the God of Israel among the Gentiles, so that those who have abandoned their idols may say, “How false [were] the idols our fathers possessed, and there was none among them who rains!” [[Jer 16:19](#)]. And at that time *those who now erred in spirit shall know understanding* of God, *and they that murmured* formerly in the desert against the Lord [cf. [Num 14:27, 36](#)] *shall learn the law*, the knowledge of which they did not have previously. For if they had received Moses, they would have received the Lord Jesus Christ as well, because Moses spoke about him [cf. [John 5:46](#)].

That which in the beginning of the section we translated according to the Hebrew as, *Thus says the Lord to the house of Jacob, he who once redeemed Abraham*, and led him forth from the Chaldeans and brought him in to the promised land, is perfectly clear. But what the Septuagint has translated, “Thus says the Lord concerning the house of Jacob, which he separated from Abraham,” can be understood as follows: he has “separated” the scribes and Pharisees, who blasphemed the Lord, “from Abraham,” the one who saw the Lord’s day and rejoiced [cf. [John 8:56](#)]; for if they had been sons of Abraham, they would have done the works of Abraham [cf. [John 8:39](#)].<sup>334</sup> Also, the Apostle argues that they who have faith that is similar to

[Exegesis in the Age of Constantine](#) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), discusses Eusebius’ engagement with Jewish exegesis on 145–3.

<sup>333</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 97 (193, 20–94, 6).

<sup>334</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (193, 11–7).

Abraham's must be called Abraham's sons, that is the Gentile people, who are called Abraham's son not on the basis of works but by faith [cf. [Gal 3:6–9](#)].

15. ([30:1–5](#)) *Woe to you, apostate (desertores) sons, says the Lord, that you would make a plan, and not of me, and would begin a web, and not by my spirit, that you might add sin upon sin, (2) you who walk to go down into Egypt, and have not asked at my mouth, hoping for help in the strength of Pharaoh, and trusting in the shadow of Egypt. (3) And the strength of Pharaoh shall be to your confusion, and the confidence of the shadow of Egypt to your shame. (4) For your princes were in Tanis, and your messengers came even to Hanes. (5) They were all confounded at a people that could not profit them; they were no help, nor to any profit, but to confusion and to reproach.* Septuagint: “Woe to the apostate (*praevaricatores*) sons, says the Lord. You have made a plan, and not by me, and an agreement, not by my Spirit, to add sins to sins. (2) You who proceed to go down into Egypt, but you have not asked me, that you might be helped by pharaoh, and protected by the Egyptians. (3) For the protection of pharaoh shall be to you confusion, and there shall be a reproach to those who trust in Egypt. (4) For there are princes in Tanis, evil messengers (5) will labor in vain to a people who will not benefit them for help, nor for profit, but for confusion and reproach.”

After the prophecy against Ariel and the other things that the previous speech has discussed leading up to this passage [cf. [Isa 29:1–24](#)],<sup>335</sup> now there begins another prediction that is proven to have been fulfilled after the 150 years that transpired between Isaiah and Jeremiah.<sup>336</sup> For Isaiah predicts that history that we read about in the Book of Jeremiah. When Jerusalem was overthrown and all her wealth and princes were transferred to Babylon, Gedaliah the son of Ahikam was appointed over those of the royal race who had remained in Judea. When he was treacherously killed together with his Chaldean companions, “all the *princes* of the warriors, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Azariah (*Jezonias*) the son of Hoshaiah (*Osaías*), and the rest of the common people, from the least to the greatest” [[Jer 42:1–2](#)], approached Jeremiah the prophet and said to him,

Let our prayer fall in your sight, and pray for us to the Lord your God for all this remnant, for we are left but a few of many, as your eyes do behold us, and let the Lord your God announce to us the way on which we should walk, and the word that we should do. [[Jer 42:2–3](#)]

And Jeremiah, after ten days [cf. [Jer 42:7](#)], responded with the Lord's words:

Thus says the Lord the God of Israel: If you will be quiet and remain in this land, I will build you up, and not pull you down, I will plant, and not pluck up, for now I am appeased for the evil that I have done to you; fear not before the face of the king of Babylon, of whom you are greatly afraid. [[Jer 42:9–10](#)]

And after a little bit: “But if you say, ‘We will not dwell in this land’ ” [[Jer 42:13](#)], and “you set your face to go into Egypt, and enter in to dwell there, the sword that you fear shall overtake

<sup>335</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 98 (194, 17–7).

<sup>336</sup> Isaiah (ca. 762–68 BC); Jeremiah (645–70? BC).



you there, and the famine of which you are anxious shall cleave to you in Egypt, and there you shall die” [[Jer 42:15–16](#)]. And proud men responded to Jeremiah, saying,

You are lying; the Lord our God has not sent you, saying, Go not into Egypt, to dwell there, but Baruch the son of Neriah is inciting you against us, to deliver us into the hands of the Chaldeans, to kill us, and to cause us to be carried away to Babylon. [[Jer 43:2–3](#)]

Finally, all the *princes* of the people, when the remnant was assembled together with women and children and daughters of the king, did not listen to the voice of the Lord and entered Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them. And they came to Taphnis [cf. [Jer 43:4–7](#)]. The result of this was that Jeremiah prophesied against the disobedient people the things that are contained in his book, as a sign of the coming captivity.

Therefore, since this was going to happen later, it is predicted many years before, and they are called *deserting* and “apostate sons” who “desert” the *counsel* of God that they had received through Jeremiah. They have followed their own will and *begun a web not through the Spirit* of God, who was ringing out to them in the *mouth* of Jeremiah—now he has recorded the *web* that was *begun* metaphorically, to point to the depraved *counsel*—and they did this to *increase* their former *sins* by means of the sin of contempt and pride.

You who have *gone down*, he says, *into Egypt*, and have not asked at my mouth, not that they have not asked, but that they were unwilling to listen to the counsel of the prophet. They were *hoping for help in the strength of pharaoh*, and *trusting in* the “protection” or *shade of Egypt*. For *strength of pharaoh*, which is recorded twice in this passage, the Hebrew has written *maoz*. We have taken note of this, that what we read in Daniel’s last vision as “god *maozim*” [[Dan 11:38](#)], not as Porphyry dreams up, “god of the hamlet of Modein,” but we should understand this as “strong and powerful god.” But *pharaoh* is a term of royal authority among the Egyptians,<sup>337</sup> and each one is called by a unique designation, as for example Pharaoh Necho and Pharaoh Hophra (*Uafre*) [cf. [Jer 44:30](#)], just as we prefix the Caesars and Augustuses with the proper names of kings.

*And the strength of pharaoh shall be to your confusion*, he says, *and the confidence of the shadow of Egypt to your shame*. Jeremiah writes the same thing, that in the Egyptian city Tahpanhes (*Tafnis*) he buried stones at the gate of the house of pharaoh [cf. [Jer 43:9](#)], and said to the men of Judea,

Thus says the Lord of hosts the God of Israel: Behold I will send, and take Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon my servant, and I will set his throne over these stones that you have hid, and he shall set his throne over them, and he shall come and strike the land of Egypt, such as are for death, to death, and such as are for captivity, to captivity, and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and he shall kindle a fire in the temples of the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them, and he shall lead them away captives, and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd puts on his garment, and he shall go forth from thence in peace. [[Jer 43:10–12](#)]

<sup>337</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 98 (194, 36–95, 3).

For when the Egyptians were conquered, they and the Judeans who had fled to the Egyptians were taken captive.

And what follows, *Your princes were in Tanis, and your messengers came even to Hanes*, must be read mockingly and emphatically. For they have spurned the counsel of God and sent their princes to Tanis, a city in Egypt, in which the pharaoh's royal house was located, and in which, under Moses, very many signs and wonders were carried out. For the Psalm speaks of "the miracles that he wrought in the land of Egypt, in the plain of Tanes" [Ps 78:12]. And likewise Isaiah speaks against Egypt, "Where now are your wise men? Let them announce and say to you what the Lord Sabaoth has devised against Egypt: the princes of Tanis have failed" [Isa 19:12–13].<sup>338</sup> He records that they failed at that time when the Lord entered Egypt on a light cloud [cf. Isa 19:1]. Now we do not read of the Egyptian city *Hanes* in any other passage, but from the fact that he says, *Your messengers came even to Hanes*, we understand that it is the furthest city of Egypt near the Ethiopians and the Blemmyae.<sup>339</sup> The Septuagint translated this as, "Evil messengers will labor in vain," who are confused over the people of Egypt, which were unable to "benefit" them, and they became an everlasting "reproach" [cf. Dan 12:2]. Some think that this passage is written against the ten tribes in Samaria, because when they asked for *help* from the Egyptians, they were captured by the Assyrians [cf. 2 Kgs 17:4].

According to tropology, all who, by showing contempt for the worship of God, return to their own vomit, and who, by destroying the name of sons, are addressed by the most offensive name of dogs (*canes*)<sup>440</sup> [cf. Prov 26:11; 2 Pet 2:22], "make a plan not by" the Lord, and they strike "an agreement, not by the Spirit" of the Lord. Moreover they "add sins to sins," so that having been overcome by the alluring vices, they likewise receive depraved doctrines, and "go down into" the darkness of "Egypt," "asking to be helped by pharaoh," who reigns in Egypt, whose "protection" leads to shame and everlasting "reproach" [cf. Dan 12:2]. For his "princes" are "in Tanis, that is, in the "lowly" and rejected "command"; they are "evil messengers," who will "labor in vain to a people, who will not" be able to "benefit them." For just as the salvation of disciples helps holy teachers, so the destruction of deceivers destroys the patriarchs of those who fled to Egypt for help.

16. (30:6a) *The burden of the beasts of the south*. The Hebrew expresses this as *massa behemoth negeb*, which the Septuagint translated as, "The vision of the four-footed beasts in the desert."

The exposition above, which we have composed in great detail as an unfolding of the history, provides the interpretation of this passage. According to prophetic usage, a *burden*, that is, a weight and bundle of torments and punishments, came upon not only Babylon [cf. Isa 13:1], Philistia [cf. Isa 14:29], Moab [cf. Isa 15:1], Damascus [cf. Isa 17:1], Egypt [cf. Isa 19:1], the deserted sea [cf. Isa 21:1], Dumah as well [cf. Isa 21:11] and Arabia [cf. Isa 21:13], the valley of Zion [cf. Isa 22:1], and finally Tyre [cf. Isa 23:1], but upon the *beasts of the south* too, which the Septuagint translated as "four-footed beasts in the desert." But it signifies the tribe of Judah,

<sup>338</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (195, 3–).

<sup>339</sup> An Ethiopian people; cf. *Plin. 5, 8, 8, § 46*.

<sup>440</sup> The word *dog* in the singular (*canis*) is similar to *Tanis*; in the plural dogs (*canes*) resembles *Hanes*.

which is situated in the southern part near the desert, and those who rejected Jeremiah's prediction, and when Jerusalem had been captured they were unwilling to live in Judea, but fled through the desert to the Egyptians. And they are rightly called *beasts of the south* or "four-footed beasts in the desert," for they have rejected the knowledge of God, and having despised his command, they have fled to the images of Egypt, placing their hope in pharaoh. The one who leans on him is like one who leans on a staff that is broken: it pierces the hand of the one leaning on it [cf. [Isa 36:6](#)]. Also the sons of Korah were speaking of *beasts* of this sort in the Psalm: "When man was in honor, he did not understand; he is compared to the foolish *beasts* and has become like them" [[Ps 49:12](#)]. And what follows, "This way of theirs is a stumbling block to them" [[Ps 49:13](#)] can rightly be understood about the present section, that the way of the desert will be their downfall.

I know that I have read that the *beasts of the south* and "four-footed beasts in the desert," who forsake the borders of Judea and have fled to the darkness of Egypt, are applied to the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenlies and the rulers of this darkness [cf. [Eph 6:12](#)], who destroyed all the riches and former wealth through the longing for Egypt. That one will have said this. Should we discuss this tropologically, as things we have not yet set forth, we will say that all who have devoted themselves to the errors of the world, having deserted the Creator, are the "four-footed beasts in the desert" of this world. They hope in vain for help from the world, since they have abandoned the true help of God.

17. ([30:6b-7a](#)) *In a land of tribulation and distress, the lioness and the lion, from these the viper and the flying basilisk, carrying their riches upon the shoulders of beasts, and their treasures upon the hump of camels to a people who will not be able to profit them. (7) Egypt will help in vain, and to no purpose.* Septuagint: "In tribulation and distress, the lion and lion's whelp, thence asps and the young of flying asps. Those who bore their riches on donkeys and camels to a nation that will not profit them, (7) the Egyptians have profited you pointlessly and in vain; tell them that this consolation of yours is vain." *Lion* is written in Hebrew as *lehis*, and *flying basilisk*, which the Septuagint translated "the young of flying asps," is expressed in Hebrew as *ενπρηστης* flying away. We can express it as "one burning," and it is called a *saraph* in Hebrew. On the other hand, in that passage that we translated *carrying upon the shoulders of beasts*, all have translated *beasts* similarly, as *πωλους*, that is, the colts of donkeys.

Now *the land of tribulation and distress* signifies the very extensive desolation of the desert through which the remnant of Jerusalem fled down to Egypt, with Johanan son of Kareah and the daughters of King Zedekiah, when everything that they could have had was removed [cf. [Jer 43:5-7](#)]. We should understand both the *lioness* and the "lion's whelp" metaphorically, as referring to Jerusalem and its people. For Balaam says in Numbers, "Behold, the people will rise up as a *lioness*, and will raise itself as a lion; he will not lie down till he devours the prey and drinks the blood of the slain" [[Num 23:24](#)]. It is also written in Ezekiel, "Take up a lamentation for the prince of Israel, and you will say, 'Why did your mother, a lioness, lie down among the lions, why did she bring up her whelps in the midst of the young lions?' " [[Ezek 19:1-2](#)].

And to keep us from thinking that Holy Scripture is truly speaking about a *lioness* and a *lion*, he speaks against the nature of reality, that from a *lioness* and a *lion* are born the *viper* and the

*flying basilisk*, or the “flying young of asps,” that is to say, that from evil parents worse children are generated. Even the Gospel said of them, “Generation of *vipers*, who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?” [[Matt 3:7](#)]. And to the land of Israel, it is said, “You are a land in which it has not rained, nor have showers come upon you in the day of wrath, whose princes in its midst are like roaring *lions*, seizing the prey, devouring souls through power” [[Ezek 22:24–25](#)].

These “young of” *vipers*, or of “flying asps,” that is, the princes of the people and the whole crowd of the ungodly, came *to a people who were not able to profit them*. For Jeremiah says that the Lord delivered Pharaoh Hophra (*Uafre*), king of Egypt, into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those seeking his life [cf. [Jer 44:30, 27](#)], and all the men of Judah, who were in the land of Egypt, were consumed by sword and famine, even to the point of massacre, to such an extent that the Hebrews hand down the tradition that before Nebuchadnezzar captured Egypt, Jeremiah and Baruch avoided the imminent captivity by their deaths.

Someone has explained the *lioness* and the “whelp of the lion” of the heavenly Jerusalem and of the people who have been deceived out of it, and the *flying basilisk* and the *vipers* and the “young of asps” of that “crooked serpent” of which we read above [cf. [Isa 27:1](#)], and of which the Savior said in the Gospel, “I saw Satan falling like lightning from heaven” [[Luke 10:18](#)]. He is called the dragon in the Apocalypse, and he dragged down one-third of the stars with him to the earth [cf. [Rev 12:4](#)], stars that lost their former wealth by the perversity of their judgment, bringing them down into the Egypt of this world.

18. ([30:7b–c](#)) *Therefore I have cried out concerning this, “It is pride only, sit still.”* I do not know what the Septuagint intended when it translated this, “Tell this, since this consolation of yours is vain.” On the other hand, Symmachus has  $\tau\alpha\rho\alpha\chi\eta\ \epsilon\iota\sigma\iota\nu\ \kappa\alpha\tau\omicron\iota\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu$ , that is, “There are tumults that they may dwell in.” Aquila translated the Hebrew word *reheb* as  $\omicron\rho\mu\eta\mu\alpha$ , that is, “violence” and “pride,” Symmachus as “disturbance,” the Septuagint as “vanity,” Theodotion as “breadth.” For the word is written with the three letters *res*, *heth*, *beth*, and these same three are written in the Psalms, “I will mention Rahab and Babylon to those who know me” [[Ps 87:4](#)].

And the meaning is, Since help among the Egyptians is vain, I have commanded her, that is, Jerusalem, or *I have cried out*, that the Egyptians had merely the name and pride of a kingdom without the power, and Israel should have stayed or dwelled in its own land, they should not seek in vain for help from the weak.

19. ([30:8](#)) *Now, therefore, go in and write for them upon a box, and inscribe it carefully in a book, and it shall be on the last day for a testimony forever.*

The Hebrews say that since there is one Spirit in the prophets, and since all times have been linked together with God, for Jeremiah<sup>441</sup> to be commanded is also a command of God, to *go in* to Egypt and *write for them upon a box*, which is wooden and not subject to decay,<sup>442</sup> or, as Symmachus translated it,  $\epsilon\pi\iota\ \pi\tau\upsilon\chi\eta\nu$ , that is, upon a very wide tablet; but *for them*, doubtless referring to the Jews, and to explain it *carefully in a book*, so that there is no difficulty in the reading. Thus when the prediction is fulfilled in reality, then let them understand that the words of the prophets are true. We are skipping what is clear in order to linger in what is rather

<sup>441</sup> A textual variant reads “saiah.”

<sup>442</sup> For the same word, see [Jerome, Ep. 64.9](#).

obscure.

20. ([30:9–11](#)) *For it is a people that provokes to wrath, and lying sons, sons that will not hear the law of God, (10) who say to the seers, “Do not see,” and to them that behold, “Behold not for us those things that are right, speak unto us pleasant things, see errors for us.” (11) Take away from me the way, turn away the path from me, let the Holy One of Israel cease from before us.*

It is clear that they have provoked God to wrath, being *unwilling to listen* to the words of Jeremiah. Those who said to him, *Do not see for us*, because we are *unwilling*, do not forbid to us the *way* of Egypt and do not announce *those things that are right*, but *speak* what is *pleasant* to us, that we should go to Egypt, which heaps sins upon sins [cf. [Isa 30:1](#)]. Why do you pour out upon us what we do not gladly hear? Why do you show a *way* on which we do not want to walk? Why do you frequently repeat in our ears, Thus says the Lord, *the Holy One of Israel*? [[Isa 45:11](#)]. *Let that preaching cease* from us.

According to tropology, every heretic is called a *son*; for “they went out from us, but they were not of us” [[1 John 2:19](#)]. Those who do *not hear the law of God* with the ears of the inner man, and say to the teachers of the churches, *Do not see for us those things that are right*, do not threaten us with the fires of Gehenna, but promise the kingdom of heaven, so that paradise may be opened to us after a life of luxury and delights. Why do you show me the Lord’s *way*, on which I do not gladly walk? Why do you repeat the name of the *Holy One of Israel*, or the “word of Israel,” which does not enter the secret recesses of my heart? This is indeed being said as well to the negligent people of the church, if they reject the strict standards of their teachers and prefer flatterers.

21. ([30:12–14](#)) *Therefore, thus says the Holy Lord of Israel: Because you have rejected this word, and have hoped in calumny and tumult, and have leaned upon it, (13) therefore shall this iniquity be to you as a breach that falls, and is found wanting in a high wall, for suddenly its grief (contritio) shall come, when it is not hoped for, (14) and it shall be broken small, as the potter’s vessel is broken all to pieces with mighty breaking (contritione), and no potsherd shall be found of its fragments, wherein a little fire may be carried from the hearth, or water be drawn out of the pit.*

He is saying, since you said above, “Let the Holy One of Israel cease from before us” [[Isa 30:11](#)], or, as the Septuagint translated it, “Remove from us the word of Israel,” therefore, *Thus says the Holy One of Israel*. And he repeats himself to you who are unwilling, so that you may understand that the one whose warnings you have neglected punishes. *You* had confidence *in the calumny* and “falsehood” of the Egyptians, and *you leaned upon* their *tumult*, or objection and pride, as Symmachus and Theodotion translated; *therefore this iniquity* or sin will be turned *to you*, so that you may be like a *wall* of a very strong and captured city *that suddenly falls*, whose “sudden destruction” has “come,” for this is how the Septuagint translated it.

Here is the meaning according to the Hebrew: Just as a *breach* of the highest *wall*, which has dragged a lengthy destruction, can be restored with difficulty and receive its former beauty, so a “sudden” *grief shall come* to you. And I will make use of a comparison: just as a *potter’s vessel*, if it *is broken all to pieces with mighty breaking* (contritione), it is reduced to bits to such an extent that hardly a tiny *potsherd* remains *of its fragments, wherein a little fire may be carried*,

or a little *water be drawn out of a hole or pit*, so you, when you will have gone in to Egypt, with Nebuchadnezzar pursuing you there, you will perish in a massacre.

The heretics too, and every doctrine contrary to the truth, trust *in calumny* and “falsehood,” and, according to the Septuagint, they murmur against their own Creator. For this reason the city of their impiety will be destroyed, which Cain built [cf. [Gen 4:17](#)], upon whom sudden destruction will come, when it will have been captured by men of the church, and is so destroyed and diminished that nothing remains in it that can rekindle the extinct fire, and supply at least a muddy bit of water to the thirsting people.

22. ([30:15–17a](#)) *For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: If you return and be quiet, you shall be saved; in silence and in hope shall your strength be. And you were unwilling, (16) and have said, “No, but we will flee to horses”; therefore shall you flee. “And we will mount upon swift ones”; therefore they will be swift who will pursue after you. (17a) A thousand men for fear of one, and for fear of five shall you flee.* Septuagint: “Thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: When you shall turn back and mourn, then you will be saved and you will know where you have been; because you were trusting in vanities, your strength became vain. And you were unwilling to listen, (16) but you said, ‘We will flee upon horses’; therefore shall you flee. ‘And we will be on swift mounts’; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. (17) A thousand will flee at the voice of one, and many will flee at the voice of five.”

*The Holy One*, he says, whose name I had kept quiet about above, is *the Lord God* himself, who speaks to you both through me and through Jeremiah. If you repent, and abandon either the vices or error of depraved counsel, and stay in Judea, not fearing the violence of the Babylonians, but my precepts, *you will be saved. Be quiet* and hope in the Lord, and grasp the strength of faith in my promises. You who despise life-giving precepts *have said* in your desperation, *No*, it will not be as you say, *but we will flee to Egyptian horses*, and we will spur them on and advance at swift pace toward them. Because you have said these things, you will indeed flee and enter Egypt by a destructive course, but the Babylonians will be swifter, who will pursue you all the way to Egypt; and such great terror and dread will seize hold of Egypt that a thousand Egyptians will not be able to resist a single Chaldean, and there will be an enormous multitude of those who flee from five of the enemy.<sup>443</sup> This accords with what we read in Deuteronomy: “The Lord will make you to fall down before your enemies; by one way you will go out toward them, and you will flee from their face seven ways, and you will be scattered throughout all the kingdoms of the earth” [[Deut 28:25](#)].

According to anagogy and the Septuagint version, the divine word is exhorting all sinners to repentance, and the heretics in particular, that when they “turn back” from their vices “and mourn” and repent, they may be “saved”; and “then” let them understand “where” they “have been” previously, and that they put hope “in vanities” “in vain.” And although he exhorts them to repentance, in spite of this they trust in false teachers and in the uncertainty of the world, and, “unwilling to listen” to the words of God, they long for Egyptian “horses,” and they rejoice in their swiftness, things that the Lord has forbidden them to multiply [cf. [Deut 17:16](#)]. Therefore, men of the church will swiftly “pursue” them, and “a thousand” men and a disorderly throng of refugees will not be able to endure the “voice of one” warrior or “of five”

<sup>443</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 98 (196, 31–3).



fighters, which we ought to refer to the mind and to the *five* senses.

23. (30:17b) *Till you are left as the mast of a ship on the top of a mountain, and as an ensign upon a hill.* Jeremiah also writes that when those who had fled to Egypt were killed by the sword and famine, a few remained who returned to Judea [cf. [Jer 44:27–28](#)]. And just as when a ship has been shattered and its frame has been broken to pieces, a single tree remains, which is called the *mast*, and it is set up as an *ensign* on the top of a mountain or on the height of a *hill*, so scarcely anyone remains as an *ensign* and vestige to demonstrate the power of God. And at that time, he says, the whole remnant of Judah, who are now entering the land of Egypt in order to dwell there, will know, when they have returned to the land of Judea, whose word, whether mine or theirs, is fulfilled.

24. (30:18) *Therefore the Lord waits, that he may have mercy on you, and therefore by sparing you he will be lifted up, because the Lord is the God of judgment. Blessed are all who wait for him!*

This is the great clemency of God, that he *waits* for our repentance, and until we are converted from vices; he restrains his powerful hand, lest he be forced to strike. But the reason he has mercy and spares is so that his mercy may be exalted, and the goodness of the Creator may become known to all. Or at any rate, this accords with what he says in the Gospel: “When I am lifted up, I will draw all things to myself” [[John 12:32](#)]. The reason he is lifted up on the cross is in order to spare everyone. For he is *the God of judgment*, and *blessed are all who wait for the Lord*, who *waits* for their own conversion. Now the words that follow will show whose conversion this refers to and what it consists in.

25. (30:19a) *For the people of Zion will dwell in Jerusalem.*

The Jews relate these things to the time of Cyrus, when the people returned from Babylon to Judea under Zerubbabel and Jeshua the high priest [cf. [Hag 1:1, 12](#)]. But as we have already repeatedly said, all the promises that transcend the insignificance of that time we should relate to the coming of Christ, when the formerly captive people was liberated by the passion of the Lord and dwelled in Zion and in Jerusalem, namely in the “watchtower” and “vision of peace,” that is, in the church. On the other hand, the word of holiness that is added in the Septuagint, which said, “For the *holy* people will dwell in Zion,” can be interpreted this way, so that we should say that no one dwells in Zion except the one who is holy and hears the Lord saying, “Be holy, for I am holy” [[Lev 11:44](#)].

26. (30:19b–c) *Weeping you shall not weep, pitying he will have pity on you. At the voice of your cry, as soon as he shall hear, he will answer you.*

When you have returned to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem, you will not weep as you had wept before, but your weeping will be turned to joy: “For blessed are those who weep, for they will laugh” [[Luke 6:21](#)]. And after you have cried out and said to God, “I cried out with my whole heart, hear me, O Lord” [[Ps 119:145](#)], and again, “I cried out, have mercy on me, and I will keep your commands” [[Ps 119:146](#)], and elsewhere, “I waited in the morning and cried out” [[Ps 119:147](#)], and your *voice* was so clear that it reaches the heavens, *at once the Lord will answer you*, and you will be like Moses, of whom it is written, “Moses spoke and the Lord answered him” [[Exod 19:19](#)].

27. (30:20a) *And the Lord will give you spare bread, and short water.*

If we relate these things to the time of Zerubbabel, the interpretation is easy. For joy was not perfected under him, since David says, “When the Lord converted the captivity of Zion, we became as comforted ones” [[Ps 126:1](#)]. Consequently they did not receive full and perfect consolation, but the likeness of consolation. But according to the Apostle Paul and to this same prophet Isaiah [cf. [Isa 10:22–23](#); [Rom 9:28](#)], the word of the gospel at the advent of the Savior is being predicted, as *spare bread, and short water*. In place of the intricately complex observations and commands of the law, it has recapitulated all things in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” [[Matt 19:19](#)]. “For the Lord has made his word consummated and abbreviated on the earth” [[Isa 10:23](#)].

28. ([30:20b–21](#)) *And he will not cause your teacher to fly away from you anymore, and your eyes shall see your teacher, (21) and your ears shall hear the word of one admonishing [you] behind [your] back: “This is the way, walk in it, and not to the right hand, nor to the left.”* Septuagint: “And those who deceive you shall no more at all draw near to you, for your eyes shall see those who had seduced you, (21) and your ears shall hear the words of those who [went] behind you to deceive you, who said, ‘This is the way, let us walk in it, either to the right or to the left.’ ”

The Septuagint edition and the Hebrew are quite discordant on this passage. First, then, we will treat the common edition (*vulgata editio*), and afterward we will follow the order of truth.<sup>444</sup> The “eyes” of their heart [cf. [Eph 1:18](#)] have understood and perceived the truth, and have recognized with the total reasoning of the mind those who had previously “deceived” them; moreover, their “ears” have been instructed and have perceived the “words of those deceiving behind the back”—for they always hasten to deceive that blind part of the body, in accordance with what we read in the Psalm: “That they may shoot in the dark at the upright in heart” [[Ps 11:2](#)]. These people assume for themselves such great authority that they teach either to the “right or the left,” that is, either good things or evil. They are unwilling to discuss things rationally with their disciples, but they teach them to follow their own predecessors. When that happens, then those who were previously deceiving them will not be able to approach them anymore, after they have perceived that they have been understood.

On the other hand, the explanation according to the Hebrew is both easy and true. For when the Lord has given “spare bread” and “short water” to those who believe [cf. [Isa 30:20a](#)], *he will not cause* that one who teaches man knowledge *to fly away from them anymore*, but his *eyes shall always see his teacher, and his ears shall hearken to the word of one admonishing behind the back* and saying, *This is the right way, walk in it, and not to the right hand, nor to the left*. This accords with what is read elsewhere: “We will not turn aside to the right hand nor to the left, we will go on the royal way” [[Num 20:17](#)].<sup>445</sup> For whatever is beyond measure in either direction is a vice, and concerning the “right hand” direction it is said, “Do not be excessively just” [[Eccl 7:17](#)]. But there is no doubt that the things on the *left* are placed on the side of the goats and of those who perish [cf. [Matt 25:33, 41](#)].

29. ([30:22](#)) *And you will defile the plates of your graven things of silver, and the garment of*

<sup>444</sup> The former term refers to the *Vetus Latina*, Old Latin translation of the Greek LXX. The “rder of truth” refers to Jerome’s new translation of the Hebrew.

<sup>445</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 99 (198, 30–1).

*your molten things of gold, and you will scatter them as the uncleanness of a menstruous woman. You will say to it, "Go forth."* Septuagint: "And you will defile the idols plated with silver and gold, and you will grind them to powder and scatter them as the water of a menstruous woman, and you will cast them away as dung."

When you have understood the truth, and when those who deceive do not approach you, but your eyes see your teacher and your ears always hear, This is the way, walk in it, not to the right hand, nor to the left [cf. [Isa 30:20–21](#)], then you will "grind to powder and scatter" all the errors and "idols" and likeness of truth, which the craftsman had composed with his tongue in the splendor of eloquence. This is what the *silver* means. The gold signifies the reason of wisdom. And you will judge them so unclean that you compare them to the filthiest blood of a *menstruous woman*, which the Septuagint translated with different words, as "water of a menstruous woman."

30. ([30:23a–b](#)) *And rain will be given to your seed, wherever you will sow in the land, and the bread of the corn of the land will be most plentiful and rich.* Septuagint: "Then there will be rain to the seed of your land, and the bread of the corn of your land will be plenteous and rich."

It is written in the Book of Kings that after the false prophets were killed by Elijah, *rain* was given to the land of Israel [cf. [1 Kgs 18:40, 45](#)], and that the *bread* of Elisha [cf. [2 Kgs 4:42–44](#)], and later of the Savior, was very *plentiful and rich*. In fact it had so much abundance that many thousands of men were satisfied from it [cf. [Matt 14:15–21](#)]. So too in the present passage, unless first the "idols gilded with silver and gold" have been "ground to powder" [cf. [Isa 30:22](#)], and reputed to be a dung pit [cf. [Phil 3:8](#)], *rain* and the very *plentiful and rich bread will not be given to the spiritual seed*. For virtues do not enter unless the vices have withdrawn.

31. ([30:23c–24](#)) *The lamb in that day will feed spaciously in your possession, (24) and your bulls, and the colts of donkeys that till the ground, will eat mingled provender as it was winnowed on the floor.* Septuagint: "And your cattle in that day will feed in a fertile and spacious place; (24) your bulls and your oxen that till the ground, will eat chaff mixed with winnowed barley."

In the abundance of all things, when the heavenly rain comes down and that bread which came down from heaven [cf. [John 6:33](#)], which the one who eats will never hunger [cf. [John 6:35](#)], *lamb*s will feed in a most spacious place, who follow the lamb wherever he goes [cf. [Rev 14:4](#)], and who are always on his right [cf. [Matt 25:33](#)]. But the *bulls*, the leaders of the flock, of which we read, "The congregation of *bulls* with the heifers of the peoples" [[Ps 68:30](#)], and the *colts of donkeys*, sitting upon which the Lord entered Jerusalem [cf. [Matt 21:2, 5, 7](#)], who *till the ground, will eat from the floor* when it has been *winnowed*, so that in this way nothing in their food is mixed with the chaff. In Jeremiah it is written about this, "What is the chaff to the corn? says the Lord" [[Jer 23:28](#)]; and the Gospel speaks of things that are burned with unquenchable fire [cf. [Matt 3:12](#)].

On the other hand, according to the Septuagint, the "cattle," which are not yet filled with reason and wisdom, and one of whom says to God, "I have been made as cattle with you" [[Ps 73:22](#)], "will feed in a" very "fertile and spacious place," which does not produce thorns and thistles [cf. [Gen 3:18](#)], but flows with milk and honey, like the land of Israel [cf. [Exod 3:8](#)]. This location has bestowed full freedom on those who feed. But the "bulls and oxen that till the

ground,” that is, the apostles and apostolic men, of whom the Apostle Paul also interprets what is written, “You shall not muzzle an *ox* that is treading; does God care for oxen?” [[1 Cor 9:9](#)]<sup>—</sup> but surely he is speaking about those who “till” their own “ground” and of whom the same one says, “We are God’s field, God’s building” [[1 Cor 3:9](#)]. For the Father is the farmer and Christ is the vine [cf. [John 15:1](#)]<sup>—</sup>they will “eat chaff mixed with winnowed barley.”

We read that Isaac, too, sowed “barley,” and since he was among foreigners he received a hundredfold crop of barley [cf. [Gen 26:12](#)]; and Hosea hired an adulterous woman for a core and a half core of “barley” [cf. [Hos 3:2](#)]; the Savior, too, satisfied with “barley” loaves five thousand men who were still serving the [five] senses of the body and following the law of Moses [cf. [John 6:9–10](#)]. In another passage the one who breaks the five loaves of the law and reduces them to fragments filled four thousand men with wheat bread [cf. [Mark 8:9, 19–20](#)], who were following the number of the Gospels. People of this sort both eat part of the chaff, while they follow the letter in certain respects, and yet they gradually advance through the chaff and barley, that they may come to the grain.

32. ([30:25](#)) *And there will be upon every high mountain, and upon every elevated hill streams of running waters in the day of the slaughter of many, when the tower shall fall.*

On this passage, the Jews apply the *many* who have been slaughtered and the falling *towers* to the power of the Roman Empire. The Apostle also speaks of these things: “Provided only he who is at present restraining it does restrain, until he is gotten out of the way” [[2 Thess 2:7](#)]; that is to say, because at that time the blessedness of the people of Israel would be so great that not only valleys and fields, but all *mountains* and *hills* are irrigated with flowing *waters*. Now we should understand the *mountains* and *hills* of those who have been elevated to the heights by their virtues, “those who hunger and thirst for justice” [[Matt 5:6](#)], those whom the Lord summons to drink. For “he who drinks” from his waters “will never thirst again” [[John 4:14](#)]. This is also why we read in the Psalm, “Bless the Lord from the fountains of Israel” [[Ps 68:26](#)]; and in the Gospel it is said of everyone who drinks from the waters of Jesus that rivers of living water flow from his belly [cf. [John 7:38](#)]; and the saint says to God, “Since there is a fountain of life with you” [[Ps 36:9](#)].<sup>446</sup> The purest river comes forth from it, of which the Scripture once again relates, “The rush of the river gladdens the city of God” [[Ps 46:4](#)]; and in another passage, “The river of God is full of water” [[Ps 65:9](#)], namely, that river who says through Jeremiah, “They have forsaken the fountain of living water” [[Jer 2:13](#)].

But this will happen at that time when very many have been *slain*, or “perish,” “for *many* are called, but few are chosen” [[Matt 20:16](#)]<sup>—</sup>and when *the towers have fallen*, either the powers of demons, or all the proud and arrogant and great ones in this world, of whom it is also said in the Psalms, “I saw the ungodly man lifted up and exalted like the cedars of Libanus, and I passed by and he was not, and I looked for him and his place was not found” [[Ps 37:35–36](#)]. Those who moved their feet from the east, whose languages were confused at Babylon, longed to build these *towers* [cf. [Gen 11:2, 7, 9](#)], as well as those “upon whom the *tower* of Siloam fell” [[Luke 13:4](#)].

33. ([30:26](#)) *And the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun will be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when the Lord will bind up the wound of*

<sup>446</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (200, 12–0).

*his people, and will heal the stroke of their wound.* Septuagint: “And the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun [will be] sevenfold, in the day when the Lord will heal the grief (*contritionem*) of his people, and will cure the pain of your wound.”

I am surprised at how above the same Septuagint translated as “brick” and “wall” the Hebrew words found in the present passage, *labana* and *hanna*, which Aquila translates “white” and “paleness,” by which he means the moon and sun. I am referring to that passage where it is written, “And the moon will blush and the sun will be ashamed” [[Isa 24:23](#)], which the Septuagint translated, “The bricks will decay, and the wall will fall.” Yet now, following the same Hebrew words, they have translated them as “moon” and “sun.” This is the source of my suspicion that they did not go astray from the beginning, but gradually their version was corrupted, through the fault of copyists. For it is impossible that those who in this passage translated the same words well would have gone astray in the passages higher up.

“On the day of the slaughter of many” [[Isa 30:25](#)], therefore, when the proud and arrogant fall, and those who set their mouth against heaven [cf. [Ps 73:9](#)] have learned that they are the earth, the *light of the moon will be as the light of the sun*, when the Lord gives a new heaven and a new earth [cf. [Isa 65:17](#)], and the form of this world passes away [cf. [1 Cor 7:31](#)], that the moon and the sun may attain to the rewards of their effort and course. For indeed, “the expectation of the creation awaits the revelation of the sons of God, because even the creation itself will be liberated from servitude to corruption unto the freedom of the glory of the sons of God” [[Rom 8:19, 21](#)],<sup>447</sup>—although some who understand these things as organs of light claim that they are insensible.

Therefore, the *moon* will receive the radiance of the *sun*—and it is not surprising to understand this about the brightest element to which the ruler of the night [cf. [Gen 1:16](#)] has been handed over, since it is also written about the saints, “The just will shine like the sun” [[Matt 13:43](#)]—and the *sun* will receive a *sevenfold* light, just as there was light for seven days when the world was created from the beginning—although the Septuagint did not translate “seven days”—when *the Lord will have bound the wound of his people*, or “healed the grief of his people,” when that which is written will be fulfilled: “Pain, grief (*maeror*) and groaning will flee” [[Isa 35:10](#)], when, as the fullness of the Gentiles enter in, all Israel will be saved [cf. [Rom 11:25–26](#)]; or at any rate, when the vengeance will have come for those whose souls cry out from under the altar, “How long will you not avenge our blood from those who dwell on the earth?” [[Rev 6:9–10](#)].<sup>448</sup> And consider this, that he did not say when he “heals the grief of his people” Israel, or Jacob, but simply “of his people,” in order to indicate all who serve God.

Some apply this passage and everything that is contained in this section of promises to the heavenly Jerusalem and to the return of his people, when that which is written will be fulfilled: “Heaven and earth will pass away” [[Matt 24:35](#)]. Others apply it to the time of Elijah, and they say that he is the one of whom it is written above, “Your eyes will see your teacher, and your ears will hear the word of the one warning behind the back” [[Isa 30:20–21](#)]. At that time, they say, in accordance with the fables of the poets and the golden age of Saturn, streams of milk

<sup>447</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (200, 20–3; 200, 28–01, 2).

<sup>448</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (200, 26–8).

flow from “mountains and hills,” and the purest honey drips from the leaves of the trees.<sup>449</sup> Those who receive these things will adopt the fable of the thousand years, too, and the Savior’s earthly empire [cf. [Rev 20:4–7](#)] by means of a Jewish error. They fail to understand that John’s Apocalypse weaves together the marrowy mysteries of the church under the surface of the letter.

<sup>449</sup> Cf. [Ovid, \*Met\* 1,111–12](#).



## [THE TENTH BOOK]

1. The tenth book, which we now have in hand, will be lesser than the ninth and eleventh in number of lines, but not in greatness of meaning. For it is followed by a historical narrative about Sennacherib, Rabshakeh, and King Hezekiah that will not be able to be joined to the things preceding it, owing to the enormous length of the book, nor can it be separated, because of the content of the achievements. And so, as you wanted, Eustochium, virgin of Christ, and as has been generally approved, just as I dictated the previous books, so, if Christ will smile upon it, I will also dictate this one and the remaining ones. Thus I will join the prophecies to one another, and not tear them from one another and separate the end of one from the beginning of another. Moreover, I hear that a scorpion, a mute and venomous animal, is muttering something or other about the former promise<sup>11</sup> made in my brief commentary on the prophet Daniel; or rather, it is trying to strike, being about to die in its own venom.<sup>22</sup> The dirges and mournful songs for it have not yet been made public to me, and therefore my response has been postponed.<sup>33</sup> And obedience to you is all the more necessary, and to the holy and extremely learned man, your brother<sup>44</sup> Pammachius, who by insatiable eagerness compels me through a letter to finish Isaiah and move on to Ezekiel, while I am still stuck in the same mud,

1 *Sponsionem*—n alternate reading is *responsionem*—eplv.

2 Rufinus of Aquileia is the apparent referent here. In [Apology against Jerome 2.35](#), Rufinus had criticized Jerome's *Preface to the Vulgate Daniel*, in which Jerome rejected the canonicity of the LXX additions to Daniel. Jerome responded to this criticism in [Apology against Rufinus 2.33](#) by disingenuously claiming that in that preface, he had merely reported contemporary Jewish objections to the Christian version of Daniel and that their views were not his own personal views. However, in his *Commentary on Daniel*, written just before the *Commentary on Isaiah*, not only did Jerome not defend the LXX additions to Daniel, he reaffirmed the Jewish critique. J. Braverman, [Jerome's Commentary on Daniel: A Study of Comparative Jewish and Christian Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible](#) (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1978), 50, describes Jerome's answer to Rufinus as "eak." Thus Rufinus successfully exposed and convicted Jerome of Judaizing in respect to his preference for the Jewish canon of Scripture over against the Christian canon. Being convicted like this would certainly help explain why Jerome continued to rage against Rufinus until his death: he is projecting his own guilt on the man who caught him in the deception.

3 Rufinus died in Sicily in 411. At the beginning of the sixth book in his *Commentary on Ezekiel*, Jerome referred to his death by saying that the "erpent was buried." F. X. Murphy, [Rufinus of Aquileia \(345–11\): His Life and Works](#) (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1945), 221, writes, "here is no evidence linking Rufinus with the attacks that Jerome felt he had been directing against him."

4 I.e., brother-in-law.

worn out by weakness of age and of body and by the lack of secretaries who could help me by their services. Moreover I hardly believe that I will finish the middle section of Isaiah in this book. But if I complete this, as you pray, I will then have to tackle the remaining things as well, which will commence in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah [cf. [Isa 36:1](#)].

2. ([30:27–29](#)) *Behold, the name of the Lord comes from afar; his wrath burns and is heavy to bear. His lips are filled with indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire. (28) His breath (spiritus) is as a torrent overflowing even to the midst of the neck, to destroy the nations unto nothing, and causing the bridle to go astray that was in the jaws of the people. (29) There will be a song for you, as the night of the sanctified solemnity, and joy of heart, as one who goes with a flute, to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the Mighty One of Israel.* Septuagint: “Behold, the name of the Lord comes after a long time, burning wrath with glory; the speech of his lips is speech full of anger, and the anger of his wrath shall devour as fire. (28) And his breath (*spiritus*), as water drawing into a valley, shall reach as far as the neck, and be divided to trouble the nations for vain error, and error will be cast away, and will take them in their sight. (29) Must you always rejoice, and go into my holy places continually, as if celebrating a feast and rejoicing, so that you go in with a flute to the mountain of the Lord, to the God of Israel?”

Let us first speak according to the Hebrew. What is said depends on what came before [cf. [Isa 30:1–26](#)].<sup>55</sup> The prophetic discourse had rebuked those who displayed contempt for the help of God and fled to Egypt out of fear of the Babylonians. It had warned that those going down there would die. And in turn, after their punishment, he promises that those who had not wanted to listen to him will live in Jerusalem, not merely under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, but he promises greater beatitude to all those believing the word of God at the consummation of the world, when rivers of water will flow over all the mountains and hills, and towers will fall, killing many, and the moon and the sun also will give a brighter light, when the Lord will bind up and heal the wound of his people [cf. [Isa 30:26](#)]<sup>56</sup>—although some assert by means of hyperbole that these things were fulfilled in the land of Judea in the times of Cyrus, who alleviated the captivity of the people.

Therefore, because rewards were promised to the good and obedient, now, on the contrary, punishment is announced to the evil and scornful. For let the Lord fulfill his own design, and come after a long time to punish the sinners, and pronounce sentence on them all, and by the breath (*spiritu*) of his mouth slay the impious [cf. [2 Thess 2:8](#)], whom he addresses as having been a *bridle of the people*, not one that guided those subjected to it, but one that “dragged” into ruin those who were submitted to it. And he also makes a comparison with the *torrents* that are *overflowing even up to the neck*. Hence he testifies that the end of all things has come; for just as the *torrent* drowns him whose *neck* it has reached, so the judgment of God will allow no one to go away unpunished. When, however, he will have destroyed the *bridle, which was in the jaws* of all the *nations* together with the nations subjected to it, and reduced them to nothing, then for you saints, he says, who obey my commands, there will be a *song as the night of the sanctified solemnity*, when you came forth from Egypt, and as on the solemnity of the Passover when you threw off the yoke of servitude to Egypt, saying, when Pharaoh had been drowned in the Red Sea, “Let us sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously magnified” [[Exod 15:1](#)]. And

5 Cf. *Eus Is* 100 (201, 13–1).

there will be for you such great *joy* of mind that you imitate those who *go with flutes*, bearing the first fruits to the temple and carrying gifts for the winepresses of God [cf. [Pss 81:1; 84:1](#)]. They show the joys of mind with song. I have touched briefly on these things in this brief discussion according to the Hebrew.

In both versions, however, one should take note that it is not the Lord, but the “name of the Lord” that “comes after a long time,” of which it is said in the Psalms, “Blessed is he who comes *in the name of the Lord*, the Lord God, and he has given us light” [[Ps 118:26–27](#)].<sup>66</sup> He himself says in the Gospel, “I have come *in the name of* my Father, and you did not receive me” [[John 5:43](#)]. And beautifully, with the voice of human impatience, he is said to come “after a long time.” “How long, O Lord, will you forget me unto the end? How long do you turn away your face from me?” [[Ps 13:1](#)]. His “burning wrath” also “comes with glory,” in order that we may fear in his majesty the one whom we scorned in his humility. This very thing is also written in the Psalms: “God will come manifestly, our God, he will not keep silence; a fire will *burn* before him, and round about him a very great tempest” [[Ps 50:3](#)]. For he himself says in the Gospel, “I came to cast *fire* upon the earth, and would that it were already *burning!*” [[Luke 12:49](#)]. Again, it is read in another Psalm, “The voice of the Lord who cuts through a flame of *fire*” [[Ps 29:7](#)]. Consequently the wise flame consumes whatever in the world is made of hay, wood, [or] straw [cf. [1 Cor 3:12](#)]. This is also why God is said to be a consuming *fire* [cf. [Deut 4:24; Heb 12:29](#)].

As for what is added, “And the anger of his wrath shall devour as fire,” many of our people<sup>77</sup> explain the “wrath of the fury of the Lord” as the devil, to whom we are handed over for punishment. According to the Book of Samuel, he incited David to number the people of God [cf. [2 Sam 24:1; 1 Chr 21:1](#)]. Moreover, the Apostle speaks of “handing over” a man of this sort “to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved” [[1 Cor 5:5](#)].<sup>88</sup> Here, however, this *wrath* and “anger of the wrath of the Lord” will do nothing by its own choice, but it will act because it was commanded to do so. This is why it follows, “The speech of his lips is a speech full of anger.” Also, “his breath (*spiritus*), as water drawing into a valley shall reach as far as the neck,” that it may cause the punishment to overflow onto sinners. It “will be divided” on account of the quality of their merits, that it may *destroy* and “trouble the nations,” whom “vain error” had seduced, and they would understand that they have been made to stumble. This is why it is said to men of this sort, who had the upper hand by means of the power of this world and who took delight in their own error, that they will not always be doing this.

Some of our people think that this passage and the content of the whole chapter are spoken principally against heretics and all teachings that are contrary to the truth. For when the time of judgment will come, they would not “go into” his “holy places” and “mountain,” that is, the church “of the Lord,” nor would they collect riches in the name of religion, and indulge in excess, as though they were “celebrating a feast” of the Lord. The Jews understand these things to be about the nations of Gog and Magog, whom they think will come from the north, that is, from the region of Scythia. Ezekiel speaks about this in greater detail [cf. [Ezek 38–39](#)].

3. ([30:30–33](#)) *And the Lord shall make the glory of his voice to be heard, and shall show the*

6 Cf. *ibid.* (201, 26–7).

7 Cf. *ibid.* (201, 27–0).

8 Cf. *ibid.* (201, 35–02, 8).

*terror of his arm, in the threatening of wrath, and the flame of devouring fire; he will crush to pieces with whirlwind, and hailstones. (31) For at the voice of the Lord the Assyrian shall fear being struck with the rod. (32) And the passage of the rod shall be strongly grounded, which the Lord shall cause to rest upon him. With drums and harps, and in great battles he shall overthrow them. (33) For Topheth has been prepared from yesterday, prepared by the king, deep, and wide; its nourishment is fire and much wood, the breath (flatus) of the Lord as a torrent of sulfur kindling it. Septuagint: "And the Lord shall make the glory of his voice to be heard, and he will show the wrath of his arm with wrath and anger and devouring flame of fire; terribly shall he flash like lightning, and as water and hail descending with violence. (31) For at the voice of the Lord the Assyrians shall be overcome, by the stroke with which he shall strike them. (32) And it shall happen to him from every side from which he had hope of assistance in which he trusted. They in turn shall fight against him with drums and with harp. (33) For you will be deceived before the days; has a kingdom been prepared for you also? [Rather], a deep valley, wood piled, fire and wood of many. The wrath of the Lord [shall be] as a trench set on fire with sulfur."*

I could have quickly indicated to readers what seemed fitting to say according to the Hebrew. But what shall I do about the zeal of some who denounce my work as incomplete unless I shall also have discussed the version of the Septuagint translators? Therefore, let me follow the order of discussion that I have begun.

The *voice* of the *Lord* and his precept will be made known to all, and the strength of his *arm* will be manifest to everyone, when the time of retribution will come, of *flame* and *whirlwind* and *hail*, which will fall with the greatness and weight of *stones*. As we have said, Ezekiel writes about this in his prophecy, with a full discussion of Gog and Magog [cf. [Ezek 38–39](#)]. "At" the command of his *voice*, *the Assyrian shall fear being struck with the rod*. This refers to all the ungodly, all who imitate the hostile nation. It is not that the Assyrian alone will be struck in the day of judgment, but by "the Assyrian" we should understand the devil. After all, it follows, *And the passage of the rod shall be strongly grounded that the Lord shall cause to rest upon him*. And this is the meaning: by no means will he strike him with the *rod*, and raise it again, and like those who kill, bring the beating to an end. Rather, he will cause him to remain as a *strongly grounded* and deeply rooted thing in his punishments. But if it is understood this way, when will the devil repent, especially since it is said to sinners, "Go into the eternal fire that God prepared for the devil and his angels" [[Matt 25:41](#)]?<sup>99</sup> *With drums and harps and in great battles he shall overthrow them*, that is to say, with the joy<sup>110</sup> of all, the Lord will *overthrow* the demons and all the impious. For *from yesterday* and from times past, *Topheth has been prepared* by the Lord and *king*, that is, wide and spacious [cf. [Matt 7:13](#)] Gehenna, which burns them with eternal flames. *The nourishment of it is the kindling of fire, and much wood*, that is, the perpetual flames and sufferings of sinners. And, as the prophetic discourse had spoken beforehand of an oven and furnace of burning fire [cf. [Isa 30:27](#)], it preserves the metaphor, that we may know

9 This statement is directed against Origen. Cf. J. P. O'onnell, [The Eschatology of St. Jerome](#), Dissertationes ad Lauream 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 153.

<sup>110</sup> *Gaudio*. A variant reads *gladio* (sword).

that it is set on fire by the *breath (flatu)* and spirit (*spiritu*) and also by the will of the Lord, mixed with *sulfur*, because it excites the flames in order to make their torments more bitter.<sup>111</sup>

Furthermore, it is said in the Septuagint, “At the voice of the Lord the Assyrians shall be overcome by the stroke when he shall strike them, and it shall happen to him from every side from which there had been hope of assistance for him, in which he trusted, they in turn shall fight against him with drums and with harp.” This means that those who once had been subjugated to him would rise up against the devil and fight against him with joy and gladness by a sudden “turn,” when they understand their error and destroy him by whom they had been “deceived.” And it is spoken to him, because he deceived himself from the beginning, judging his own “kingdom” to be eternal, for whom Gehenna and eternal sufferings have been “prepared.”

4. (31:1–3) *Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, placing hope in horses, and putting their confidence in chariots, because they are many, and in horsemen, because they are very strong, and [who] have not trusted in the Holy One of Israel, and have not sought after the Lord. (2) But he the wise one has brought evil, and has not removed his words, and he will rise up against the house of the wicked ones, and against the aid of those who work iniquity. (3) Egypt is man, and not God, and their horses are flesh, and not spirit, and the Lord has put down his hand, and the helper shall fall, and he that is helped shall fall, and they shall all be consumed together.*

After the burden of the beasts of the south [cf. [Isa 30:6](#)], and those who carried their riches into Egypt to the people who could not profit them, those who “hoped for help in the strength of pharaoh and trusted in the shadow of Egypt” [[Isa 30:2](#)], under the pretext of returning to Jerusalem and alleviating the captivity under Cyrus,<sup>112</sup> the prophetic discourse has announced the consummation of the world and the perfect blessedness of the just. Now it returns to those same ones to whom it had told above not to go down to Egypt [cf. [Isa 30:2](#)]. And this is situated between the present passage and the one passed over, because there, in the former passage, the tribe of Judah is commanded not to go down into Egypt; here it is prophesied that they will show contempt for the command of the Lord and go down; and because both Israel and the Egyptians, both the deserters and their helpers, would equally be slaughtered by Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king. Jeremiah speaks in very great detail about this [cf. [Jer 42–43](#)].

<sup>111</sup> O’onnell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, 145–6, notices the similarity between Jerome’s description of hell in this passage and the language of Origen. “Whether Jerome means to say that the fire or that the furnace is metaphorical is not perfectly evident. However, this passage, like the two cited just above [*In Ezek 44.4, In Is 50.11*], could be interpreted in an Origenistic sense.” O’onnell goes on to point out that, although such texts might lead us to suspect Jerome of Origenistic leanings in regard to the nature of hell’s punishments, since they speak of remorse as the meaning of hell fire, other texts in Jerome show that he did not exclude the understanding of hell as extrinsic punishment. The Origenistic error is not merely explaining the fire and torments of hell as the sinner’s consciousness of his guilt, but the denial of other punishments (149).

<sup>112</sup> See above under [30:27–9](#).

Woe, therefore to those *who go down to Egypt* and for fear of the Chaldeans despise the commands of the Lord, *placing their hope* in idolatry, who boast that they have the worship of God, and by *putting confidence in the help of horses* are ignorant of what is written, “A horse is deceptive in respect to salvation” [Ps 33:17], and they *put their confidence in chariots* and light carriages, *and horsemen*. And they do not recall this song: “The horse and rider he has thrown into the sea” [Exod 15:1]; *and they have not trusted in the Holy One of Israel*, who, through Jeremiah, promised his help to those who remained in the land of Judah [cf. Jer 42:10–12]. *And they have not sought after the Lord*, not that they have not sought after him, but that they despised the words of the one they sought after. This is also why it is said about the evil priests, “Those who eat up my people have not called upon God” [Ps 53:4].

*But he himself, the wise one*, that is, the Lord, *has brought evil* upon them, and the worst evil, namely Nebuchadnezzar, or simply evil, signifying the thing and not a person. *And he has not removed his words* that he had spoken through the prophets. On account of this *he will rise up against* the tribe of Judah, *the house of the wicked ones*, and against the help of the Egyptians, who *work iniquity*. For *Egypt*, or, “the Egyptian,” as the Septuagint translated it, *is man, and not God: and their horses are flesh, and not spirit*. This is also why it is written in Jeremiah, “Cursed is the man who hopes in man, and strengthens the flesh of his arm, and his heart turns away from the Lord, and he will be like a shrub in the desert that will not see when good things have come” [Jer 17:5–6]. And in another place, it is written, “Vain is the salvation of man” [Ps 60:11], or, as the Hebrew has better, “*in man.*”

And, when the Lord will extend his *hand* to punish, or turn it aside, under the metaphor of a charioteer, and will loosen the bridles of the galloping horses, the Egyptian *helper shall fall*, and Israel, to whom he was *bringing help*. Which indeed we are able to understand as referring also to those who, in the time of persecution and of tribulation and distress do not *trust* in the Lord, but in the help of the Egyptians, that is, of men of the world. They do not know that Abraham was in danger in Egypt [cf. Gen 12:10–20], and the people of God had toiled with mud and bricks as slaves in that region [cf. Exod 1:14], which spiritually is called the “iron furnace” [cf. Jer 11:4]. This is also why it is read in the Apocalypse of John, “The place where the Lord was crucified, spiritually it is called Sodom and Egypt” [Rev 11:8].

5. (31:4–5) *For thus says the Lord to me: Just as if the lion roars, and the lion’s whelp upon his prey, when a multitude of shepherds shall come against him, he will not fear at their voice, nor be afraid of their multitude, so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight upon Mount Zion, and upon its hill. (5) As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts protect Jerusalem, protecting and delivering, passing over and saving.*

In clear matters we are recording a single version, especially where there is no difference in meaning.<sup>113</sup> After the Israelites were killed in Egypt, as well as the Egyptians, in whose help they trusted, the captives will return to Jerusalem, while Cyrus reigns, and the strength of the Lord, who had promised to help them himself, will be shown by two similes. Just as a hungry *lion* and a *lion’s whelp*, if it sees a flock of sheep, is not frightened by the *voice of any shepherd* and, aware of his own strength, despises the *multitude* of them, so *the Lord of hosts will fight*, not “against” *Mount Zion and its hill*, but *upon Mount Zion* against his enemies.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 1 (204, 6–5).



Let us state another comparison: *just as birds* fly over their nests in order to defend their chicks, and if they see either a serpent, or a man, or other birds approaching their young, they fight with the beak and claws, forgetful of their weakness, and with a chattering voice they double the pain of their heart, *so shall the Lord protect Jerusalem and passing over it, deliver and save it*. For *passing over*, the Hebrew records *phase*. In three of the translators except for the Septuagint, *υπερβαιων* is set down. From this it is clear that the Pasch, that is, the Passover of the Lord, does not signify suffering, but a “passing over” [cf. [Exod 12:11](#)].

But the *Lord* himself testifies in the Gospel under the simile of *birds* that he has always been the protector of Jerusalem: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you, how often have I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling?” [[Matt 23:37](#)]; and in Deuteronomy it is said about the Lord, “He has spread out his wings and has taken them and borne them on his pinions” [[Deut 32:11](#)].

6. ([31:6–9](#)) *Turn, as you had withdrawn into the depth, O sons of Israel. (7) For in that day a man will cast away his idols of silver and idols of his gold, which your hands have made for you in sin. (8) And the Assyrian will fall by the sword not of a man, and the sword not of a man will devour him, and he shall flee not at the face of the sword, and his young men shall be tributaries. (9) And his strength shall pass away from dread, and his princes fleeing shall be afraid; the Lord has spoken, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.* Although the Septuagint has translated the first verses similarly, at the end they wrote differently: (8b) “His young men shall be overthrown; (9) for they shall be surrounded with a rock as with a trench, and shall be conquered; but the one who flees shall be taken. Thus says the Lord: Blessed is he that has a seed in Zion, and household members in Jerusalem.”

While the Lord is fighting against his adversaries upon Mount Zion and protecting it in the manner of birds [cf. [Isa 31:4–5](#)], *Return, O sons of Israel*, or, as Symmachus translated, “Do penance, you who have withdrawn from the Lord by a deep counsel and by sin.” For if you do this, *casting away* your golden and silver *idols*, which you made *for sin*, on account of which your city was captured, *the Assyrian*, in fear of whom you now *flee*, *shall fall, not by the sword* of men, nor by the strength of an army, but by the power of God—now this signifies the angel by whom 185,000 Assyrians were destroyed in one night [cf. [Isa 37:36](#)—and the Assyrian king himself *shall flee*, not from the *sword* of men, but from the wrath of God, so that *his young men* and strong men may become *tributaries* to the Medes, of whom it is spoken against Babylon, “Behold, I will stir up the *Medes* against you” [[Isa 13:17](#)]; and the *strength* of the Assyrian *shall pass away from dread* of the Lord, and will perish, and all *his princes* will tremble. For *the Lord* has spoken and has promised, whose words are deeds, and who has a *fire in Zion, and a furnace in Jerusalem*. Thus a flame comes out from Jerusalem and consumes his adversaries like stubble and wood.

Another<sup>14</sup> interprets what is said, *In that day a man shall cast away the idols of his silver*, and the rest, in this way. He is testifying that after the return from the Babylonian captivity until the coming of Christ, the *sons of Israel* never worshiped idols; also, he says that the present passage indicates that the *Assyrian* must be conquered, not by an angel, but by the Medes,

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (204, 20–5).

because the most ancient and once powerful kingdom would be destroyed, after the displeasure of the Lord, and would serve the victors.

The Nazarenes understand this passage thus: “O sons of Israel,” who have “renounced” the son of God by an evil “counsel,” “return” to him and his apostles. For if you do this, you will *cast away* all the *idols* that were *for you to sin*, and the devil *will fall* down before you, not by your own strength, but by the mercy of God; and his *young men*, who before had fought for him, they *shall be the tributaries* of the church; and his entire *strength* and “rock” will *pass through*. Moreover the philosophers and every perverse doctrine will *turn* their backs at the sign of the cross. For it is the Lord’s decree for this to happen, whose *fire* is a light *in Zion*, and whose oven is *in Jerusalem*.

In Hebrew, *fire* and light are written with the same letters: *aleph, uau, res*; but if *ur* is read, it means “fire,” or “light.” And so this is said because for “fire,” which Symmachus alone translated, Aquila and Theodotion have translated “light.”

However, I am not able to understand what the Septuagint reading means: “They shall be surrounded with a rock as with a trench, and shall be conquered; but he that flees shall be taken”; unless, perhaps, we are able to say that the “young men” of the Assyrian king, who had to be conquered and taken, are so surrounded by the “rock,” that is by the strength of the Lord, in the way that a trench surrounds a city.<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, we *are* able to interpret what follows: “Blessed is he that has a seed in Zion, and household members in Jerusalem,” thus, that we say it agrees with the meaning of the present passage, whereby the divine words exhort those fleeing into Egypt to return to Jerusalem and to produce sons. Such great blessedness is promised to him that he is defended by the Lord, and protected by his help. Also, in another place it is written about it, “The final glory of this house shall be greater than the former” [[Hag 2:9](#)]. This can also be applied to the church, “vision of peace,” and “watchtower,” about which is written, “Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God” [[Ps 87:3](#)]; and in another place, “The flow of the river makes glad the city of God” [[Ps 46:4](#)]. For in this [city] there is *fire* and a *furnace* that devours sinners, and consumes wood, hay, and straw [cf. [1 Cor 3:12](#)]; or light and an oven, so that the glory of the just and the punishment of the sinners may be shown forth.

7. ([32:1–8](#)) *Behold, a king shall reign with justice, and princes shall preside in judgment. (2) And he shall be as one who is hidden from the wind, and hides himself from a storm, as streams of waters in drought, and the shadow of a rock that stands out in a desert land. (3) The eyes of those who see shall not be dim, and the ears of those who hear shall listen diligently. (4) And the heart of fools shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of stammerers shall speak quickly and plainly. (5) He who is a fool shall no more be called prince, neither shall the deceitful man be called great. (6) For the fool will speak foolish things, and his heart will work iniquity, to practice hypocrisy, and speak to the Lord deceitfully, and to make empty the soul of the hungry, and take away drink from the thirsty. (7) The vessels of the deceitful are most wicked; for he has concocted devices to destroy the meek, with lying words, when the poor man was speaking judgment. (8) But the prince will devise such things as are worthy of a prince, and he shall stand above the guides.* Septuagint: “For behold a just king shall reign, and princes shall preside with judgment. (2) And a man shall hide his words and be hidden, as from water that is being borne

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (205, 4–7).

along, and he shall appear in Zion as a rushing river, glorious in a thirsty land. (3) And they shall no more trust in men, but they shall incline their ears to hear. (4) And the heart of the weak ones shall attend to hear, and the tongues of stammerers shall quickly learn to speak peace. (5) And they shall no more tell a fool that he is a prince, and your servants shall no more say, “Be silent.” (6) For the fool shall speak foolish things, and his heart shall understand vanities to perform iniquity and to speak error to the Lord, to scatter hungry souls, and to cause the thirsty souls to be empty. (7) For the counsel of the wicked ones will devise iniquitous things, to kill the lowly with unjust words, and ruin the words of the lowly in judgment. (8) But the godly have devised wisdom, and this counsel remains.”

According to the Septuagint translators, who said, “For behold a just king shall reign, and princes shall preside with judgment,” what follows needs to be joined to the earlier things, that is to say, to those things with which the previous section ended: “Blessed is he that has a seed in Zion, and household members in Jerusalem” [[Isa 31:9](#)].<sup>116</sup> According to the Hebrew, the previous prophecy ended by speaking about those who went down into Egypt. This is now the beginning of another prediction, namely about the coming of Christ and his apostles.

For this *king will reign* justly, not showing partiality *in judgment* [cf. [Deut 1:17](#); [2 Chr 19:7](#)], and his *princes will preside* with truth, considering the cases, not the men; and whoever is under his shade-giving shelter will be as safe in the midst of tribulation and distress, and in the *storm* of this world, as he who flees from the *wind* and the *whirlwind* and hides himself in a safe place. He is like the one who discovers the purest springs in the desert, and he who has found rest from the violently raging heat of the sun beside a stream under *a rock that stands out*. Where we said, *As streams of waters in drought*, the Septuagint has translated, “And he shall appear in Zion as a rushing river.” For the Hebrew word *basaion*, which we have discussed above and that means “in thirst” or “in drought” and “in the rough,” was translated by the Septuagint and Theodotion as “in Zion (*Sion*).” They read *Sion* for *saion*, that is, “thirst,” which is written with the same letters.

When Christ *reigns*, therefore, and his *princes preside in judgment*, the *eyes* of believers *shall not be dim*, and *the ears of those who hear will attend diligently*, which were deaf before, and *the heart of former fools shall understand knowledge*, and the *tongue of stammerers*, and of the mute, which was not able to sound out Christ, will confess the Lord with words that are full and clear. *He who is a fool shall no more be called prince*—for “God has made foolish the wisdom of this world” [cf. [1 Cor 1:20](#)]<sup>117</sup>—*neither shall the deceitful and perverse teacher be called great* among the people. This refers to the scribes and Pharisees, to whom the Lord said, “Fools and blind men! Which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold sacred?” [[Matt 23:17](#)]. *For the fool will speak foolish things*, which in Hebrew is written as *nabal nabala idabber*. We have expressed this in order to explain Abigail’s words to Nabal the Carmelite: “In accordance with his name, he is a fool” [[1 Sam 25:25](#)].

Truly, *the fool speaks foolish things, and his heart works iniquity*, who has shown fear where there was nothing to fear [cf. [Ps 14:5](#)], and has indulged in folly in place of wisdom, saying: “If this man were from God, he would not have broken the sabbath” [[John 9:16](#)]. Up to the present

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 2 (205, 28–5).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (208, 3–).

day, the teacher of the synagogues does this, so as *to practice hypocrisy*, which in Hebrew is written as *oneph*, that is, ὑποχρῖσιν. This is why it is quite often said to the Pharisees, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” [Matt 23:13]. He says, *and would say to the Lord deceitfully*: “Teacher, we know that you are from God, and that it does not matter to you concerning men; is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” [Matt 22:16–17]. They *make empty the souls of the hungry people and take away drink from the thirsty crowds*. They neither enter themselves nor allow others to enter [cf. Matt 23:13]. For all the *vessels and weapons of the deceitful teacher and prince are most wicked, who concocts treachery to destroy the simple with lying words*, saying to a deceived people, “Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee” [John 7:52].

When the poor man was speaking judgment to them, namely, he who, though he was rich, became poor for our sake [cf. 2 Cor 8:9]. For truly, Christ spoke *judgment* and justice, saying, “If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe me; but if I do them, and you do not want to believe me, believe in the works” [John 10:37–38]. This *poor man, who speaks judgment*, being *prince and Lord, has devised such things as are worthy of a prince*, saying, “I have come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel” [Matt 15:24]. And he will be concerned for the infidels, desiring to save those who do not believe [cf. 2 Pet 3:9], *and he will stand above the guides*, his apostles, to one of whom he says, “But you, a man of one mind, my guide and my acquaintance” [Ps 55:13]. These things have been said according to the Hebrew, from which the Septuagint departs, not only in words, but in meaning and in many details.

For when the “just king shall reign,” and “princes” shall command “with judgment,” there will be a “man hiding his words,” a man who is God by nature, and he will “hide his words” by speaking to them in parables [cf. Matt 13:10, 13].<sup>118</sup> But “he will hide” “as from rushing water,” namely, from the Jewish people, who, like “water,” are “borne along” and drawn here and there by the will of their teachers. The man “hiding his words” among unbelievers “shall appear in Zion,” that is, in the church, “as a river glorious and rushing into a thirsty land.” For “he will appear” to the people of the Gentiles, who previously were suffering thirst for the truth, and the river of God will water the thirsty ground, about which it is written, “The force of the river makes glad the city of God” [Ps 46:4]; and in another place, “The river of God is full of water” [Ps 65:9]. For he himself says in the Gospel, “Let him who thirsts come to me and drink; he who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water’ ” [John 7:37–38].<sup>119</sup>

At that time, “they shall no more trust in teachers, but they shall offer their ears to hear” the Lord, and both with the “heart” and with the “tongue,” they will confess the “peace” of the Lord, abandoning the foolish princes and their “servants,” who commanded those who believed in Jesus to be silent [cf. Acts 4:18]. That which follows has nearly the same meaning as the Hebrew and can be applied to the heretics. For they speak falsehood against the Lord and corrupt “souls” that are “hungry and thirsty.” They “cause them to go away empty,” so that even if they had anything good by nature, they would lose it through the fault of the teachers, whose every “counsel” is that they might “destroy the lowly with unjust words and ruin the words of

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (207, 1–).

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (207, 22–6).

the lowly in judgment.” One should equally note in this that he who is capable of being deceived by them is “lowly” and cleaves to the ground.

8. ([32:9–20](#)) *Rise up, you rich women, and hear my voice, confident daughters, give ear to my speech.* (10) *After days and a year, you who are confident will be troubled; for the vintage is at an end, the gathering will come no more.* (11) *Be astonished, O rich [women], be troubled, O confident ones, strip yourselves, and be confounded,* which Symmachus translated as “be laid bare.” It follows, *gird your loins.* (12) *Mourn for your breasts, for the desirable country, for the fruitful vineyard.* (13) *Upon the ground of my people shall thorns and briars come up; how much more upon all the houses of joy of the rejoicing city?* (14) *For the house has been forsaken, the multitude of the city has been left, darkness and terror (palpatio) have come upon its caves forever. A joy of wild asses, the pastures of flocks,* (15) *until the spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the desert shall be as Carmel (Chermel), and Carmel shall be counted for a forest.* (16) *And judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and justice shall sit in Carmel.* (17) *And the work of justice shall be peace, and the service (cultus) of justice quietness and security forever.* (18) *And my people shall sit in the beauty of peace, and in the tabernacles of confidence, and in wealthy rest.* (19) *But [there will be] hail in the descent of the forest, and the city shall be humbled with humility.* (20) *Blessed are you who sow upon all waters, sending in the foot of the ox and the ass.* For the *darkness and trembling* that have come upon its caves forever, the Septuagint translated, “And the villas will be caves forever,” which in Hebrew is written *ofel* and *been*. The Hebrews think that there were two high and very strong towers in Jerusalem that were called by these names. The former of them means “darkness” or “cloudy,” because it raised its top even to the clouds; the other means “proof” and “firmness,” or, as Symmachus renders it, “scrutinizing,” because the eyesight failed to anyone who tried to catch sight of the top of it. At the end of the section too, they [the Septuagint] translated it this way, “Blessed are those who sow upon every water, where the ox and the ass tread.”

After the calling of the nations, when Christ the King commands with justice, and his princes, the apostles and apostolic men, preside over believers with judgment [cf. [Isa 32:1](#)], the prophetic discourse is directed to the *rich women*, which are either the cities of Judea, or the synagogues of that time; or, as many think, we ought to understand the wealthy wives of the former Jewish people, to whom it is spoken as though to those who are lying there after the ruin: *Rise up*, and nevertheless they are addressed as *confident daughters*, or “hopeful”; and they are instructed to *hear* the words of the Lord, and remember the *days* and the *year*. We will read about this *year* in what comes later, as the Savior himself says: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to evangelize the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and sight to the blind, to call the acceptable *year* of the Lord” [[Isa 61:1–2](#)].<sup>220</sup> And let this remembrance be for them: “in sorrow with hope,” according to the Septuagint, that they may mourn the fact that they denied their Lord, and have hope of salvation, if they do penance.

For he says that the *vintage is at an end*, and after the final ruin, which happened under Vespasian, Titus, and Hadrian, *there will come* no other captivity, nor will grapes remain among the people, which would need to be *gathered* afterward. For this reason they are summoned to

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 3 (209, 34–10, 3).



mourn, and they are commanded to *bare* their breasts and *gird their loins*, for that which formerly was a *desirable country* and *fruitful vineyard*, about which it is written, “I planted you as a fruitful vine, wholly true; how have you turned into bitterness, a foreign vine?” [[Jer 2:21](#)], is destroyed by the ravaging Roman.

*Upon the ground of my people*, it says, *shall thorns and briers*, or “grass” *come up*. And this is the meaning: if the Judean land, which is the land of the promise, has been filled with *thorns and briers*, how much more other cities, which are full of joy and which will receive these words in the Gospel, “Woe to you who rejoice now, for you shall mourn!” [[Luke 6:25](#)].<sup>221</sup> For *the house*, that is, my temple, *has been forsaken*, as I say to the apostles, “*Rise*, let us go from here” [[John 14:31](#)], and to the unbelieving, “Your *house* will be left to you desolate” [[Matt 23:38](#)]. Palpable (*palpabiles*) *darkness* has taken possession of the sanctuary of the temple and the hidden mysteries, and by no means have they become a storeroom of the vessels of the Lord, but *caves forever*. For they had heard from the Lord and Savior, “The *house* of my Father shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a robbers’ cave” [[Matt 21:3](#)].

*A joy of wild asses*, it says, *the pasture of the flocks*. This should either be understood according to the letter, that everything will be deserted, or spiritually, that when Israel is expelled, wild men and those who do not have knowledge of God would live in Judea, and this would be *until the spirit is poured on us from on high*, which the Savior ascending to the Father promised to the believers, saying, “Behold, I go and I will send to you the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth” [[John 15:26](#)], and again, “Until you receive power from on high” [[Luke 24:49](#)].<sup>222</sup>

Above he had said, “Yet a very little while, and Libanus shall be turned into Carmel (*Chermel*), and Carmel shall be regarded as a forest, and in that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see” [[Isa 29:17–18](#)].<sup>223</sup> Now he repeats the same thing using different words, that the *wilderness* of the nations is being changed into the wealth of Israel, and Israel is counted among the nations. At that time, *judgment will dwell in the desert*, namely the Lord and Savior, to whom the Father gave all judgment [cf. [John 5:22](#)]. And *justice shall rest in Carmel*, about which it was said above, *And there will be a desert in Carmel*, because *judgment* and *justice* dwell in the desert and rest in *Carmel*, which was first called a *desert*.

And *the work of justice shall be peace*, which, according to the Apostle, surpasses all understanding [cf. [Phil 4:7](#)], and *the service* (*cultus*) *of justice quietness*, that they may adore the Lord not by the loquacity of the Jews but with the brevity of faith; and may *rest* secure in eternal *peace*, and there would be riches in their *tabernacles*, about which the Apostle spoke: “I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ, because in everything you have been made *rich* in him, in every word and in all knowledge” [[1 Cor 1:4–5](#)].<sup>224</sup>

Now when the Christian people *sit*, or “dwell,” *in the beauty of peace*, or, as the Septuagint translated it, “in the city [of peace],” doubtless referring to the church, then *hail*, and storm and the wrath of the Lord raging furiously will “come down” on the *forest*, about which it was said

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (211, 9).

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (211, 6–).

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (211, 11–8).

<sup>224</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (212, 22–4).



above, *And Carmel shall be counted for a forest; and the city of Jerusalem will be humbled*, and according to another Scripture, it will speak out of the earth [cf. [Isa 29:4](#)].

When this happens this way, and we have learned from the prophetic prediction what great goods the church shall possess and what great evils Jerusalem shall suffer, blessed are you, apostles, and other teachers, who *sow upon all waters* of the Holy Scripture, “where the ox and the ass tread.”<sup>225</sup> The *ox* [is] a clean animal on account of the election of the fathers [cf. [Rom 11:28](#)], the *ass* is unclean, on account of the former idolatry of the nations. Thus the church of the Lord is gathered both from the circumcision and from the uncircumcision.

That which the Septuagint expresses above as, “Upon the land of my people, thorns and grass shall come up,” can be referred both to the heretics and to all those simple believers, who do not understand the Holy Scripture in a way that befits its dignity. This is why we will join together each thing with each thing, that the land of the people of God may produce “thorns” for heretics and “grass” for all of those who lack experience in the church.

9. ([33:1](#)) *Woe to you who plunder, shall you not also be plundered? And you who despise, shall you not also be despised? When you shall have made an end of plundering, you shall be plundered; when being wearied you shall cease to despise, you shall be despised.* Septuagint: “Woe to those who make you miserable; for no one makes you miserable, and those who reject you do not reject you. Those who reject shall be taken and given up, and as a moth on a garment, so shall they be overcome.”

He had said about the apostles and the teachers of the churches, “Blessed are those who sow upon every water, where the ox and the ass tread” [[Isa 32:20](#)]. Now he aims a curse at their persecutors, or rather, at their prince, who possesses the hearts of the impious, that they may receive back for whatever they have done [cf. [2 Cor 5:10](#)], and their present power may supply the material for their future torments. This is why according to the Septuagint it is said, “Woe to those who make you miserable; for no one makes you miserable.” And this is the meaning: To the extent that it is in them, when they persecute you and afflict you with various cruelties, they think that those who have been killed and have suffered cruelly are “miserable,” but “no one” can “make you miserable”; for they do not have power over the soul, but over the body [cf. [Matt 10:28](#)]. And he who “rejects you does not reject you,” but him who sent you, according to that which the Savior says to his disciples, “He who rejects you rejects me, and he who rejects me rejects him who sent me” [[Luke 10:16](#)].<sup>226</sup> Therefore the persecutors “shall be taken” and “given up” to eternal fire, and “as a moth” consumes a “garment,” so shall they be consumed by continual flames. This is also written at the end of this prophet: “For their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched” [[Isa 66:24](#)].

10. ([33:2–6](#)) *O Lord, have mercy on us, we have waited for you; be their arm in the morning, and our salvation in the time of tribulation. (3) At the voice of the angel the people fled, and at your exaltation the nations were scattered. (4) And your spoils shall be gathered together as a locust (bruchus) is gathered, when the ditches are full of it. (5) The Lord is magnified, for he has dwelled on high; he has filled Zion with judgment and justice. (6) And there shall be faith in your times, riches of salvation, wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the very treasure.*

<sup>225</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (212, 36–13, 7)

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (213, 11–5).

Septuagint: “Lord, have mercy upon us; for we trust in you; the seed of unbelievers has gone to destruction, but our salvation was in a time of tribulation. (3) By reason of the voice of fear the people were dismayed for fear of you, and the nations were scattered. (4) And now shall your spoils of the small and great be gathered; as if one should gather locusts (*locustas*), so shall they mock you. (5) Holy is God who dwells on high! Zion is filled with judgment and justice, (6) they shall be delivered up to the law, in treasures is our salvation; wisdom is coming, and instruction and piety toward the Lord; these are the treasures of justice.”

The Hebrews think that the preceding section, in which it is read, “Woe to you who plunder, shall you not also be plundered?” [[Isa 33:1](#)], and the rest to the end, are spoken against Sennacherib, the king of the Assyrians, because, after he had overthrown the cities of the ten tribes, which were called Israel, and also captured the cities of Judah, except Jerusalem, he himself is conquered, and his army is destroyed by a striking angel [cf. [2 Kgs 19:35](#)]. Wherefore, now, they claim, these things are said that are contained in this present section, under the persona of the people giving thanks to God and saying, *O Lord, have mercy on us, we have waited for you*. For he was their *arm*, and the strength of the people during the fortified siege in the time of the *morning*; and he was their *salvation* in necessity and anguish. For *at the voice of an angel*, which Symmachus translated just as it was written in the Hebrew, *amun*, whom the Hebrews claim is Gabriel and has the etymology of the people, the Assyrian fled; and *at the exaltation* of God the *nations* that were with him *were scattered* here and there. While they were fleeing, the *spoils were gathered together* by the Jews, just as a multitude of male and female *locusts* are accustomed to be gathered, when they have been heaped up in the *ditches*. In this victory, the Lord was *magnified*, and *Zion was filled with judgment and justice*, and the *faith* of the besieged people was tested, and they possessed all *riches* in *wisdom* and *knowledge* of God and *fear* of the Lord, who alone was their *treasure*. They would say these things according to history, in their effort to overthrow with all reasoning the mysteries of Christ and of his apostles.

We, however, after [reading about] the blessedness of the apostles,<sup>227</sup> about whom it was said above, “Blessed are those who sow upon each water, where the ox and the ass tread” [[Isa 32:20](#)], and the lamentation and mourning of those who persecuted them, about whom it is read in what follows, “Woe to those who make you miserable; for no one makes you miserable, and just as a moth on a garment, so shall they be ruined” [[Isa 33:1](#)], we are convinced that these statements are made under the persona of the same apostles, and of all believers, and that the meaning is, Lord, we have placed our hope in your help, and we have trusted in you. The seed of the unbelievers has perished eternally, and *our salvation* has appeared *in the time of tribulation*; for by your offer of help, the entire multitude of the *nations* has been *scattered* and has been plundered [cf. [Isa 33:1](#)] and made a mockery to the victors. And this was done because the holy *Lord dwells on high*, and *Zion is filled with judgment and justice*, about which it was written above, “Judgment shall rest in the desert” [[Isa 32:16](#)] and “justice.”<sup>228</sup> Therefore, “the law” of the gospel “will be handed over” to this *Zion*, which was first called a desert, and to whoever will dwell in her. In its *treasure* is our *salvation*, and the *wisdom* of believers, and

<sup>227</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 4 (213, 22–8).

<sup>228</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (214, 11–7).

“instruction” and “piety,” or *faith*, which is proper to the Christians, and the *fear of the Lord*, in which the treasures of knowledge are contained [cf. [Col 2:3](#)].

11. ([33:7–12](#)) *Behold, those who see shall cry outside, the angels of peace shall weep bitterly. (8) The ways have been demolished, travel along the road has ceased, the covenant has been made void; he has cast out the cities, he has not regarded the men. (9) The land has mourned, and languished: Libanus has been confounded and become foul, and Sharon has become as a desert, and Bashan and Carmel (Carmelus) have been shaken. (10) Now will I rise up, says the Lord, now I will be exalted, now I will lift myself up. (11) You shall conceive heat, you shall bring forth stubble, your breath (spiritus) as fire shall devour you. (12) And the people shall be as ashes from a fire; as a bundle of thorns they shall be burned with fire.*

The Hebrews think that their word *arellam*, which Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion translated, “I will appear to them,” dividing the last syllable and reading *arellahem*, signifies *angels*, and that it is a prophecy concerning the destruction of the temple after the calling of the nations and the riches of the church; that *the angels will cry*, not dwelling within, but going *outside*, and those who before were the messengers *of peace, will weep bitterly*. Or, the Lord appeared to the apostles themselves, who had been sent to announce peace to Jerusalem, to which the Lord also spoke, “If you even knew the things that make for your peace!” [[Luke 19:42](#)],<sup>229</sup> that he might strengthen them by the sight of him. They will weep for Jerusalem, because it did not receive their preaching, because *the ways were demolished and travel by the road has ceased*. This accords with what is said in the Lamentations of Jeremiah: “The roads to Zion mourn, for they are not who would come to the solemnity” [[Lam 1:4](#)].

Also, *the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has been made void, he has cast out the cities of Judea, he has not regarded the men*, who by their vices wanted to be beasts [cf. [Ps 49:12](#)]. *The land has mourned and languished* for those who lingered in the land. *Libanus has been confounded and become foul*. There is no doubt that this signifies the temple, about which we read in Zechariah, “Open your doors, O Libanus, that the fire may devour your cedars” [[Zech 11:1](#)], or Jerusalem, which is called *Libanus* in Ezekiel, when the prophet says, “A great eagle with great wings that has a design for entering Libanus” [[Ezek 17:3](#)].<sup>330</sup> Later on the divine word interprets this and says, “When Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem” [[Ezek 17:12](#)], explaining clearly that the eagle is the Babylonian king and Libanus is Jerusalem.

*And Sharon has become as a desert, and Bashan and Carmel have been shaken*. For *Bashan*, the Septuagint translated “Galilee,” a province instead of one place within the province. Moreover, the whole region near Joppa and Lydia is called *Sharon*, in which very wide and fertile fields extend. *Bashan* is also the region across the Jordan, which two and a half tribes possessed [cf. [Num 32:33](#)], and which it interpreted “very fertile” and “fat,” and *Carmel*, about which we have spoken above. Therefore, the district of Judea, formerly fertile, will be changed into a desolation, by which metaphor is shown that all the wealth of the Jews will be exchanged for poverty and need. Therefore, because they refused to receive the words of the apostles, *Libanus has been confounded*, and *Sharon* has been turned into a desolation, and *Bashan and Carmel* have been *shaken*.

<sup>229</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (215, 7–2).

<sup>330</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (215, 31–16, 3).

Furthermore, the Lord says that he will *rise up*, either from his excessive patience, or from the lower world, and must be *exalted* among the nations and be *lifted up* on the cross [cf. [John 12:32–33](#)]. And he makes an apostrophe<sup>331</sup> to the Jews themselves: *You shall conceive heat and shall bring forth stubble, and your breath (spiritus) will be inflamed with fire, so that devouring flames consume both what is conceived and brought forth. And, he says, the Jewish people shall be as ashes from a fire.* They will show the extent of their unhappiness in the remnants of the ashes. For their *thorns*, which were *bundled together* in the great number of their sins, will be *devoured by fire*, which many refer to the final captivity and the overthrow of Jerusalem; others assert more fully and perfectly that it will happen at the time of judgment.

12. ([33:13–19](#)) *Hear, you that are far off, what I have done, and you that are near know my strength. (14) The sinners in Zion are completely terrified, trembling has taken possession of the hypocrites. Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? Which of you will dwell with everlasting burning? (15) He who walks in justices, and speaks truths, who casts away avarice from false accusation, and shakes his hands free from every bribe (munere), who stops his ears lest he hear of blood, and shuts his eyes that he may see no evil. (16) He shall dwell on high, the fortifications of rocks [shall be] his height: bread has been given him, his waters are faithful. (17) His eyes shall see the king in his beauty, they shall see the land far off. (18) Your heart shall meditate on fear. Where is the scribe? Where is he who ponders the words of the law? Where is the teacher of little ones? (19) The shameless people you shall not see, the people of profound speech, so that you cannot understand the eloquence of his tongue, in whom there is no wisdom.* Septuagint: “Those who are far off shall hear what they have done; those who draw near shall know my strength. (14) Those who were unjust in Zion have departed; trembling shall seize the ungodly. Who tells you that a fire is kindled? Who tells you of the eternal place? (15) He who walks in justice, and speaks [of] the right way (*viam*), and hates impiety and injustice, and shakes his hands free from bribes (*muneribus*), and stops his ears that he should not hear the judgment of blood, and shuts his eyes that he should not see injustice. (16) He shall dwell in a high cave of very strong rock; bread shall be given him, and his water [shall be] faithful. (17) Your eyes shall see a king with glory, they shall see a land from afar. (18) Your soul shall meditate on fear. Where are the grammarians? Where are the counselors? Where is he that numbers them that are being nurtured, (19) the small and the great people? To whom he did not give counsel, neither did he know his deep speech, so that a despised people did not hear, and there is no understanding to him that hears.”

Since “the ways have been demolished, traveling along the roads has ceased, the covenant” with the Jewish people “has been made void,” God has “cast out their cities,” he “has not regarded them” among men [cf. [Isa 33:8](#)], for this reason, *you who are far off, hear what I have done* and “draw near,” so that you may *know my strength*. Those who were *sinners* and “ungodly” *in Zion are completely terrified*, or “have departed”; and *trembling will take possession of the hypocrites*, to whom the Lord spoke in the Gospel, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites” [[Matt 23:13](#)].<sup>332</sup>

*Which of you can dwell with him who is a devouring fire?* [cf. [Deut 4:24](#); [Heb 12:29](#)]. Who

<sup>331</sup> See n. at [1.50](#).

<sup>332</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 5 (218, 1).

*will dwell with everlasting burning?* Or, according to the Septuagint, “Who will tell you that an eternal fire is kindled,” which God has prepared for the devil and his angels? [cf. [Matt 25:41](#)].<sup>333</sup> *Who, therefore, will be able to dwell with God or to “tell” of the coming sufferings?* Everyone who is in every way the kind that the prophetic discourse describes, *who walks in multiple justices*, and not just one time, but at all times loves *justices*, nor once only but continually *speaks truths*. *Who casts away avarice*, which is the mother of *false accusation*. For money is not accumulated by one person except by means of another person’s loss and harm. *And he shakes his hands free from every bribe* (munere); for bribes (*munera*) blind the eyes even of the wise [cf. [Deut 16:19](#)]. *Who stops his ears lest he hear the “judgment of blood”*; all *iniquity* and oppression and injustice is a “judgment of blood,” and although he may not kill with the sword, he kills with the will. *And shuts his eyes that he should see no evil*. Happy is the conscience that neither hears nor sees evil!

The one who is like this, therefore, *shall dwell on high*, that is, in the kingdom of heaven, or “in a high cave of very strong rock,” in Christ Jesus. He was the rock that followed the people of Israel, so that they drank from it and were protected by its strength [cf. [1 Cor 10:4](#)]. “Bread shall be given him, and his waters [shall be] faithful.” These are the waters that the stories of pagans understand to consist in ambrosia and nectar; but we will interpret the *bread* and most *faithful waters* to be the law of God.

The one who is like this *shall see Christ the king in his “glory,”* about whom it is said above, “Behold, a just king shall reign, and princes shall preside with judgment” [[Isa 32:1](#)].<sup>334</sup> And his eyes *shall see the land far off*, which they had longed to see for a long time, the land of the meek and the gentle, about which it is written in the Gospel, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land” [[Matt 5:5](#)]; or, placed in heaven, they shall despise earthly things [cf. [Col 3:2](#)].

*Your heart shall meditate on fear*, so that, though you may have gained all things, you would say with the Apostle, “For I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” [[1 Cor 15:9](#)]. For “the *fear* of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” [[Ps 111:10](#)]. *Where is the scribe? Where is he who ponders the words of the law? Where is the teacher of little ones? Where are the scribes and Pharisees*, he asks, who, weighing the *words of the law*, deceived the wretched people? Now, those whom Scripture calls *little ones* are little in knowledge, little in understanding.

When however, the *eyes* of the believer *will see the king* in his majesty, and his *heart will meditate on fear*, then he will not see the *shameless people*, the Jewish people, or the people of the philosophers and orators of the world, who congratulate themselves for their learning and worldly eloquence. Of them it now says, *The people of profound speech, so that they cannot understand the eloquence of his tongue*. Their every adornment consists in words, they have leaves only [cf. [Mark 11:13](#)] and the shadow of words, and yet they do not possess the fruit of the truth. Finally, it follows, *In whom there is no wisdom*. In another place it is said of them, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will reject the understanding of prudent” [[Isa 29:14](#)]. Why? Because “God has made foolish the wisdom of the world” [[1 Cor 1:20](#)].

<sup>333</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (217, 3–).

<sup>334</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (217, 22–0).



13. ([33:20–24](#)) *Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnity; your eyes shall see Jerusalem, a rich habitation, a tabernacle that cannot be removed, neither shall its nails be taken away forever, nor shall any of its cords be broken, (21) because only there our Lord is great; the place of rivers, very broad and spacious streams, no ship with oars shall pass through it, neither shall the great galley cross it. (22) For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us. (23) Your cords are loosed, and they shall be of no strength; your mast shall be in such condition, that you shall not be able to spread the flag. Then shall the spoils of much prey be divided, the lame shall take the spoil. (24) Neither shall he that is near say, “I am feeble.” The people that dwell there shall have their iniquity taken away from them. Septuagint: “Behold the city of Zion, our salvation; your eyes shall see Jerusalem, a rich city, tabernacles that shall not be shaken, neither shall the stakes of her tabernacle be removed forever, nor shall her cords be broken, (21) for the name of the Lord is great to you. Your place will be rivers and very wide and spacious streams; a ship driven by oars shall not go this way. (22) For the Lord is great, he shall not pass me by. The Lord our judge, the Lord our prince, the Lord our king, the Lord himself shall save us. (23) Your cords are broken, for they had no strength; your mast has given way, it shall not spread the sails, it shall not raise a flag, until it be given up for plunder. Therefore many lame men shall take the spoil (24) and shall not say ‘I labor’; the people dwelling among them, their sin shall be forgiven them.”*

O just one, to whom it was said above, “Your heart shall meditate on fear” [[Isa 33:18](#)], and “the shameless people you shall not see” [[Isa 33:19](#)], and you who had heard before, “Your eyes shall see the king in his beauty” [[Isa 33:17](#)], consider *Zion, the city of our solemnity*; see the church of Christ, in which there is true *solemnity*. *Your eyes* will discern the vision of peace and unhopd-for riches, which no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has entered into the heart of man [cf. [1 Cor 2:9](#)]; and *a tabernacle that cannot be removed*; for the first tabernacle, which the Jewish people had, has been *removed* and *taken away*.

*Neither shall its nails be moved forever, and all its cords shall be strong*, so that the Lord may dwell in it, who is the place of all *rivers* and flowing *streams*, through which no one of the opposing side will be able to sail, nor shall a “great galley,” which signifies the devil, be able to *cross* it, because *the Lord himself* is our *judge*, and “prince” and *king*, and our Savior, and while he protects [us], let us fear no one’s evil plots. These things have been said about *Zion, the city of our solemnity*, and about Jerusalem, a very rich habitation, which the Lord himself will surround and fortify with his rivers.

Now he speaks to the earthly Jerusalem, that the *cords* of its tabernacle have been *loosened*, and they were not able to hold up the tent, and its *mast*, from which very beautiful sails were hanging, has fallen, with snapped cables so that it is not only useless for navigation but also as a *flag*. Moreover, after their ship has been destroyed, and their tabernacle ruined, so that as the *cords are broken* in both parts, the *spoils* will be divided among the victors. Those who will be so feeble in the strength proper to them that they are called *lame*, and nevertheless, when the wrath of God gives to them strength, they will know no infirmity, nor will they say, “I have labored.” For [for him] who has been among them, sin and iniquity will be taken away from him, because he carried out the will of God.

14. ([34:1–7](#)) *Come near, O nations, and hear, and listen, O peoples, attend; let the earth*



*hear, and its fullness, the world, and everything that comes forth from it. (2) For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies. He has killed them, and delivered them to slaughter. (3) Their slain shall be cast forth, and out of their carcasses shall rise a stink. The mountains shall be melted with their blood, (4) and all the armies of heaven shall melt away, and the heavens shall be unrolled or folded together as a book, and all their armies shall fall down as the leaf falls from the vine, and from the fig tree. (5) For my sword is inebriated in heaven. Behold it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my slaughter unto judgment. (6) The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made thick with fat, from blood of lambs and he-goats, from the blood of rams full of marrow; for there is a victim of the Lord in Bozrah (Bosra) and a great slaughter in the land of Edom. (7) And the unicorns shall go down with them, and the bulls with the mighty. Their land shall be inebriated with their blood, and their ground with the fat of fat ones.*

After the destruction of Jerusalem, and the shipwreck of the once very strong ship, and the despoiling of all its furnishings, it speaks about the ruin of all nations and of the consummation of the world, which will take place on the day of judgment. Wherefore, all *nations* and *peoples, the earth and its fullness, the world and all its products*, both those places that are inhabited and those that are uninhabited from an excess of cold or heat, are commanded to *hear* and to know with all trembling of the mind those things that are to come. *For the indignation of the Lord* is described as about to come not upon one Judean nation and the Assyrians, Chaldeans, Egyptians, Moabites, Ammonites, and Philistines, but upon *all nations* and *upon all their armies*, or, as the Septuagint has translated, “the number of them.” This indignation *kills them*, and causes the *stink* of their putrefying bodies to *rise up* on high. This signifies the sins of all the nations. Thus *mountains* are filled with their pus and filthiness and *blood*. *Mountains* refers to each of the lofty powers and angels, who governed each nation. And *all the armies*, or the *strength of heaven, melts away*. The *heavens* are *unrolled or folded together like a book*, and *all their armies* and their militia, and, as the Septuagint has translated, “the stars” *fall down like leaves that fall from the vine and the fig*, when the cold approaches and they are contracted by their dryness. Indeed, the Savior says the same thing in the Gospel: “The stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; and then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven” [[Matt 24:29–30](#)].<sup>335</sup> And one should consider that it does not say that the heavens perish, but that they will be *unrolled or folded up as a book*. Thus after all sins have been openly disclosed and read aloud, those that had previously been opened are *rolled up*, so that no longer are the *sins of many* written in them. Daniel also speaks in his writings about books of this sort, “The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened” [[Dan 7:10](#)], in which were written down the works of everyone.<sup>336</sup>

Now the majority think that the “stars fall,” according to the to Apocalypse of John and that which is written elsewhere: “All the stars will be dissolved in fire” [[2 Pet 3:10](#)], and: “Heaven and earth will pass away” [[Matt 24:35](#)], and “For the form of this world is passing away” [[1 Cor 7:31](#)]. These truly are the “stars” that turn red in heaven. Consequently the whole is shown

<sup>335</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 7 (221, 17–0)

<sup>336</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (223, 9–4).

from the part,<sup>337</sup> namely that the destruction of the heavens is shown by the ruin of the “stars.” Others, however, believe that those “stars” will fall of which Paul the Apostle writes: “Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” [[Eph 6:12](#)].<sup>338</sup> Nor should it cause wonder, if the demons that inhabit the air are said to be “heavenly,” since Scripture also speaks of the birds *of heaven* [cf. [Gen 1:26](#)], which fly, not in heaven to be sure, but in the air. For even Satan is transformed into an angel of light [[2 Cor 11:14](#)],<sup>339</sup> pretending to be a star, and the Savior saw him “falling like lightning from heaven” [[Luke 10:18](#)]. And tropologically he is said to be like a great star: “How has Lucifer fallen, who arose in the morning?” [[Isa 14:12](#)].

All these things will happen, because his *sword is inebriated in heaven*. This refers to the punishment, sentence, and vengeance against sinners that is brought by the Lord. This *sword* and *μαχαίρα* in Ezekiel is sharpened against the ungodly, and it is commanded to return to its sheath after having killed very many [[Ezek 21:16](#)]. And when it will have been *inebriated* and *filled in heaven*, that is, in the air, which is called *heaven* in scriptural usage, then it *will come down* also *to Idumea*, that is, to earthly things, so that, after the punishment of the demons, the souls of men likewise may be judged. For *Idumea* in our speech means “earthly.”<sup>440</sup> And it is *filled with blood* and *made thick with the fat of lambs and of he-goats and of rams full of marrow and of bulls* so that it may signify that both the princes and the people must equally be punished.

*For there is a victim of the Lord in Bozrah (Bosra), and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.* The same prophet testifies about this *Bozrah* and *Idumea* also in what follows, saying, “Who is this who comes from Edom, his red garments from Bozrah (*Bosor*)?” [[Isa 63:1](#)].<sup>441</sup> And some think that because *basar* means “flesh,” the torments in the flesh of everyone are being indicated by means of *the victim of the Lord in Bozrah*. These ones slip into a pious error, for in the present passage, the letter *sin* is not written, which is in *basar*, that is, in “flesh,” but *sade* is written, and *Bozrah* is named, which, according to Joshua [cf. [Josh 21:27](#)] and Jeremiah [cf. [Jer 48:24](#)] is not in Edom, that is Idumea, but is found in the land of Moab. Now *Bozrah* in our language means “fortified,” and “surrounded,” or “made firm.” Accordingly, it is shown that the *world* is made solid by the will of the Lord, according to what is sung in the Psalm: “He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the rivers” [[Ps 24:2](#)]; and concerning the firmness of the earth, it is said under the persona of God, “I have made firm its pillars” [[Ps 75:3](#)].

And when there will be *a victim of the Lord in Bozrah*, and his *slaughter in Idumea*, *unicorns*, namely the kings and the princes of the earth, *shall go down* with the powerful *bulls*, and all things will be filled with slaughter and *blood*, and with the *fat* of the formerly rich and powerful. Through these words and in accordance with human usage, the torments are being shown to those who hear of the terror. They are to be inflicted on all the princes and powerful ones and

<sup>337</sup> That is, synecdoche.

<sup>338</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 7 (221, 4–0).

<sup>339</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (222, 15–6).

<sup>440</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (222, 29–0).

<sup>441</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (223, 7–).

the peoples and little ones. The teachers of the Jews want us to understand *Bozrah*, that is “fortified” and “made firm,” and *Edom* or “Dumah,” and *Idumea*, as referring to Rome; and they say that everything that is contained in the following section is said about it.

15. [\(34:8–17\)](#) *For it is the day of the vengeance of the Lord, the year of recompenses of the judgment of Zion. (9) And its streams shall be turned into pitch, and its ground into sulfur, and its land shall become burning pitch. (10) Night and day it shall not be quenched, its smoke shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste, none shall pass through it in the age of ages. (11) The pelican and hedgehog shall possess it, and the ibis and the raven shall dwell in it, and a measuring line shall be stretched out upon it to reduce it to nothing, and a plummet unto desolation. (12) Its nobles shall not be there; they shall rather call upon the king, and all its princes shall be nothing. (13) And thorns and nettles shall grow up in its house, and the thistle in its fortresses: and it shall be the habitation of dragons, and the pasture of ostriches. (14) And demons shall meet with donkey centaurs, and the hairy ones<sup>442</sup> shall cry out one to another, there has the night hag lain down and found rest for herself. There the hedgehog has had its hole, and brought up its young ones, and has dug round about, and cherished them in its shadow; there are the kites gathered together one to another. (16) Search diligently in the book of the Lord, and read: not one of them was wanting, one has not sought for the other, for that which proceeds out of my mouth, he has commanded, and his very spirit has gathered them. (17) And he has cast the lot for them, and his hand has divided it to them by measuring line; they shall possess it forever, from generation to generation they shall dwell therein.*

As we said above, the Hebrews contend that this has been prophesied about the Roman Empire, and the destruction of Zion, a once very powerful kingdom, in *vengeance* is being announced. Many of our people understand this to be recorded literally in the Apocalypse of John [cf. [Rev 14:10](#); [20:10](#)]. But from the fact that it is said, *The day of the vengeance of the Lord, the year of recompenses of the judgment of Zion*, we think of that *year* of which the Savior himself speaks: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me, he has sent me to preach the gospel to the poor; to proclaim release to the captives, and to the blind that they may see, to summon the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of recompense for our God, to console all who mourn and to give glory to those bewailing Zion” [[Isa 61:1–3](#)]; and of which it was said above, “Rise up, O rich women, and remember days of the *year* in pain, yet with hope” [[Isa 32:9–10](#)],<sup>443</sup> and through this, after the universal consummation of the whole world, the Scripture returns to Jerusalem, to which he was speaking at that time, and its devastation is described in detail, namely that after the time of the Roman siege comes, everything is filled with *pitch* and *sulfur* and *burning flames*, and its *smoke* remains *forever*, and there the *pelican* and the *hedgehog* dwell, and the *ibis* and the *raven*. These animals were accustomed to live in deserted places, and this would happen because the line of the Lord and the *plummet*, that is, his sentence, cannot be changed.

Its *nobles*, that is, the apostles and those who believe, *will not be there*, and they will not be joined to the number of those who perish, but *they will call rather upon Christ the king*.

<sup>442</sup> Or “atyr.”

<sup>443</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 8 (223, 29–24, 8).

However, all *its princes*, namely the scribes and Pharisees, *shall be reduced to nothing*, and *in the houses* that were once very beautifully decorated, *thorns and nettles and thistles shall grow up*. And *it will be the habitation of dragons and the pasture of ostriches*, which are themselves symbols of extreme desolation. And according to the Septuagint, various phantasms of “demons” *will meet one another there*; or, as all the others have translated according to the Hebrew, *siim* and *iim*, *donkey centaurs* and *hairy ones* and the *night hag*, which are described in pagan fables and fictitious stories of poets. There as well the *hedgehog nourishes its young ones*, and has a most reliable place. There have gathered *kites*, a very fierce bird of prey, which is called in Hebrew *daioth*; or, as the Septuagint translated it, “deer,” about which we will speak later.

In the midst of these things the prophet says to those who hear, O men, who hear me speaking, the things that are coming that I announce will all be fulfilled in reality; for they are written *in the book of the Lord*, and his sentence is definitive, and not even one thing will be in vain. For because it proceeds from my mouth, he has commanded it; that is, I am indeed speaking, but the words are the Lord’s, and whatever his Spirit has spoken will be accomplished. For everything will be fulfilled by his decree and *measuring line*, and even to eternal *generations* they will not abandon their orderly progression. This has been said as a historical explanation in accordance with the Hebrew.

However that may be, those who pursue tropology assert that under the names of beasts and monsters, when the Jewish people have been cast out, idolaters and those who are enslaved to various superstitions will live in Jerusalem. And these, they say, are the *pelicans* and *hedgehogs*, the *ibis* and the *raven*, the *dragons*, *ostriches*, “donkey centaurs,” “demons,” *hairy ones*, and the *night hag*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *lilith* and was translated by Symmachus alone as *night hag (lamia)*. Some of the Hebrews conjecture that it is an  $\epsilon\rho\iota\upsilon\upsilon\upsilon$ , that is, a fury. And if in fact we take into consideration the settlers brought to Jerusalem from various nations, and how each family worshiped the portents of their particular demons according to the ritual of their province, we will be assured that all of these things did dwell in Jerusalem.<sup>444</sup>

The Septuagint translated this, “There have the deer met each other, and seen one another’s faces. They passed by in number, and not one of them perished, nor did they seek another; for the Lord commanded them, and his Spirit gathered them. And he cast lots for them, and his hand will apportion for them, so they might graze forever, and possess for a generation of generations, and rest in it.” We will interpret this allegorically as follows.<sup>445</sup> Let us show that the “deer,” that is the apostles, all the saints and the teachers, are those of whom it is written, “As a *deer* longs for streams of water, so longs my soul for you, O God” [[Ps 42:1](#)]; and elsewhere, “The voice of the Lord perfecting the *deer*” [[Ps 29:9](#)]; and again, “Let the *deer* of friendship and a colt of your graces speak to you” [[Prov 5:19](#)]; and in Job, “But you have guarded the months of the *deer* and you will send forth their offspring” [[Job 39:2](#)]; and in the Song of Songs, “My kinsman is like a gazelle, or a young stag of the *deer* upon the mountains of aromatic spices” [[Song 2:9](#)]. They have *met each other* in Jerusalem and *have seen each other’s*

<sup>444</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (224, 24–6).

<sup>445</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (225, 24–26, 21).

faces, and *have passed by* and left it. They reached various provinces, because the Lord commanded them, “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” [[Matt 28:19](#)]; and “his Spirit gathered them,” and “cast lots” and “apportioned for them,” that one might go to India, another to Spain, another to Illyricum, another to Greece, and each one “rested” in the province of his gospel and teaching.

What we have said has been prophesied about Jerusalem, the Jews also suppose to have been said about the Roman Empire. Some apply it to the world, lest it should appear to contradict what was said before.

16. ([35:1–2](#)) *The desert shall rejoice and the impassable solitude shall be glad, and shall flourish like the lily. 2) It shall bud forth and blossom, and shall rejoice with joy and praise. The glory of Libanus is given to it, the beauty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the beauty of our God.* Septuagint: “Rejoice, thirsty desert, let the solitude be glad, and flourish like the lily. (2) And the desert places of Jordan shall flourish and be glad; the glory of Libanus is given to it, and the honor of Carmel, and my people shall see the glory of the Lord, and the height of our God.”

Since Jerusalem has been turned into pitch [cf. [Isa 34:9](#)], and its smoke goes up forever [cf. [Isa 34:10](#)],<sup>446</sup> and the pelican and the hedgehog and the ibis and the raven, dragons and ostriches, demons and donkey centaurs, the night hag and hairy ones dwell in it [cf. [Isa 34:11–14](#)], and the Lord’s sentence has been fulfilled upon it, “Your house will be left to you desolate” [[Matt 23:38](#)], therefore, that which had been a *desert* before, of which it is said in the Psalm, “The voice of the Lord shaking the *desert*, and the Lord will move the desert of Kadesh, the voice of the Lord preparing the deer, and it will uncover the thickets of the forests” [[Ps 29:8–9](#)], will be converted into an abundance of all things; and with the deer fighting over all the woodlands of the nations, the beasts that previously possessed them will be expelled. Hence what is said in the same prophet is fulfilled: “Rejoice, O barren one, you who do not bear; break forth and cry aloud, you who are not in travail, for the sons of the deserted one are more than of her who has a husband” [[Isa 54:1](#)].

Before it was “thirsty” or *impassable*, not having life-giving waters, and the Lord did not go through it. Now it will *flourish like the lily*, or, as Aquila has expressed it more meaningfully, *καλυκωσις*, which we are able to express as budding rose, and one not yet fully leaved. But it will *flourish*, so that it declares with the Apostle, “We are the good aroma of Christ in every place” [[2 Cor 2:15](#)]; and this from the Song of Songs, “Flowers have appeared in the land; the mandrakes have given forth their fragrance” [[Song 7:12–13](#)]. As for what is recorded in the Septuagint, “And the desert places *of the Jordan* shall rejoice,” “of the Jordan” of course is not found in the Hebrew; but we can say that it points to John’s baptism of repentance in the “Jordan” river, a baptism that the Lord sealed and confirmed by his own washing [cf. [Matt 3:15–16](#)]. And because it speaks figuratively of the desert in which John was, which refers to the nations, it can be logically joined to the “Jordan.” Thus let us come through the desert of the nations to the baptism of the Savior.

And what follows, *The glory of Libanus is given to it, and the beauty of Carmel and Sharon*, we ought to understand according to the preceding explanation, in which we said that Libanus

<sup>446</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 8. 9 (226, 22–28, 14).

is to be understood as the temple or Jerusalem, since Zechariah says, “Open your doors, Libanus” [[Zech 11:1](#)], and Ezekiel, “A great eagle with great wings, full of claws, which has the design of entering into Libanus” [[Ezek 17:3](#)]; and Carmel (*Carmelum*) signifies the first people, about which it was said above, “And there will be a desert in Carmel (*Chermel*) and Carmel (*Chermel*) shall be counted for a forest” [[Isa 23:15](#)]; and *Sharon* has the same meaning, as Scripture says: “Sharon has become as a desert” [[Isa 33:9](#)]. Therefore, all the radiance, the worship of God, knowledge of circumcision, fertile lands and fields, which are called *Sharon*, which Symmachus translated as “fields,” will be given to the formerly deserted church. And its inhabitants “will see the glory of the Lord” and the *beauty*, or “height,” of our God.

17. ([35:3–7](#)) *Strengthen the feeble hands, and confirm the weak knees.* (4) *Say to the fainthearted, or timid, “Fear not, behold our God will bring the revenge of recompense; God himself will come and will save you,”* or, as the Septuagint translated, “us.” (5) *Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be clear,* or, “shall hear.” (6) *Then the lame shall leap as a deer, and the tongue of the mute shall be free, for waters have broken out in the desert, and streams in the wilderness.* (7) *And that which was dry land [shall become] a pool, or a swamp, and the thirsty as springs of water. In the dens where dragons dwelt before, there shall rise up the verdure of the reed and the bulrush.* The Septuagint has translated this as, “There there will be the joy of birds and a sheepfold for flocks.” He says, (8) *And a path and a way, or a clean way, shall be there, and it shall be called the holy way; the polluted shall not pass over it, and this shall be a straight way for us, so that fools do not go astray on it,* or, as the Septuagint has translated, “Neither shall there be there an unclean way; but those who have been dispersed shall not go astray.” He says, (9) *No lion shall be there, and no evil beast shall go up by it, nor be found there, but they shall walk on it who have been delivered.* (10) *And the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and shall come into Zion with praise and everlasting joy upon their head. They shall obtain joy and gladness, sorrow and groaning shall flee away.* We have mixed together both versions to prevent the length of the books from being extended by setting forth each singly. The length already exceeds the measure of brevity.

Above it was said of the apostles, “They shall see the glory of the Lord, and the beauty of our God” [[Isa 35:2](#)].<sup>447</sup> Now they are commanded to *strengthen the feeble hands* among the nations, and to *confirm the weak knees*, so that those who were not able to do the work of God before because of their *feeble hands*, and who had a withered right hand [cf. [Matt 12:10](#)], may stretch it forth to good works; and those who long ago were limping among the idols because of their various errors may walk with a strong gait upon the truth, and by strengthening the *fainthearted* or fearful in the faith of the Lord, they may cause them not to *fear*. Let the fear of the one God expel the fears of all error. Now the reason for safety and steadfastness is that Christ will come, to whom the Father has given all judgment [cf. [John 5:22](#)], and he will repay to each according to his works [cf. [Ps 62:12](#)]. *He himself will come and will save you*, to whom it is said, *fear not*; or “us.” Accordingly, the apostles say that they share salvation in common with those who believe [cf. [Jude 3](#)].

*Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be clear; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute shall be free.* Although this has been

<sup>447</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 9 (228, 21–0).



fulfilled in the greatness of the signs [cf. [John 20:30](#)],<sup>448</sup> when the Lord spoke to the disciples of John who had been sent to him, “Go and report to John what you have heard and seen; the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise, the poor have good news preached to them” [[Matt 11:4–5](#)]; nevertheless, it is fulfilled every day among the nations, when those who previously were *blind* and struck against wood and stones, behold the light of truth; and those who, with deaf ears were unable to hear the words of the Scriptures, now *rejoice* in the precepts of God; when those who were *lame* before and were not holding to the *straight way*, *leap like deer*, imitating their teachers, and the *tongue of the mute will be free*, whose mouths Satan had closed, that they might not be able to confess the one Lord [cf. [1 Cor 8:6](#); [Rom 10:9](#)].

Now the reason the *eyes will be opened*, the *ears will hear*, the *blind will leap* and the *tongue of the mute will be free*, is because the *waters* of the baptism of the Savior have *broken out* or “burst forth” in the onetime *desert* of the church, and *streams* or *torrents in the wilderness*, namely, the various spiritual graces; and that which was *dry land* has been turned into a *pool* and *swamp*, so that not only has burning thirst ended, but it has become passable by boat and well watered, and it has very many springs, for which the deer longs [cf. [Ps 42:1](#)]. The one who drinks from them is able to bless the Lord, as it is written: “Bless the Lord from the springs of Israel” [[Ps 68:26](#)]. In the *dens* of the souls of the Gentiles, in which *dragons dwelt before*, there will be *reeds* and *bulrushes*,<sup>449</sup> on which is written the faith of the Lord, and on which formerly weary limbs may rest; or “there will be a joy of birds and a sheepfold for flocks,” that the doves might receive wings [cf. [Ps 55:6](#)], and the lowly ones who remain may hurry to the heights and be able to say with the Psalmist, “The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall not want; he makes me lie down in the place of pasture, he has led me out to the waters of refreshment” [[Ps 23:1–2](#)].<sup>550</sup>

*There will be there a path and a most clean way, which shall be called holy*, and which itself says of itself, “I am the way” [[John 14:6](#)], through which he who is *polluted* shall not be able to *pass*.<sup>551</sup> This is also why it is said in the psalm: “Blessed are the blameless in the way” [[Ps 119:1](#)].

And this *way*, that is our God, will be for us so *straight* and level and flat that it shall hold no error, and the foolish and the senseless are able to walk on it, to whom wisdom speaks in Proverbs, “If anyone is a little one, let him come to me, and to the foolish she said: ‘Come and eat my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mixed for you, leave infancy, and live, and walk by the ways of prudence’ ” [[Prov 9:4–6](#)]. For “God has chosen the foolish things of the world” [[1 Cor 1:27](#)], the foremost of such foolish ones speaks in the Psalm, “O God, you know my folly” [[Ps 69:5](#)]; but “the foolishness of God is wiser than men” [[1 Cor 1:25](#)]. This is why the Septuagint has translated, “and those who had been dispersed” and separated from fellowship with the Lord “will not go astray.”

It follows, *No lion shall be there*, namely our adversary the devil, who prowls about roaring [cf. [1 Pet 5:8](#)], seeking how he might be able to enter the sheepfold of the Lord [cf. [John 10:1](#),

<sup>448</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (228, 35–29, 15).

<sup>449</sup> Or “*apurus*.” Cf. [Isa 19:6](#).

<sup>550</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 9 (229, 26).

<sup>551</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (229, 32–3).

[10](#)], and no evil beasts, his accomplices, shall go up by it. For the traces of the serpent cannot be found on the rock [cf. [Prov 30:19](#)].<sup>552</sup> But *those shall walk by it who have been delivered* from the chains of sins, and *have been redeemed* by the blood of the Savior, and have done penance, and have “come into Zion.” Of “Zion” we have quite often spoken: “You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” [[Heb 12:22](#)]. May we not seek in a Jewish manner a golden Zion and bejeweled Jerusalem [cf. [Rev 21:10–11, 19–21](#)], which, according to the prophecy of Daniel was reduced to everlasting ashes [cf. [Dan 9:26–27](#)]?

And there shall be *everlasting joy* upon the heads of those who praise the Lord, that after they have overcome the world, they will be able to say with the Apostle and the prophet, “I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of justice” [[2 Tim 4:7–8](#)]; and “O Lord, you have crowned us as with a shield of your good will” [[Ps 5:12](#)]. Then, while *joy* and *gladness* increase, *sorrow and groaning shall flee away*, when he who rescues will come out of Zion [cf. [Isa 59:20](#)]. In accordance with the Apostle Paul, we interpret all these things in respect to the first coming of Savior; the Jews, however, and our Judaizers, relate them to the second coming, on the pretext of the one little line, *They shall return and shall come into Zion with praise*, longing for the blood of sacrifices and the servitude of all the nations and the beauty of women.<sup>553</sup>

## [THE ELEVENTH BOOK]

1. It is difficult, no, impossible, to please everyone, and the differences of opinion are not as great as the number of persons. To some I seemed to take longer in the explanation of the twelve prophets than I should have, and for this reason I tried to be brief in my little commentary on Daniel, except in the last and second-to-last visions, where I had to lengthen the discussion because of their great obscurity, and especially in the explanation of the seven, sixty-two, and one weeks [cf. [Dan 9:25–27](#)]. In discussing these, I have briefly summarized what Africanus, the chronologist, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, and also Clement, a priest of the Alexandrian church, Apollinarius the Laodicean, Hippolytus, the Hebrews, and Tertullian thought. I left it to the reader to choose what to select from the many views presented. And so, what we did out of modesty in forming judgments and out of consideration for those who would read the work, displeases some people perhaps, who long to know not the opinions of the ancients, but our judgment. It is easy to say to them in response that I did not want one man to be received in such a way that I seemed to be condemning the others.<sup>11</sup> And, at any rate,

<sup>552</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (230, 11–8).

<sup>553</sup> This polemic is directed against Christian millennialism.

1 In his *Commentary on Daniel* at 9:24–7, Jerome writes concerning the meaning of the seventy weeks, “realize that this question has been argued over in various ways by men of great

if such great and learned men displease fastidious readers, what will they make of me who expose myself to the bites of the envious on account of the slenderness of my meager talent?<sup>22</sup> But if, moreover, I have called the men mentioned above “teachers of the church,” let them understand that I do not approve the faith of them all, who in any case contradict each other;<sup>33</sup> but I spoke to the distinction between Josephus and Porphyry, who argued a great deal about this question.<sup>44</sup> But if I have translated discordant things in the explanation of the statue and of its feet and fingers, the iron and the clay as the Roman kingdom, because Scripture foretells that it was first strong, then weak, let it not be ascribed to me, but to the prophet [cf. [Dan 2:31–45](#)].<sup>55</sup> For neither should princes be flattered to the extent that the truth of the Holy Scriptures is neglected, nor is a general discussion an injury of one person. Since this injury was avoided through the kind devotion of my friends, the person has suddenly been removed by the judgment of God, so that both the care of my friends toward me and the treachery of my detractors was shown.<sup>66</sup> But now let us continue with other things that we have begun. The eleventh book on Isaiah, O virgin of Christ, Eustochium, will be easier to begin, because it has a

learning, and that each of them has expressed his views according to the capacity of his own genius. And so, because it is unsafe to pass judgment upon the opinions of the great teachers of the Church and to set one above another, I shall simply repeat the view of each, and leave it to the reader’ judgment as to whose explanation ought to be followed.”Trans. Gleason Archer (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 95.

2 M. Hale Williams, [The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 194, notes that this text shows that Jerome was very much aware of the role played by his use of sources in his self-presentation as an exegete: “the passage makes very clear that the method of the commentary on Daniel—and of the other commentaries—as a deliberate choice. Furthermore, it explicitly links compilation, especially the citation of sources by name, with Jerome’ desire to humble himself before his readers.”

3 This may be directed against Rufinus, who in his [Apology against Jerome 1.22](#), criticized Jerome’ hypocrisy in attacking Origen as a heretic, when in many of his earlier writings, including the *Commentary on Daniel*, he had named him a “aster of the churches.”

4 The passage concerns the explanation of the “eventy weeks” of [Dan 9:24](#).

5 Jerome is referring to his interpretation of [Dan 2:40](#) in his *Commentary on Daniel*, where he mentions the feebleness of the contemporary Roman Empire, since Roman rulers (the Emperor Honorius) feel the need to enlist the help of barbarian tribes both in civil wars and against foreign nations. Jerome’ contemporaries interpreted his words as a veiled attack on the Emperor Honorius, who employed the Vandal general Stilicho as his powerful minister. Cf. G. Grützmacher, [Hieronymus: Eine biographische Studie zur alten Kirchengeschichte, vol. 3, Sein Leben und seine Schriften von 400 bis 420](#) (Berlin: Scientia Verlag Aalen, 1969) 177.

6 This may be a reference to the Emperor Honorius’ ordered execution of his Vandal general Flavius Stilicho in 408. Stilicho’ death removed the chief foe of Alaric the Visigoth, who led his troops to sack Rome in 410. In [Ep. 123.17](#), Jerome referred to Stilicho as “he half-barbarian traitor who armed the enemy against us with our own resources.”Stilicho may have heard of Jerome’ expressions and taken offense. Jerome seems to think that he was planning some sort of revenge against him when he was put to death. Cf. W. Fremantle, “ieronymus,” [DCB 3:46](#).

lengthy historical section. The rest will have to be dictated in a similar fashion down through its two sections. And one must strive for brevity in such a way that there is no loss of understanding.

2. (36:1–10) *And it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of the Assyrians came up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and captured them. (2) And the king of the Assyrians sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah with a great army (manu gravi), and he stood in the aqueduct of the upper pool on the way of the fuller's field. (3) And there went out to him Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the house, and Shebna (Sobna) the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph one of the recorders.<sup>77</sup> (4) And Rabshakeh said to them, "Tell Hezekiah, Thus says the great king of the Assyrians: What is the confidence in which you trust? (5) Or with what counsel or strength do you arrange to rebel? In whom do you trust, that you have withdrawn from me? (6) Behold, you trust in this broken staff of a reed, in Egypt, upon which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it; so is pharaoh, king of Egypt, to all who trust in him. (7) But if you answer me, 'We trust in the Lord our God,' is it not he whose high places and altar Hezekiah has taken away, and has said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar'? (8) And now deliver yourself up to my lord the king of the Assyrians, and I will give you two thousand horses, and you will not be able on your part to furnish riders for them. (9) And how will you stand against the face of the judge of one place, of the least of my master's servants? But if you trust in Egypt and in chariots and in horsemen, (10) have I now come up without the Lord against this land to destroy it? The Lord said to me, Go up against this land and destroy it."*

The history is clear and does not need interpretation.<sup>88</sup> These same things have been written and are related in more detail in the Books of Kings and of Days, that "in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah reigned" [2 Kgs 18:1]. "He was twenty-five years old," it says, "when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem" [2 Kgs 18:2]. "And he did what was good before the Lord, according to all that David his father had done" [2 Kgs 18:3]. And after a little bit,

He hoped in the Lord the God of Israel, and after him there was not any like him among all the kings of Judah, but neither were there among those who were before him. For he cleaved to the Lord and did not depart from his tracks, and he kept his commandments that the Lord had commanded Moses. This is also why the Lord was with him and wherever he went forth, he acted wisely. But he rebelled against the king of the Assyrians, and did not serve him. [2 Kgs 18:5–7]

In the sixth year of his reign, Shalmaneser king of the Assyrians captured Samaria and the ten tribes that were called "Israel" [cf. 2 Kgs 18:9–10]. And he transferred them to the Assyrians, and put them in Halah and Habor, by the rivers of Gozan, in the cities of the Medes [cf. 2 Kgs 18:11]. But after seven years, that is, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, *the king of the*

7 RSV: "he recorder."

8 Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 10 (231, 1–2). For a modern discussion of the chronological problems of chaps. 37–9 and its relation to Kings, see J. H. Walton, "New Observations on the Date of *Isaiah*," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 28, no. 2 (1985): 129–2.

Assyrians Sennacherib entered Judah and besieged its *fortified cities*, desiring to capture them [cf. [2 Kgs 18:13](#)]. And when he laid siege to Lachish, Hezekiah sent messengers to him, saying, “I have sinned; depart from me, and whatever you impose on me I will bear” [[2 Kgs 18:14](#)]. And when he had paid three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold to the king’s empire, having broken the doors of the Lord’s temple and stripped it of its plated sheets, which he himself had fastened upon them [cf. [2 Kgs 18:16](#)],

the king of the Assyrians sent the Tartan and Rabshakeh with a very strong army (*manu valida*) from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And when they had gone up, they came to Jerusalem and stood opposite the aqueduct of the upper pool, which is on the way of the fuller’s field. And they summoned the king to themselves. There came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the house, and Shebna (*Sobna*) the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph from the commentaries.<sup>99</sup> And Rabshakeh said to them, “Say to Hezekiah, Thus says the great king, the king of the Assyrians ...” [[2 Kgs 18:17–19](#)],

and the other things that are contained in the history.

In this, Rabshakeh is to be regarded as presumptuous.<sup>110</sup> For some kind of opposing power, as it were, is imitating the usage of the prophets, because, just as they are accustomed to record in their prefatory words, “Thus says the Lord,” by which they show the authority and the importance of the one who is speaking, so now he has said, “Thus says the great king, the king of the Assyrians” [[2 Kgs 18:19](#)]. But there came out to him Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, who was over the house, and Shebna (*Sobna*) the scribe, and Joah the son of *Asaph from the commentaries*. This is the Eliakim, the son of Hilkiyah, about whom we read above in the vision of the valley of Zion [cf. [Isa 22:1](#)]: “I will call my servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, and I will clothe him with your robe, and I will strengthen him with your girdle, and will give your power into his hand, and he shall be as a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah” [[Isa 22:20–21](#)], and so on. But these things are said to Shebna, who was appointed over the temple before him [Eliakim], about whom it is written in the same vision, “Go, enter to him who dwells in the tabernacle, to Shebna, who is appointed over the temple” [[Isa 22:15](#)]. The Hebrews have the tradition that Shebna was terrified by the threats of Rabshakeh and handed over armies (*manus*) to the Assyrians, and betrayed the lower part of Jerusalem to the adversaries. They say that except for the citadel of Zion and the temple, nothing else remained that the Assyrian did not control. Hence they err who think that the Shebna who now goes out with Eliakim and Joah to Rabshakeh is the same as the one above.<sup>111</sup> For there, Shebna is recorded to have been placed over the temple, which it is said was to be captured by the Assyrians. But this Shebna is a scribe, that is a γράμματευς, which in Hebrew is called a *sofer*, and has the same name as the one above. But the Jews claim that Rabshakeh, which is said in the Hebrew tongue, was the son of the prophet Isaiah and was himself a traitor, and that another remaining son of Isaiah is called Jashub [cf. [Isa 7:3](#)], which in our language means “left

9 RSV: “he recorder.”

<sup>110</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 10 (232, 24–8).

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (232, 14–3).

behind.” On the other hand, others judge him to have been a Samaritan, and that is why he knew how to speak Hebrew and why he was blaspheming the Lord so boldly and impiously.

Therefore, let us consider the words of Rabshakeh. And in particular, what he says first is false: *You trust in this broken staff of a reed, in Egypt.*<sup>112</sup> For nowhere does history relate that Hezekiah sent to the Egyptians and sought the help of pharaoh. But what he adds is true: *If you answer me, We trust in the Lord our God.* But on the other hand, he joins this truth to a lie<sup>113</sup> [when he says] that Hezekiah removed *God’s* high places and altars. For he had not done this against God but for God, in order to destroy idolatry and ancient error and to command that God be worshiped in Jerusalem, where his temple was located—although we do read that by an evil custom the people constructed altars in the hills and mountains and offered sacrifices to God. And wanting to show the small number of the besieged, he promises them *two thousand horses, riders* for which Hezekiah is not able to *furnish*. This does not come from the helplessness of the Jewish people, who lacked knowledge of horsemanship, but from observing the commands of God, who had commanded the king of Israel through Moses, “He shall not multiply horses for himself, and he shall not have many wives” [[Deut 17:16–17](#)]. But if, he says, on the other hand, you are unable to *withstand* me, the servant of Sennacherib, even the least of his *servants*, how will you withstand such great power of the king? To this, however, that he had said, *If you answer me: We trust in the Lord God*, he responds shrewdly and prudently that he had not come by his own will, but by the commands of the Lord. *The Lord said to me, Go up upon that land, and destroy it.* And this is his argument: Surely I would not have been able to come here except by the will of the Lord. But since I came and captured many cities, and part of Jerusalem remains intact, it is shown that I came by his will.

I have read in someone’s commentary that it was the same Sennacherib who also captured Samaria, which is altogether false.<sup>114</sup> For sacred history reports that Pul, under Menahem the king of Israel, was the first king of the Assyrians to have plundered the ten tribes [cf. [2 Kgs 15:17–20](#)]. Second, Tiglath-pileser came to Samaria under Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel [cf. [2 Kgs 15:29](#)]. Shalmaneser was then the third to have captured all of Samaria under Hoshea, king of Israel [[2 Kgs 17:3, 6](#)]. Fourth came Sargon, who fought against Ashdod (*Azotus*) [cf. [Isa 20:1](#)], and fifth was Esarhaddon, who transported Israel and sent Samaritans as guards into the land of Judea [cf. [2 Kgs 17:23–24](#)]. Sennacherib was the sixth, who under Hezekiah the king of Judah laid siege to Jerusalem, after capturing Lachish and the other cities of Judah. But others think that these many names refer to one and the same man.<sup>115</sup>

3. ([36:11–21](#)) *And Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to Rabshakeh, “Speak to your servants in the Syrian tongue, for we understand it; do not speak to us in Judaic in the hearing of the people, who are upon the wall.”* (12) *And Rabshakeh said to them, “Has my master sent me to your master and to you, to speak all these words, and not rather to the men that sit on the wall that they may eat their own dung, and drink the urine of their feet<sup>116</sup> with you?”* (13) *Then*

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (233, 3–4).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (233, 15–2).

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (233, 32–34, 8).

<sup>115</sup> Cf. [[5](#)][20:1–](#).

<sup>116</sup> *Pedum*. A variant reads *pecudum*, “f cattle.”



*Rabshakeh stood and cried out with a loud voice in Judaic and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of the Assyrians. (14) Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you. (15) And do not let him make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will deliver us, this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of the Assyrians.' (16) Do not listen to Hezekiah. For thus says the Assyrian king: 'Make a blessing with me, and come out to me, and every one eat of his own vine, and every one of his own fig tree, and every one drink the water of his cistern, (17) till I come and take you away to a land which is like your land, a land of grain and of wine, a land of bread and vineyards. (18) Do not let Hezekiah trouble you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Have any of the gods of the nations delivered their land out of the hand of the king of the Assyrians? (19) Where is the god of Hamath (Emath) and of Arpad? Where is the god of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? (20) Who is there among all the gods of these lands, who has delivered his land out of my hand, that the Lord may deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?' "* (21) *And they were silent, and answered him not a word. For the king had commanded, saying, "Do not answer him."*

Rabshakeh's accusation is a testimony to Hezekiah, because, when all the cities of Judea were captured, he trusted in the Lord and said to the people: "Do not be afraid or dismayed before the king of the Assyrians and before all the multitude that is with him. For more by far are with us than are with him. With him there is an arm of flesh; with us there is the Lord our God, who is our helper and fights for us. And the people were encouraged," it says, "at the words of this sort from Hezekiah king of Judah" [[2 Chr 32:7-8](#)]. This is why Rabshakeh wants to destroy what he had built, and he says to the people, *Do not let Hezekiah deceive you and do not let him make you trust in the Lord God.*

Now as for what Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah humbly pleaded, *Speak to your servants in the Syrian tongue, for we understand it, and do not speak to us in the hearing of the people who are upon the wall*, it has this meaning: Is it really necessary to fill the people with unjustified terror and to brandish empty strength? Speak a language that the people do not understand, since indeed we have knowledge of your language and know the Syrian speech, which is common to both of us.

Rabshakeh responds to this arrogantly: *Has my master sent me to your master and to you, and not rather to the men who sit on the wall?* And again, increasing their dismay by a threat he says that they would *eat their own dung, and drink the urine of their feet with you*. By this he shows that they are to be captured by famine, scarcity, and thirst.

Immediately then, he supplemented this threat with an enticement in order to deceive by promises and persuasion those whom he had not conquered with terror. He says on behalf of the king of the Assyrians, *Make a blessing with me, and come out to me*. In the Book of Kings this reads as, "Do what is useful with me, and come out to me" [[2 Kgs 18:31](#)]. Therefore, the sense is the same: Do, he says, what would be beneficial to you and would lead to your blessing. Or, he is saying this: Bless the king of the Assyrians and praise him, and confess him lord, that you may receive a reward and dwell in your city and enjoy your things while I return or go back to Egypt, when Libnah (*Lobna*) has been captured; but afterward, I will come and will transport you into a *land of grain and of wine* and of olive trees, which is similar to your land. But he does

not give the name of the region, because he had not been able to find the equal of the land of promise, but he promises one that is similar. For everyone desires that [name] in which he was born. Some think that he is promising them the land of Media, which resembles the land of Judah both in location and in its crops.

And he adds, *Where is the god of Hamath and of Arpad and of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?* This shows that Samaria served all these gods, and for that reason it was captured. But if, he says, we have easily conquered the ten tribes with such great gods guarding them, how much more easily will we conquer all of you, or rather, Jerusalem alone, which has the protection of only one God?

All the people remained silent and did not say anything to him in response, since indeed they had received the command of the king not to respond. Truly, Hezekiah was just and was doing all things faithfully, all things by means of counsel [cf. [Prov 13:10](#)].<sup>117</sup> For the reason he had ordered them not to respond to the blaspheming Assyrian was to prevent their provoking him to greater blasphemies. This is why it is written, “Do not kindle the coals of a sinner” [[Sir 8:10](#)]; and we read in the Psalm, “When the sinner stood against me, I was dumb and was humbled and kept silence from good [words]” [[Ps 39:2–3](#)]; and again, “Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord, and a fortified door about my lips; do not incline my heart to words of evil” [[Ps 141:3–4](#)].

4. ([36:22–37:7](#)) *And Eliakim the son of Helkiah, who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph from the commentaries,<sup>118</sup> went in to Hezekiah with their garments torn, and told him the words of Rabshakeh. (37:1) And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah had heard it, that he tore his garments and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. (2) And he sent Eliakim who was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and the ancients of the priests covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the son of Amoz the prophet. (3) And they said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah: This day is a day of tribulation, and of chastisement, and of blasphemy, for the sons have come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring forth. (4) If somehow the Lord God hears the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of the Assyrians his master has sent to blaspheme the living God, and to reproach with words which the Lord your God has heard. Therefore lift up prayer for the remnant that is left.” (5) And the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. (6) And Isaiah said to them, “Thus shall you say to your master: ‘Thus says the Lord: Be not afraid of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of the Assyrians have blasphemed me. (7) Behold, I will give a spirit to him, and he shall hear a message, and shall return to his own land, and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.’ ”*

Leaving what is clear, let us discuss only those things in which the meaning lies hidden. They tear their garments, because they had heard Rabshakeh blaspheming. And the king himself tears his garments because he believed that it was on account of his own sins and those of the people that Rabshakeh had come even to the gate of Jerusalem and had spoken such things against the Lord. This is also why the high priest tore his garments, because he believed that the Savior was blaspheming [cf. [Matt 26:65](#)]; and Paul and Barnabas tore their garments, when the

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 10 (234, 31–6).

<sup>118</sup> RSV: “he recorder.”

Lycaonians conferred the worship due to God upon them [cf. [Acts 14:14](#)].

Therefore, in place of a royal outfit, he was covered in sackcloth, and going up from the palace to the temple, he sent Eliakim the high priest and Shebna the scribe and the senior priests to Isaiah son of Amoz the prophet. Here the humility and prudence of the king should be considered. He himself goes on to the temple; to Isaiah son of Amoz the prophet he sends the princes of the people and the senior priests, draped not in priestly stoles, but with goatskins.

Instead of this, in the Book of Kings, one reads, “He himself was covered with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. And he sent Eliakim, who was appointed over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and the aged from the priests, covered with sackcloth, to *the prophet Isaiah* the son of Amoz” [[2 Kgs 19:1–2](#)]. Here, because Isaiah himself was writing a history about himself, he did not call himself a *prophet*, but the *son of a prophet*; but there, because someone else was the author of the historical narrative, he calls him a prophet. This indeed is what we read also about Matthew the Evangelist, that he called himself Matthew the tax collector [cf. [Matt 10:3](#)]; whereas the other evangelists kept silent about the name of tax collector, and they recorded only his apostolic dignity [cf. [Mark 3:18](#); [Luke 6:15](#)]. And because he is second in his own writings in the connections of the apostles, he is first in the writings of others [cf. [Luke 14:7–11](#)].

*And they said to him, it says, Thus says Hezekiah, not “the king.”*<sup>119</sup> He does not puff him up by using the imperial title. *This day is a day of tribulation and of chastisement and of blasphemy, of our tribulation, of God’s chastisement, of the enemies’ blasphemy.* And he sets forth a comparison with a woman who is about to bring forth and who is in pain, because she has come to the time to give birth and is not able to bring forth, nor to say, “From your fear, O Lord we have conceived and we were in pain and we have brought forth the breath (*spiritum*) of salvation” [[Isa 26:18](#)].<sup>220</sup>

It follows, *If somehow the Lord your God will hear the words of Rabshakeh.* For we do not dare to call the Lord of all *our* Lord, by whose anger we endure so much, but we call him *your* Lord. And we have this confidence of vengeance, because the living God is being blasphemed by the worship of dead idols. And they have *reproached with words that the Lord your God has heard. Therefore lift up our low-lying prayer,* not for all the people who have already perished, but for those remaining who are under siege.

*And when the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah:* again he remains silent about the title of prophet, in order to preserve the humility with which he had begun. And Isaiah came before them—for by means of the same [prophetic] spirit by which he knew the future, he had also heard the absent king—and he tells them what they needed to respond to their lord, with humility joined with assurance of mind. Tell, he says, *your lord, who is your lord; for thus says my Lord: Do not fear the word* by which, not you, but I have been *blasphemed*. I am not telling everything that I am going to do to the king of the Assyrians, lest I should seem to be vaunting my power, but because there must be given to him a *spirit*, not of God, but of the adversary; and when he *hears a message, he will return to his own land and fall there by the sword.* Thus, at the same time Hezekiah heard the two things that he desired, that he was to be delivered

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 11 (235, 21–2).

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (235, 24–8).

from the siege and from danger, and that the hostile enraged king would die in his own land. If anyone asks why in a book of prophecy the history that is written in the Books of the Kings and Days seems to be mixed in, let him consider that the prophecy is joined to the history, concerning both the deliverance of the city and the death of the Assyrian, and concerning both the turning back of the sun by ten hours [cf. [2 Kgs 20:9–11](#)], and the prolongation of life for a period of fifteen years [cf. [2 Kgs 20:6](#)]. This is because it pertains both to prophecy and history.

5. ([37:8–13](#)) *And Rabshakeh, returned and found the king of the Assyrians in a battle against Libnah; for he had heard that he had set out from Lachish. (9) And he heard them speaking about Tirhakah (Tharaca), the king of Ethiopia, "He has come forth to fight against you." When he heard this, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, (10) "Thus shall you speak to the king of Judah, saying, Let not your God deceive you, in whom you trust, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of the Assyrians. (11) Behold, you have heard all that the kings of the Assyrians have done to all the lands which they have destroyed, and can you be delivered? (12) Have the gods of the nations delivered them whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan, and Haran (Aram), and Rezpah (Reseph), and the sons of Eden, who were in Telassar (Thalassar)? (13) Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and of Ivvah?"*

With the same words and same thought, the Books of Kings and of Days record that Rabshakeh abandoned the siege of Jerusalem, according to the will of the Lord, and proceeded to go to his lord, whom he knew was on his way to fight against Libnah, having either deserted or captured Lachish [cf. [2 Kgs 19:8–13](#); [2 Chr 32:9–19](#)]. And also, Sennacherib himself, upon hearing that Tirhakah the king of the Ethiopians was waging war against him, meets him as he is coming, and nevertheless sends messengers to Hezekiah, and letters, in order to terrify with words those whom he had not yet captured by his strength. And just as he had told the people, "Do not let Hezekiah deceive you" [[Isa 36:14](#)], he utters the same blasphemy to the king: *Let not your God deceive you*. And he records examples of greater things, that just as their gods were not able to deliver the other lands from their hands, so Jerusalem will not be delivered. But in the list of the other nations, he records *Hena (Anae) and Ivvah (Ava)*, which the Septuagint confused, saying "Anaeugava." They have recorded the conjunction "and," that is *u* in the Hebrew tongue, between the two nations *Anae* and *Ava*. Accordingly, to those who are ignorant of this, it appears that they are a single nation or city. We are passing over what is clear, that we may spend time on what is doubtful.

Now Herodotus,<sup>221</sup> and in very great detail Berosus, an author of Chaldean history,<sup>222</sup> also recount that Sennacherib king of the Assyrians fought against the Egyptians, besieged Pelusium and, when he had already captured the city by constructing ramparts, Tirhakah king of Egypt came to help, and that in one night a pestilence killed 185,000 Assyrians near Jerusalem [cf. [2 Kgs 19:35](#)]. The reliability of these things needs to be sought from their own books.

6. ([37:14–20](#)) *And Hezekiah took the letters (libros) from the hand of the messengers, and read them, and went up to the house of the Lord, and he spread them before the Lord. (15) And he prayed to the Lord, saying, (16) "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, you who sit upon the*

<sup>221</sup> Cf. [Hdt. 2:141](#).

<sup>222</sup> Cf. Berosus, cited by [Josephus, Ant 10, 1. 4, 20](#).

*cherubim, you alone are the God of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. (17) Incline, O Lord, your ear, and hear: open, O Lord, your eyes, and see, and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to blaspheme the living God. (18) For truly, O Lord, the kings of the Assyrians have laid waste lands, and their countries. (19) And they have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the works of men's hands, wood and stone, and they broke them in pieces. (20) And now, O Lord our God, save us out of his hand, and let all the kingdoms of the earth know that you alone are the Lord."*

Hezekiah snatches up customary weapons against the blasphemies of King Sennacherib, and he goes again to the temple and spreads open his letters (*epistulas*) before the Lord. At first he had been silent; for, terrified by fear of the Lord, he did not dare to open his mouth in the temple, or to pour out his prayers freely to God. Now, however, because he had already heard Isaiah saying, "Do not be afraid of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of the Assyrians have blasphemed me" [[Isa 37:6](#)], and so on. He boldly entreats the Lord and asserts that he alone is the *living God*. By this we understand that idols are images of the dead.

And as for what he adds, *For truly, O Lord, the kings of the Assyrians have laid waste lands, and their countries, and they have cast their gods into the fire. For they were not gods, but the works of men's hands, wood and stones, and they broke them in pieces*, this is proven by many histories that record that the kings of the Persians came into Greece and destroyed and despoiled the temples of the Greeks.<sup>223</sup> And he asks for vengeance, that on this occasion all kingdoms may come to know that he alone is God, who is able to deliver his own from danger.

7. ([37:21–25](#)) *And Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the Lord the God of Israel: For those things you have asked me concerning Sennacherib the king of the Assyrians, (22) this is the word which the Lord has spoken of him. The virgin daughter of Zion has despised you, and laughed you to scorn, the daughter of Jerusalem has wagged her head after you. (23) Whom have you reproached, and whom have you blasphemed, and against whom have you exalted [your] voice, and lifted up the height of [your] eyes? Against the Holy One of Israel. (24) By the hand of your servants you have reproached the Lord, and have said, 'With the multitude of my chariots I will go up to the height of the mountains, to the top of Libanus, and I will cut down the heights of their cedars, its choice fir trees, and I will enter the height of its summit, the forest of its Carmel. (25) I have dug, and drunk water, and have dried up with the print of my foot all the streams shut up in banks.' "*

Since Hezekiah so boldly prayed to the Lord, and did not send to Isaiah, as he had previously sent, the prophet himself does not go to him, but he sends messengers to speak to him in the words of God. "Concerning Sennacherib, against whom you pray, this is the decree of the Lord. The *virgin of Zion* and the *daughter of Jerusalem has laughed you to scorn and despised you*. She is called *virgin* and *daughter* because, with all of the nations worshiping the images of dead men, she alone is preserving the chastity of the religion of God and the worship of one divinity. And she who had not responded to the one present, lest she should incite you to greater blasphemy, *wagged her head after him* who was going away, concerning the definitive vengeance, concerning the certain punishment. And this is what she said: You have grown

<sup>223</sup> Cf. Herodotus.



haughty, not against me, but against the Lord; not you yourself through yourself, but through your servants, so that the arrogance of the one blaspheming was greater. For you said that *with the multitude of your chariots* you would *go up to the height of the mountains* and to *the top of Libanus*, and you would *cut down its tall cedars and its fir trees*. We should understand this metaphorically, either about all the nations and their princes, or about Jerusalem, which is the interpretation of *Libanus*. Consequently, its *cedars and fir trees* refer to all the powerful and the nobles, while the *height* of its *summit* and the *forest of Carmel* refer to the temple. For he himself had said above, ‘Have you not heard what the kings of the Assyrians have done to all lands which they destroyed? And therefore you will not be able to be delivered’ ” [Isa 37:11].

And as for what he adds, *I have dug, and drunk water, and have dried up with the print of my foot all the streams shut up in banks*, according to the history, this can be understood to mean that in view of the multitude of his army, he drank dry all the rivers. Thus he was forced to dig wells for himself; as a metaphor, it means that he ravaged with his army all the peoples, who are sometimes described by the name of *waters*. The Septuagint alone has translated this as “And I have made a bridge, and have made the waters a desert and every gathering place of waters,” namely because no nation was impassible to him, but upon all the waters of the peoples he has trampled with his foot.

8. (37:26–28) “Have you not heard what I have done of old? From the days of old I have formed it, and now I have brought it to effect, and it has come to pass in the eradication of hills and fortified cities fighting together. (27) The inhabitants of them trembled with a shortened hand and were confounded; they became like the grass of the field, and the herb of the pasture, and like the grass of the housetops, which withered before it was ripe. (28) I knew your dwelling, and your going out, and your coming in, and your rage against me. (29) When you were furious with me, your pride ascended to my ears; therefore I will put (ponam) a ring in your nose, and a bit between your lips, and I will turn you back by the way by which you came.”

These things must be decreed under the persona of God against the words of the Assyrian, because the Lord has responded in this way to the blasphemy of him: “Do you not know that what you have done, you have done by my will, and I have predicted that these things would be and commanded that these things must happen through you? And so, what I decreed *of old*, this has been fulfilled in time, that the *hills*, that is, the princes who previously were *fighting* among themselves, and the most *fortified cities*, when I draw back my hand and do not supply the customary help, they were *eradicated* and they trembled and perished; and they were compared, not to the olive tree and vine, and fruitful trees, but to *grass* and an *herb* and to the *grass* on the houses, which are impeded from bearing fruit, and wither before they reach maturity. And so, *I knew your sitting place* and *going out* and *coming in* before, and I spoke of the *rage* with which you would rage against *me*, since the prophets predicted it. Through it I knew *of old* that you would say, ‘I will *ascend* to heaven, I will set (ponam) my throne above the stars of heaven, I will be like the Most High’ [Isa 14:13–14]. And so, your fury and pride have reached my ears, and I will not carry you further, that you may understand of what you were capable, not that you were capable by your own strength, but by my choice. For the ungodly nations and unfruitful trees deserved to be cut down and to fall by means of you [cf. Isa 10:15], who were, so to speak, my ax and saw. And so, *I will put a ring in your nose*, or a curb, that I



may keep your blaspheming mouth in check, to prevent you from daring to say such things any longer, and I will force a *bit between your lips*, that it may tame your ferocity and lead you back to the Assyrians.” Scripture uses this metaphor in the Psalms against the ungodly: “With bit and curb constrain the jaws of those who do not come near to you” [[Ps 32:9](#)].

9. ([37:30–32](#)) “*But to you this shall be a sign: Eat this year the things that spring of themselves, and in the second year eat fruits; but in the third year sow and reap and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.* (31) *And that which shall be saved of the house of Judah, and that which is left, shall take root downward, and shall bear fruit upward,* (32) *for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and salvation from Mount Zion. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.*”

The prophet says all these things through messengers to Hezekiah, what Sennacherib had said, what the Lord responded to him. Now he makes a speech to him, lest he perhaps doubt that what had been said would come to pass. And it was especially for this reason indeed that the prophets had credibility of their words among the people, because they mentioned not only these things that were to happen after many ages, but also that must be fulfilled without delay and after no great period of time, and that within two years both the Assyrian king would perish and security would be restored to the city of Jerusalem. *This will be the sign*, he says, of those things that I am predicting for the future, that *this year* you will *eat* those things *that spring of themselves*, or, according to the Septuagint, “that you had sown.” But *in the second year*, according to Symmachus, *eat fruits* or, according to the same ones, what will have sprouted up from what you sowed previously and from seed falling to the ground. *But in the third year*, when the Assyrian has already been put to flight and the siege has been lifted, *sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them*, if indeed, the meager *remnant* of this city, which is now enclosed by hostile troops and does not believe that they will escape, will receive such a great abundance of all things and happiness, that like a tree established with deep roots, they will be filled with very dense clusters of *fruits*. For a *remnant will go forth from Jerusalem and from Mount Zion*, and they will fill the Judean land, not because of their own merit, but by the mercy of God, or rather by the *zeal* with which he is zealous for his people against the ungodly [cf. [Zech 1:14](#); [8:2](#)].<sup>224</sup>

10. ([37:33–35](#)) “*Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the king of the Assyrians: He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor occupy it with shield, nor cast a trench about it.* (34) *By the way that he came, he shall return, and into this city he shall not come, says the Lord.* (35) *And I will protect this city, and will save it for my own sake, and for the sake of David my servant.*”

He returns to his theme and, after [giving] hope of future things, he casts out the present fear. For there was not as much joy about those things, which he had promised would come after a long time, as concern about the things impending. He says, however, that the Assyrians will retreat, and they will neither lift a *shield* against the city, nor *hurl* javelins, nor *surround* the city with fortifications and a *trench*, and the enemy will *return by the way by which he came*, and the *city* must be liberated from the present siege; and finally he adds, *For my sake, and for the sake of David my servant*. This means that they are preserved, not for their own merit, but

<sup>224</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 13 (240, 5–).

by the clemency of God, or rather by the remembrance of David their father. In this they are also being reminded about their own negligence, and about his faithfulness and justice, because God loves justice so much that he guards even the descendants of holy men, not for their own merit, but for the virtue of their ancestors.

11. ([37:36–38](#)) *And the angel of the Lord went out, and slew in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000, and they arose in the morning, and behold, all [were] corpses of the dead. (37) And Sennacherib the king of the Assyrians went out and departed, and returned and dwelt in Nineveh. (38) And it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer (Sarasar) his sons slew him with the sword, and they fled into the land of Ararat, and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.*

One hundred and eighty-five thousand of the strongest men are cut down in a single night by a single angel, and without wounding those who were killed, fierce death roams about, separating souls from bodies by the will of the Lord. We read about this in Chronicles: “And the Lord sent an angel, who slew every mighty man and the warrior and the army officer of the king of the Assyrians, and he returned in disgrace to his own land” [[2 Chr 32:21](#)]. The reason he was saved, then, was so that he might know the power of God and hold in check his blaspheming mouth, and become a witness to the majesty of him to whom a little while earlier he had shown contempt. But what he added, *And they arose in the morning*, we should understand either as referring to the Israelites, or to the remnants of his army, although it is written in the Book of Kings that when the king himself had arisen at daybreak, he saw all the bodies of the dead [[2 Kgs 19:35](#)]. Pharaoh too is preserved during the ten plagues in Egypt, in order that he might be the last to perish;<sup>225</sup> for he also will suffer. For when he had returned to Nineveh, the principal city of his kingdom, and was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, as if he had won a victory over his enemies, and was approaching the shrine of his idol to celebrate a triumph and to congratulate [himself], the despiser of the true God is slaughtered in the sanctuary of a false divinity. And he perishes not by the sword of an angel, in common with the many, but by an act of patricide by his sons. When they had fled into the land of *Ararat*, which refers to Armenia, Esarhaddon succeeded in place of his father. The Scripture testifies that he sent settlers to Samaria, so that the land might not remain uncultivated [cf. [Ezra 4:10](#)]. Now *Ararat* is a flat region of incredible fertility in Armenia, through which the Araxes flows to the base of the Taurus mountain, which reaches even that far. Therefore, when the flood ceased, even the ark in which Noah was saved with his sons was not carried to the mountains of Armenia in a general sense, which is called Ararat, but to the tallest mountains of Taurus, which overlooks the plains of Ararat [cf. [Gen 8:4](#)].

12. ([38:1–3](#)) *In those days Hezekiah was sick even to death, and Isaiah, the son of the prophet Amoz,<sup>226</sup> came unto him and said to him, “Thus says the Lord: Put your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.” (2) And Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the Lord, (3) and said, “I beseech you, O Lord, remember, I ask, how I have walked before you in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in your sight”; and Hezekiah wept with great weeping.*

<sup>225</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (240, 29–1).

<sup>226</sup> A textual variant reads “saiah the prophet, the son of Amoz.”

“The Lord chastises the one he loves, and he rebukes every son whom he receives” [[Prov 3:12](#)]. Lest the heart of Hezekiah become lifted up after his incredible triumph and victory from the midst of captivity, he is visited with a bodily infirmity and hears that he will die, in order that when he has been turned to the Lord, he might change his decree. We read of this indeed both in the prophet Jonah [cf. [Jonah 4:2–3](#)] and in the threats against David, which are said to be coming, and were not done, not by God changing his decree, but by summoning the human race to the knowledge of himself; for the Lord is penitent respecting the evils [cf. [Joel 2:13](#)]. And Hezekiah *turned his face to the wall*, because he was unable to go to the temple, but *to the wall* of the temple, near the palace which Solomon had built; or simply *to the wall*, lest he should seem to be showing his tears to those attending to him, or at least, according to Jeremiah, to his heart, who calls *cir*, that is wall, the heart [cf. [Jer 4:19](#)]. Thus did he pray to the Lord with his whole mind.

And he says, *I beseech you, O Lord, remember, I ask, how I have walked before you in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in your sight.* And upon hearing that he was to die, he does not beg for life and many years, but leaves to the judgment of God what he desires to offer—for he knew that the reason Solomon had pleased God was that he did not ask for more years of life [cf. [1 Kgs 3:11](#)]<sup>227</sup>—but the one who is about to go to the Lord recounts his works, how he had walked before him in truth and with a perfect heart. Happy is the conscience that remembers good works in the time of affliction! For “blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” [[Matt 5:8](#)]. And as it is written elsewhere, “Who will boast that he has a pure heart?” [[Prov 20:9](#)]. The perfection of heart that is now said to be in him is explained in this way: he had destroyed idols, opened the doors of the temple, smashed the bronze serpent, and done other things that Scripture mentions [cf. [2 Kgs 18:4](#); [2 Chr 29:3](#)].

But *he wept with great weeping* on account of the promise of the Lord to David, which he saw would perish in his own death. For at that time Hezekiah had no sons. For after his death, Manasseh began to reign in Judah, when he was twelve years old [cf. [2 Kgs 21:1](#)]. From this it is evident that Manasseh was born after the third year of life granted [to Hezekiah]. Therefore, there is all this weeping, because he was losing hope that Christ would be born of his seed. Others claim that even very holy men fear death on account of the uncertainty of judgment and their ignorance of the verdict that they will receive at the [judgment] seat of God [cf. [2 Cor 5:10](#)].<sup>227</sup> And at the same time is solved the question of fate and the chains of necessity and of causes. For by no means is the day of death predetermined for each person, but anyone either lives or dies by the will of God and by the unknown mortal causes, especially since even the necessity of death now appointed for him is postponed, and we read that very many have been resuscitated after death.

13. ([38:4–7](#)) *And the word of the Lord came to Isaiah, saying, (5) “Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus says the Lord the God of David your father. I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears. Behold I will add to your days fifteen years, (6) and I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of the Assyrians, and I will protect it. (7) And this shall be a sign to you from the Lord, that the Lord will do this word which he has spoken: (8) Behold, I will cause the shadow of the lines to be turned back, by which it had gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz with*

<sup>227</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 14 (241, 10–1).

*the sun, ten lines backward.” And the sun turned back ten lines by the degrees by which it was gone down.*

The history is related here in a confused order, as it were in a prophecy. It reads more coherently in the Book of Kings. While Hezekiah weeps with a great weeping,

before Isaiah had gone out of the middle part of the court, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, “Turn back, and say to Hezekiah the prince of my people, I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I have healed you.” ... And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me?” To which the prophet responded, “This shall be the sign from the Lord, that the Lord will do the word that he has spoken: Do you want the shadow to go forward ten lines, or to go back the same number of degrees?” To which Hezekiah said, “It is an easy thing for the shadow to lengthen by ten lines; and I do not want that to happen, but rather let the shadow go back ten degrees.”  
[\[2 Kgs 20:3–5, 8–10\]](#)

And when Isaiah called upon the power of the Lord and the sign was done [cf. [2 Kgs 20:11](#)], Isaiah commanded that a mass of fresh figs be brought. And when they had brought them and placed them upon his wound, he was healed [cf. [2 Kgs 20:7](#)].

But the prophet returns to the king by command of the Lord, so that the very one who had struck might heal [cf. [Deut 32:39](#); [Job 5:18](#)], and Hezekiah is called the prince of his people and the son of David, whose works he followed; for he had done right according to all that his father David did [cf. [2 Kgs 18:3](#)].<sup>228</sup> And his prayer is heard, and his tears are seen, because he had walked before the Lord in truth and with a perfect heart, and had wept with great weeping, and he had done that which was pleasing in his sight [cf. [Isa 38:3](#)]. And fifteen years are added to his life, for which he had not asked, and additionally, he is promised security for his kingdom while he is alive. Now if, as some think, to live in the body is a punishment, and death should be desired that we may be freed from prison, in accordance with what is said, “Return, O my soul, to your rest” [[Ps 116:7](#)], and in another place, “Bring my soul out of prison” [[Ps 142:7](#)], how does the Lord grant an act of kindness that he who needed to be liberated should live in the prison for fifteen more years?<sup>229</sup>

Moreover, a sign is given, that the sun turns back ten steps, which we in accordance with Symmachus translated as *lines* and *sundial*. Its steps (*gradus*) he understood as *lines*, so that the meaning would be made clearer to his readers.<sup>330</sup> Or the steps (*gradus*) had been constructed in such a way by mechanical art, that a shadow descending across each of them marked the number of hours.<sup>331</sup> This sign was a type both of present time and of the future. Thus just as the

<sup>228</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (241, 37–42, 3)..

<sup>229</sup> This seems to be directed against Origen’s speculation about the preexistence of souls and their embodiment.

<sup>330</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 14 (243, 23–7).

<sup>331</sup> E. J. Young, [The Book of Isaiah](#), 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965–2), [2:513–4](#), comments on Isaiah’s meaning here, “t the outset an exegetical question arises as to whether Isaiah is speaking of a sun dial or of steps in general. Does the word rendered *steps* refer to the scales or degree markers of a sun dial? This is essentially the position adopted in the Targum,

sun returned to its point of origin, so too the life of Hezekiah returned to the completed years, and for us who are alive on the seventh and eighth days, the length of our life is prolonged by means of the resurrection of Christ. Moreover, those who show the holy places in this province are accustomed to point out in the enclosure of the temple the steps (*gradus*) of the house of Hezekiah, or of Ahaz, because the sun descended across them.<sup>332</sup> But I will never believe, I do not say that the house of Ahaz, who was an impious king, but of any just king, was in the temple of God. For Solomon is said to have offended God, among other things, because he built the Millo on the height [cf. [1 Kgs 9:24](#)], from where he walked on the tower of the palace and was accustomed to look down upon the court of the temple.

14. ([38:9](#)) *The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he was sick and was recovering from his sickness.* Septuagint: “The prayer of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he had been sick and rose from his sickness.”

I am surprised at how the Septuagint alone recorded “prayer” for *writing*, since “prayer” is expressed by *thefellath*, and not *mactha*, which is written in the present place. Otherwise, “prayer” would be said coherently, if it were about the present time, and not the past. For it is clear that he wrote this when he was rising up after his health had returned; therefore this is not a prayer, but a thanksgiving for the kindness which he had received.

15. ([38:10–13](#)) *I said, “In the midst<sup>333</sup> of my days I shall go to the gates of the netherworld; I sought for the remainder of my years.”* (11) *I said, “I shall not see the Lord the Lord [sic] in the land of the living. I shall behold man no more, nor the inhabitant.* (12) *My generation is at an end, and it is taken away from me and rolled away as a tent of shepherds. My life is cut off, as by a weaver, while I was yet but beginning, he cut me off; from morning even to night you will make an end of me.* (13) *I hoped until morning, as a lion he has thus broken all my bones: from morning even to night you will make an end of me.”* Septuagint: “I said, ‘At the height of my days, I shall go to the gates of the netherworld, I shall abandon the remaining years.’ (11) I said, ‘I shall no more at all see the salvation of God in the land of the living, I shall no longer see man with those who inhabit; (12) it has failed from among my kindred. It has gone forth and departed from me, as one that having pitched a tent takes it down again. My breath (*spiritus*) withdrew as a [weaver’s] web, when it is cut off from by the weaver. (13) In that day I was given up until the morning; like a lion, so has he broken all my bones. I was given up from day even to the night.’ ”

He tells what he was thinking silently at that time of pressing distress and threatening illness. *I said* in my heart, he says, *In the midst of my days*, or, as Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion translated it, “in the weakness and silence of my days.” The Septuagint translated

Jerome, and in Symmachus. On the other hand B, the Syriac, and Josephus take the word in its actual sense as referring to steps. Those who adopt the latter position often assume that there was some kind of pillar or obelisk that would cast a shadow, and that in this instance the shadow cast would descend the stairs. Thus, the entire staircase served as a kind of dial itself... Whether the reference is to an actual sun dial or merely to a flight of steps used to tell time by the position of a shadow, the event was a true sign and equally wonderful.”

<sup>332</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 14 (243, 20–3).

<sup>333</sup> Lit., “alf.”

this as “at the height.” This reading is based on the similarity of the letter *rame* and *dame*—although some translated *dame* as blood, so that the sense is, “in the blood of my days,” when my shed blood and my death were being sought.

And so in desperation I said, *I shall go to the gates of the netherworld*, either by the common law of nature, or to those gates from which the Psalmist sings repeatedly that he may be liberated: “O you who lift me up from the *gates* of death, that I may recount all your praises in the *gates* of the daughter of Zion” [[Ps 9:13–14](#)].<sup>334</sup> I think that these *gates of the netherworld* are those that do not prevail against Peter [cf. [Matt 16:18](#)], because he fell asleep in the fullness of his days [cf. [Matt 26:40](#)]. The saints fulfill their *days*, like Abraham, who “died in a good old age, full of *days*” [[Gen 25:8](#)]. On the other hand, sinners and the impious die *in the midst* (in *dimidio* = *half*) of their *days*, about which the Psalm speaks: “Men of blood and the treacherous shall not live out half (*dimidiabunt*) their *days*” [[Ps 55:23](#)]; for they do not fulfill works of the virtues, nor are they eager to emend their transgressions by penance. This is why *in the midst* of the course of their life and in the darkness of their errors they will be brought down to Tartarus [cf. [2 Pet 2:4](#)].

*I sought*, he says, *for the remainder of my years*, not thinking I would be alive much longer. *I said*, “*I shall not see the Lord the Lord in the land of the living.*” In the Hebrew *ia* is recorded twice for *the Lord the Lord*. This syllable is uttered at the end of *alleluia*. The Septuagint translated this, “I shall no longer see the salvation of God in the land of the living.” In another passage as well it is written of this [land], “I will please the Lord in the country of the living” [[Ps 116:9](#)], and again, “I will please the Lord in the light of the living” [[Ps 56:13](#)].<sup>335</sup> Therefore the “country” of the saints is that which is called the “light of the living.” For “he is not God of the dead, but of the living” [[Matt 22:32](#)]. But this is all that he fears, that, led down to the *netherworld*, he may not deserve to see the salvation of God.

It follows, *I shall behold man no more, nor the inhabitant of rest*.<sup>336</sup> Because of the ambiguity of the word (*rest*), we had formerly joined it to the following verse; for the Hebrew word *oled*, if it is read as the word *edel* is written, means *rest*; if it is read as *eled*, it means “dying.” Therefore he fears that he might not dwell with the saints and men of God in *rest*, or see the Lord *in the land of the living*, and that his *generation* might be *rolled up like a tent*, and that like a [woven] *web* he might be *cut off* at the very beginning of his light, and Christ might never arise from his seed. Now the Apostle also teaches that our body may be called a *tent*, when he says, “For we who are in this *tent*, sigh, being weighed down” [[2 Cor 5:4](#)].<sup>337</sup>

*From morning*, he says, *even to the night you will make an end of me; I hoped until morning*. Job, too, says that he endured this in his anguish and torment of body, when in the day he was awaiting the night and in darkness he was hoping for light [cf. [Job 17:11–12](#); [30:26](#)], thinking that his suffering could be changed by a change in time. One who has suffered with a severe fever knows this to be true. An internal fire consumes all his bones like a lion, and he does not

<sup>334</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 14 (243, 10).

<sup>335</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (243, 18–0).

<sup>336</sup> “f rest” is missing from the lemma.

<sup>337</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 14 (243, 28–44, 1).



think that he will ever survive after such great pain.<sup>338</sup>

16. (38:14–15a) “As the young of a swallow, so will I cry; I will meditate like a dove; my eyes have been weakened from looking to the height. Lord, I suffer violence, answer for me. (15) What shall I say, or what shall he answer to me, when he himself has done it?” Septuagint: “As a swallow, so will I cry; as a dove, so will I meditate. For my eyes have failed from looking to the height of heaven to the Lord, who has delivered me, and removed the sorrow of my soul, and he himself did it.”

Imminent death and the oppressive pain of sickness were breaking all the bones of my body like a lion, but I, like a *swallow* and a *dove*, was joining together the nights and days with weeping and groaning. And from God alone, who was able to help, I was awaiting help with eyes lifted on high. And I was *saying* to him, *I suffer* more than my merits demand, but even if I have erred in anything, I will convert to the better; *answer for me*: “For it depends not on the one who wills nor on the one who runs, but upon God who shows mercy” [Rom 9:16]. And again he returns to himself: *What shall I say* or what case can I bring against my maker? Or *what shall he answer to me*, who *has done* what he willed? Therefore whatever he has decreed must be endured.

In Hebrew *sus agor* is written for *young of a swallow*, or a “swallow,” as the Septuagint translated it. This is understood by Aquila as *equus agor*, by Theodotion as *sis agor*; for if the middle letter, the vowel *uau*, is placed between the two *samech*s, it is written *sus*, and names a horse; if the vowel *ioth* is placed there, *sis* is read, and *swallow* is expressed. Symmachus, however translated it thus: “As a caged swallow, so I will sing.” This word *agor* is also found in Jeremiah, where it is written, “The stork in the sky knows its time; the turtledove, *swallow*, and crane have kept their times” [Jer 8:7].

17. (38:15b–20) *I will recount all my years in the bitterness of my soul. (16) O Lord, if it is lived this way, and the life of my spirit be in such things, you shall correct me, and make me to live. (17) Behold, in peace is my bitterness most bitter. But you have delivered my soul that it should not perish; you have cast all my sins behind your back, (18) for the netherworld shall not confess you, neither shall death praise you; nor shall they that go down into the pit look for your truth. (19) The living, the living, he shall confess you, as I do this day. The father shall make your truth known to the sons. (20) O Lord, save me, and we will sing our psalms all the days of our life in the house of the Lord. Septuagint: “O Lord, it was told you concerning this; and you have roused my spirit; and you have comforted and visited me. (17) Behold, my bitterness is in peace, for you have freed my soul, that it should not perish, and you have cast all my sins behind me. (18) For they that are in the netherworld shall not praise you, neither shall the dead bless you, neither shall they that are in the netherworld hope for your mercy. (19) The living shall bless you, as I also do; for from this day shall I beget sons, who shall declare your justice, (20) O Lord of my salvation, and I will not cease blessing you with the psaltery all the days of my life in the presence of the house of God.”*

No affair of mortals is enduring, and all worldly happiness is lost even while it is being held onto. For when the time of tribulation has come, nothing that is past is of any help to the one suffering. This is why the thought of Epicurus is foolish, who claims that the recalling of former

<sup>338</sup> Jerome describes a severe fever he suffered in [Ep. 22.30](#) to Eustochium.

goods mitigates present evils. Therefore, Hezekiah says that he *recounts all the years* of his reign and of the past blessedness, as he thought, *in the present bitterness*. And because he is now safe, and does not suffer what he relates, he philosophizes about the human condition and says, *O Lord, it is lived this way*, and we are born in *such* a condition, you have *corrected me*, but you *have made me to live*, and you have bestowed *peace* by putting the Assyrian to flight. But my *peace* was more bitter than all my *bitterness* because, while tranquility had been given to the people, and the city is secure, I alone have entered the threshold of death. *But you have delivered my soul, that it should not perish*, either in the present life or in the future. For *you have cast all my sins behind your back*, that I should not see them with sadness, but rather contemplate your mercy. For *the netherworld and death shall not confess you nor praise you*, according to what is written: “But in the netherworld who will confess you?” [[Ps 6:5](#)]. And confession in this passage does not mean penitence, but glory and praise, as we read also in the Gospel, “I *confess* you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth” [[Matt 11:25](#)].

*Nor shall they*, he says, *that go down into the pit look for your truth*, better, as in the Septuagint, “mercy.” For he who is in the netherworld does not hope for *truth* of the judgment, but “mercy,” especially since the Savior descended to the netherworld, to free from the netherworld those in prison.<sup>339</sup> The Septuagint likewise translated *pit* more clearly, as “netherworld.” *The living, the living he shall confess, as I do this day*. Here too confession is recorded for praise. For he is not confessing his sins, but giving thanks to God; and “praise is not lovely in the mouth of a sinner” [[Sir 15:9](#)]. And though the netherworld and death neither confess nor *praise* God, on the other hand, life and *the living* glorify the Lord.

As for what follows, *The father shall make your truth known to his sons*, this signifies what is said in Deuteronomy: “Ask your father, and he will declare to you; [ask] your elders, and they will tell you” [[Deut 32:7](#)]. Consequently, the mercy of God is declared to the descendants through succeeding generations and in each generation. The Septuagint recorded this as “For from this day shall I beget sons, who shall declare your justice.” Moreover, a causal conjunction links what follows with the things before, that is to say, the reason “those who are living” and *he who lives* bless God is because from that day he will “beget sons,” who will announce his *truth*. This certainly was not in his own power; for he was not promised children by the prophet, but present life was granted, especially since he begot a most impious son, Manasseh, who filled Jerusalem with blood from gate to gate [cf. [2 Kgs 21:16](#)], and he did not “bless” God but cursed him, persecuting his saints. Therefore, we can say what the Septuagint says here, that it did not say “I shall beget sons,” but  $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\iota\alpha$ , which we understand as either little children or

<sup>339</sup> J. P. O’onnell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, Dissertationes ad Lauream 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 134, cites this passage to confirm: “here is abundant testimony in Jerome’ writings to the change that is effected in the status of the good by Christ’ coming. In none of these passages does he indicate any such change in the status of the wicked. In fact, he fails to speak of such a change at times when we would expect him to mention it, if such a change existed.” Cf. *Trac. in Marc* 1.13–1; *Trac. de Ps* 107; *Hom in Lucam* 16.19–1; *In Matt* 11.3; *In Osee* 13.14; *In Eph* 4.9; *Ep.* 40.3; *In Eccles* 3.18; 9.10; *In Zach* 9.10. See J. Wicks, “[Christ’ Saving Descent to the Dead: Early Witnesses from Ignatius of Antioch to Origen](#),” *Pro Ecclesia* 17, no. 3 (2008): 281–09.

sons or infants and posterity. Consequently, from the fact that he himself obtained mercy, all his future posterity who know this would praise his incredible clemency.

Therefore, *O Lord, save me*, and all of us who believe in you and have been freed by your help, *all the days of our life* let us sing in the temple.

18. (38:21) *And Isaiah ordered that they should take a lump of figs, and apply the poultice to the wound, and that he should be healed.* (22) *And Hezekiah said, "What shall be the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?"*

This needs to be read before the "prayer" or *writing* of Hezekiah, which we have now interpreted; for the *καταπλάσμα*, which is said to have healed him, was placed on the wound earlier, and before he gave thanks to the Lord for a sign requested by him of future healing.<sup>440</sup>

The Hebrews say that the word *siin*, which the Septuagint overlooked, means "sore," not *wound*. For Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion have translated it as *ελκος*, by which they wish to understand the royal disease, by which opposite things are thought, or received as food, or anything that is soothing is placed on the body. Therefore, his health was restored by means of harmful and adverse things, in order that the power of God might be shown. Others believe *siin* to be not a sore, but *αποστημα* when the bloated body is filled with cooked food and rotting pus, and in accordance with the skill of doctors, every discharge of pus is drawn out by the drier crushed figs on the surface of the skin. And in addition we should not scorn medicine through this. It consists in use and experiment, for even God did this.

Therefore, the prayer or act of thankfulness has been recorded up to this point. On the other hand, the previous progression of history narrated what sign was given.

19. (39:1–2) *At that time Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, the king of Babylon, sent books and gifts to Hezekiah, for he had heard that he had been sick and was recovered.* (2) *And Hezekiah rejoiced over them, and he showed them the room of his aromatic spices, and of the silver, gold, sweet fragrances, precious ointment, and all the storehouses of his furniture, and all things that were found among his treasures. There was nothing (no word) in his house, nor in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.*

We read above that in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them [cf. [Isa 36:1](#)]. After besieging Lachish, he passed to Libnah and sent part of his army to Jerusalem [cf. [Isa 37:8](#)]. One hundred and eighty-five thousand soldiers of his army were slain by an angel, and he fled to Nineveh and was killed by his sons in the temple of his god, and Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place [cf. [Isa 37:36–38](#)]. We read that Hezekiah was sick and received his health by a message from the prophet, that an incredible sign took place, that the sun returned toward its rising for an interval of ten hours, and that the day was made nearly double [cf. [Isa 38:1](#), [5](#), [8](#)].

Now we read that at that time, that is, in the same year in which all these things happened,

<sup>440</sup> Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, [2:530–1](#), observes that Jerome was one of the first to notice a difficulty with respect to the position of these verses. "Modern criticism has no hesitation in asserting that these verses are out of place and that they belong before v. 7." After listing the considerations that are advanced in support of the modern rearrangement of the verses, Young rejects these assumptions and argues that vv. [21](#) and [22](#) are the climax of the whole episode.

Merodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, the king of Babylon, sent books and gifts to Hezekiah.<sup>441</sup> They were not sent by Esarhaddon, who had succeeded his father Sennacherib in the kingdom among the Assyrians. Of the former man's life and death Scripture was silent, from which it is clear that at that time there was one kingdom of the Assyrians and another of the Babylonians. After all, the Assyrians captured Samaria, that is, the ten tribes; whereas we read that Judah and Jerusalem were captured afterward by the Chaldeans, whose king was Nebuchadnezzar.

And because they practiced observation of the stars, and the course of the stars was known by long use and practice, which is shown even in the nativity of the Lord [cf. [Matt 2:2](#)], they understood that the sun's going backward and the doubling the length of the day was done in service to him whom they thought was the only god. And when they searched for the causes of this miracle and a rational explanation, with the report spreading through all the nations, they learned that even the course of the brightest sign was altered on account of the sickness of the king of Judah.

The words of Days testify that this is not my opinion, but the reliability of Holy Scripture. After other things, they said,

This same Hezekiah closed the upper spring of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west [side] of the city of David. And he prospered in all his works that he wanted; nevertheless, in the matter of the envoys of the princes of Babylon, who had been sent to him to inquire about the sign that had been done in the land, God left him to be tempted, and to make known all that was in his heart. [[2 Chr 32:30–31](#)]

Now the reason he was left to temptation is because after such a great victory, and the turning back of the sun, and the congratulations from a very powerful kingdom, his heart was lifted up. After all, in the same book it is written,

Many brought offerings and sacrifices to the Lord in Jerusalem and gifts to Hezekiah king of Judah; and he was exalted in the sight of all nations. In those days he became sick unto death, and he prayed to the Lord, and he heard him and gave him a sign, but he did not make return according to the benefits which he had received, for his heart was lifted up, and wrath came against him and against Judah and Jerusalem. [[2 Chr 32:23–25](#)]

And again, the Holy Scripture speaks of the elation of his heart tempered by penance, adding, "And he was humbled afterward, because his heart was lifted up, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and therefore the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah" [[2 Chr 32:26](#)].

Therefore, he rejoiced in the coming of the ambassadors of Merodach, who the Hebrews claim was the father of Nebuchadnezzar, and in the offering of gifts and in the congratulations for his health; and he showed them, according to the Septuagint, the house of *nechotha*, which Symmachus translated "of his spices," and the *treasuries of silver, gold, sweet fragrances, and precious ointment*, which in Hebrew is written "good oil," and all the treasures of the vessels of Gaza, or, as one reads there, "of his vessels." "Gaza," however, means "riches" in the language of

<sup>441</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 15 (246, 1–3).

the Persians; it is not a Hebrew word, but foreign.

*There was, he says, no word, which according to Hebrew usage frequently means “thing,” in his house and in all his dominion that he did not show him.* This is why the anger of God was very just, because he showed not only his own treasures and those of his palace, but also of the temple, which of course was under his authority, from the doors of which he had already removed the plates of gold on an earlier occasion [cf. [2 Kgs 18:16](#)].

20. ([39:3–8](#)) *Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah, and said to him, “What did these men say, and from whence did they come to you?” And Hezekiah said, “From a far country they came to me, from Babylon.”* (4) *And he said, “What did they see in your house?” And Hezekiah said, “All things that are in my house have they seen, there was not any word or thing that I have not shown them among my treasures.”* (5) *And Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the Lord of hosts. (6) Behold, the days shall come, that all that is in your house, and the things which your fathers have laid up as treasure until this day, shall be carried away into Babylon; there shall not be anything left, says the Lord. (7) And they shall take away some of your sons that shall come forth from you, whom you shall beget, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.”* (8) *And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the Lord which he has spoken, is good”; and he said, “Only let peace and truth be done in my days.”*

The Hebrews hand down the tradition<sup>442</sup> that the reason Hezekiah was sick was because after the unheard-of victory of the Jews and the death of the Assyrian king, he did not sing praises to the Lord, which Moses sang when the Pharaoh was drowned [cf. [Exod 15:1–9](#)], and which Deborah [sang] when Sisera was killed [cf. [Judg 5:1–31](#)], and Anna when Samuel was born [cf. [1 Sam 2:1–10](#)]. This is why he was reminded of his own frailty. And further, after the healing of his body and the great sign, he was offered another occasion for pride, which he should have avoided as a prudent worshiper of God. He should not have shown men of other nations his riches, which he possessed by God’s gift. And from this, according to the laws of tropology as well, we learn that pearls must not be cast before swine, and that dogs must not be given what is holy [cf. [Matt 7:6](#)]<sup>442</sup>—for “he who is faithful in spirit conceals matters” [[Prov 11:13](#)]<sup>442</sup>—but whoever does this thing, all his strength is weakened, and his posterity perishes, and having lost manly strength, is reduced to effeminate softness.

Therefore, Isaiah comes to the king and asks as though he does not know: *What did these men say, and from whence did they come?* He asks two [questions], what did they say and where did they come from? He answers one, ignoring the other, which must be read with emphasis and an air of superciliousness: *From a far country they came to me, from Babylon,* for the more distant is the country they had come from, so much the more glorious was he for whose sake they had come. And *they came to me,* he says—who ought to have said “They came to glorify God because of the greatness of the sign”—*from Babylon,* which city was the most powerful in the whole world. And Isaiah says further, *What did they see in your house?* And he answered with a partial truth, that they had seen everything in his house, and that there was not anything in his treasuries that he did not show them. But he remained silent about another part, about which he feared giving offense, because he had shown them all that he had in his dominion, no doubt referring to the furnishings of the temple. On account of this, Isaiah

<sup>442</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (245, 29–4).

pronounces his sentence by the word of the Lord: *Hear the word of the Lord of hosts, the time will come when all that is in your house, and acquired, not by you, but by the labor of your fathers, will be transferred to Babylon, and from your seed there will be eunuchs in the royal palace.* Based upon this, the Hebrews believe that Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah [cf. [Dan 1:3–6](#)], who were of royal seed, were made eunuchs.<sup>443</sup> There is no doubt that they were in the service of Nebuchadnezzar. And Hezekiah said, *The word of the Lord that he has spoken, is good.* The Hebrews reproach him for this, asking why he did not imitate the goodness of Moses, who said to the Lord, “Either forgive them this sin, or if you do not, blot me out of your book which you have written” [[Exod 32:31–32](#)]*—this is also why the Apostle Paul wishes to be cursed from Christ on account of his brothers, who are the Israelites [[Rom 9:3](#)]**—and therefore [they say that] Hezekiah is not approved by the words of God, who says in the following [lines], “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God” [[Isa 40:1](#)]. Accordingly, those for whom he had not asked are comforted by the clemency of the Lord.*<sup>444</sup>

21. ([40:1–2](#)) *Be comforted, be comforted, my people, says your God. (2) Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and call to her, for her evil has been completed, her iniquity has been forgiven, she has received of the hand of the Lord double for all her sins.* Septuagint: “Comfort, comfort my people, says God, (2) speak, you priests, to the heart of Jerusalem; comfort her, for her humiliation has been fulfilled, her sin has been put away (*solutum est*),<sup>445</sup> for she has received of the Lord’s hand double the amount of her sins.”

According to the other translators, others are ordered to comfort the people of God and of Jerusalem equally. According to the Hebrew, the people themselves are ordered to *be comforted*, and to *speak to the heart of Jerusalem*, and to *call to her*. For, *to speak to the heart of Jerusalem* is an idiom of the Scriptures; for he who speaks to one who is grieving and who is a gentle consoler is said to *speak to the heart*. Let Shechem, the son of Hamor show us, who, when Dinah had been violated, *spoke to her heart* and *comforted* her [cf. [Gen 34:3](#)]. And wherever we find anything similar, it has this sense. And the cause of consolation is the remission of sins, and the cause of the remission, because *she has received from the hand of the Lord double for all her sins*. For he “who knows his master’s will” and sins “shall receive a severe beating” [[Luke 12:47](#)].

This is for everyone who has in himself the indwelling Holy Spirit, whom the Savior promised to the apostles, saying, “I will ask my Father, and he will give you another Comforter, to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth” [[John 14:16–17](#)];<sup>446</sup> and again, “But when the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, comes, whom my Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things” [[John 14:26](#)]; and again, “When the Comforter comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will testify about me” [[John 15:26](#)]; and, “It is

<sup>443</sup> According to rabbinical tradition, Daniel was of royal descent, and his fate, together with that of his three friends, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, was foretold by the prophet Isaiah to King Hezekiah in [Isa 39:7](#) “nd they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” Cf. [Sanh. 93b](#); *Pirk R. El.* lii.; Origen, *Commentary to Matt.* 15. 5.

<sup>444</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 15 (247, 6–2).

<sup>445</sup> Or “oosed,” “issolved.”

<sup>446</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 16 (247, 26–48, 9).



to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go, the Comforter will not come to you” [[John 16:7](#)]. This is the Comforter, who is even now commanded to comfort the people of God. And this is why the Apostle Paul said to believers, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all *comfort*, who *comforts* us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the *comfort* with which we ourselves are *comforted* by God. For just as Christ’s sufferings super-abound in us, so through Christ our *comfort* also abounds” [[2 Cor 1:3–5](#)];<sup>447</sup> and again, “Our hope for you is firm; for just as you are sharers of those who know of the sufferings, so you will also be [sharers] of *comfort*” [[2 Cor 1:7](#)].

Now Zechariah the prophet bears witness concerning who this *people* is who is *comforted* through the apostles and ecclesiastical men. It is not Israel, Jacob, and Judah, as Scripture mentions in other places, but the *people* of God. He says, “Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for I will come and I will dwell in your midst, says the Lord. And many nations shall flee to the Lord in that day, and they shall be his people; and they shall dwell in your midst and know that the Almighty Lord has sent me to you” [[Zech 2:10–11](#)]. By this testimony it is clearly shown that very many nations must be converted to become the people of God. And the Lord who was sent by the Lord says these things, whose name is almighty.

And this should be noted, that our sins are not “put away” unless we have *received* these things *from the hand of the Lord*. Nor is it the same for sins to be “put away” and to be *forgiven*; for to whom they are *forgiven*, there is no need to “put them away,” since he hears in the Gospel, “Take heart, daughter; your sins are forgiven you” [[Matt 9:2, 22](#)]; but to whom they are “put away,” the reason they are “put away” is because they have been purged and “put away” through punishments.

According to the history, Jerusalem *received from the hand of the Lord double for all her sins*, once from the Babylonians, a second time from the Romans.<sup>448</sup> Now as for what is added in the Septuagint, “priests,” this needs to be marked in front with an obelus.

22. ([40:3–5](#)) *The voice of one crying in the desert: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the wilderness the paths of our God. (4) Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places level ways. (5) And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh together shall see, that the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”* Septuagint: “The voice of one crying in the desert: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. (4) Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places plains, (5) and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God, for the Lord has spoken.’ ”

The scribes, Pharisees, and rulers of the Jews, mindful of this *voice* when they had heard that John was preaching the baptism of repentance in the wilderness and teaching the people, send men to ask him whether he is the Christ, or Elijah or a prophet [cf. [John 1:19–21](#)].<sup>449</sup> And

<sup>447</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (248, 23–1).

<sup>448</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (249, 13–7). Erasmus of Rotterdam, *A Discussion of Free Will* (CWE 76:60) cites this passage in opposition to Luther’s doctrine.

<sup>449</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 16 (249, 31–50, 1).

when he had answered that he was none of these, again they ask, “Tell us then who you are, that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” And he replied: “I am the voice of one crying in the desert: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said” [cf. [John 1:22–23](#)].

Here one should observe that the *straight ways of the Lord*, and the *paths of our God*, the filling of *valleys* and *mountains*, and the making low of *hills*, the straightening of the *crooked*, and making “plains” of the *rough places* and of the cliffs, and the *glory of the Lord* and the “salvation of our God,” are not announced in Jerusalem, but in the *wilderness* of the church and in the *desert*, by the multitude of the nations. We read about this *wilderness* above, “Rejoice, thirsty desert, let the *wilderness* exult and blossom like the lily” [[Isa 35:1](#)]. For this *desert* was the knowledge of God, and it was being held back by idols as something lowly in respect to confession, *straight* and erect in terms of pride, *rough* and intractable in its wildness. But after the “glory of the Lord appeared,” and “all flesh saw the salvation of God,” everything was suddenly changed, and the “way of the Lord” was “prepared.” Consequently the “glory” of God “appeared” in the “wilderness,” when the Lord was baptized in the Jordan, and the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove and remained on him [cf. [Matt 3:16](#)], and the *voice* of the Father was heard [cf. [John 1:33](#)], thundering from above, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” [[Matt 3:17](#)], and “all flesh saw the salvation of God.”<sup>550</sup>

The reason it was called “flesh” is because it did not previously have the Holy Spirit. The Lord also speaks of this: “My spirit will not remain in these men, for they are flesh” [[Gen 6:3](#)].<sup>551</sup> But that “flesh will see the salvation of God” of which he likewise spoke through Joel, “I will pour out from my Spirit upon all *flesh*, and they will prophesy” [[Joel 2:28](#)]. Not only was John “crying” this at that time, who is rightly called a “voice,” the precursor and forerunner of the word of God, but up to the present day teachers of the churches “cry in the desert” of the Gentiles, that we should “make straight the ways and paths” in our hearts to God, and we should “be filled” with the virtues, we should be leveled by means of humility, we should change “crooked places” into “straight,” “rough places” we should turn to softness, and thus let us earn the right to “see the glory of the Lord and the salvation of God.”

23. ([40:6–8](#)) *The voice of one saying, “Cry.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All flesh is grass, and all its glory as the flower of the field. (7) The grass has withered, and the flower has fallen, because the Spirit of God has blown upon it. Indeed the people are grass. (8) The grass has withered, and the flower has fallen; but the word of our Lord will stand forever.* Septuagint: “The voice of one saying, ‘Cry.’ And I said, ‘What shall I cry?’ All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. (8)<sup>552</sup> The grass has withered, and the flower has fallen, because the Spirit of God has blown on it. Indeed the people are grass. The grass has withered, and the flower has fallen, but the word of our God abides forever.” That which is noted with asterisks, “because the Spirit of God has blown on it, indeed the people are grass, the grass has withered, and the flower has fallen,” has been added from the Hebrew and from the edition of

<sup>550</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (250, 16–9).

<sup>551</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (251, 13–4).

<sup>552</sup> The LXX has no v. 7 in this chapter.

Theodotion. From this it is obvious that it was either omitted by the Septuagint or gradually erased through the fault of copyists, while both the former and subsequent lines end in “flower.”

Above we read the prophet saying, “And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: Whom shall I send? and who shall go to this people? And I said: Behold, [here am] I, send me. And he says: Go and say to this people: You will hear with hearing, and you will not understand, and seeing you will see and you will not see” [[Isa 6:8–9](#)], and the rest. Since he has experienced harsh things when he proclaimed this, when the voice of the Lord now says, *Cry*, he fears similar things and inquires about what he ought to *cry*. And beginning with what is general, *All flesh is grass, and all its glory is as the flower of grass*, he arrives at the particular, so that he no less says of the people, *Indeed the people are grass*.

Indeed, if anyone looks at the frailty of the flesh, that we increase and decrease with the moments of time and that we do not remain in the same state, and how we dictate the very thing that we are saying, and it is written, and it flies by from a part of our life, he will not hesitate to call *flesh grass*, and *its glory as the flower of grass*, or the plants of the fields. Someone who was once an infant is suddenly a boy; the boy is very quickly a young man; and up to old age he is changed through uncertain periods of time; and before he is surprised that he is no longer young, he realizes that he is an old man. A beautiful woman who attracted a flock of young men behind her becomes wrinkled, her brow all furrowed; and she who previously was set to become someone’s lover is now repugnant. The distinguished Greek orator writes about this, that “the outward form of the body either fades away with time or is wasted away by feebleness.”<sup>553</sup>

Therefore the *flesh has withered* and its beauty has *fallen*, because *the Spirit* of God’s wrath and judgment *have blown upon it*—that we may return from a general discussion to the progression of the Scripture—[the flesh] of him who bears the image of the earthly [cf. [1 Cor 15:49](#)],<sup>554</sup> and serves the vices and excess [cf. [Titus 3:3](#)]; and it is *grass* and a passing *flower*. But the one who has and guards the image of the heavenly, that is the *flesh* that “sees the salvation” of the Lord, which is renewed daily in knowledge according to the image of the Creator [cf. [Col 3:10](#)]; and when it receives an incorruptible and immortal body, it changes its glory but not its nature.<sup>555</sup> But the *word of our “God,”* and those who are joined to the word, “abides” *forever*.

24. ([40:9–11](#)) *Go up upon a high mountain, you who (quae) bring good tidings to Zion; lift up your voice with strength, you who (quae) bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift it up, fear not, say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God.”* (10) *Behold, the Lord God shall come with strength,*

<sup>553</sup> Cf. Isocrates, quoted by Cicero?

<sup>554</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 16 (251, 22–3).

<sup>555</sup> Cf. *In Jon 2.7*; [Ep. 75.2](#). O’onnell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, 59–0, suggests that the reason for Jerome’s repeated use of the two adjectives *incorruptible* and *immortal* in reference to the risen body is probably the doctrine of the Origenists, that the risen body will slowly dissolve and disappear into nothing after the resurrection. “erome made it clear that this quality of incorruptibility is common to all those who rise, whether they rise to glory or to eternal punishment.” Cf. *In Is 65.20*.

*and his arm shall rule; behold, his reward is with him, and his work is before him. (11) He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather together the lambs with his arm, and shall lift them up in his bosom, he himself shall carry them that are with young.* Septuagint: “Go up upon a high mountain, you who (*qui*) bring good tidings to Zion, lift up your voice with strength, you who (*qui*) bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift it up, fear not, say to the cities of Judah, ‘Behold your God.’ (10) Behold, the Lord God will come with power (*virtute*), and his arm [is] with domination, behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. (11) He shall feed his people like a shepherd, and he shall gather together the lambs with his arm, and shall comfort the pregnant ones.”

He commands the chorus of the apostles to ascend the heights to preach to all flesh that will see the salvation of God [cf. [Isa 40:5](#)], that those who are about to speak about great things should linger in lofty places. On the other hand, the Hebrew and the other translators record this in the feminine gender, so that they say, *You who* (*quae*) *bring good tidings to Zion*. Among the Greeks this word is ambiguous, so that we could take it to mean either “she who announces” or “she to whom it is announced.” Therefore, either he announces the word of God and the Lord’s salvation to Zion and Jerusalem, for “a law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” [[Isa 2:3](#)]<sup>556</sup>—or it is announced to them through the apostles, they ought to ascend the heights and pass to the mountains. When we consider that Zion itself is a mountain, since the Scripture says, “Mount Zion, where you have dwelled” [[Ps 74:2](#)], it seems wonderful that a command is given to go up upon another higher mountain from which the prince of Tyre was wounded [cf. [Ezek 28:16](#)].<sup>556</sup>

And because there were many things coming in opposition to the teaching of the apostles, and they would be made to stand before governors and tribunals [cf. [Matt 10:18](#)], it is added, *Lift it up, fear not, say to the cities of Judah*, namely to the synagogues and Jewish people, of whom the Lord said, “I have come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel” [[Matt 15:24](#)]. Also, the Apostle Paul says, “It was necessary first to declare the word of God to you” [[Acts 13:46](#)]. But what are they commanded to say? *Behold your God*, for whom you were always waiting, *behold the Lord God shall come with strength*. You despised him when he came in humility, and his strength *shall rule*, he who had first taken the form of a slave, having become obedient to the Father to the point of death [cf. [Phil 2:7–8](#)].<sup>557</sup> *Behold his reward is with him, and his work is before him*, just as he himself says in the Gospel, “For the Son of man will come in the glory of his Father and will pay back to each one according to his *work*” [[Matt 16:27](#)].

*He shall feed his flock like a shepherd*. This one who will later come in majesty, first will take the form of a *shepherd*, saying of himself, “I am the good *shepherd*, and I know my own, and my own know me, and I lay my life down for the sheep” [[John 10:14–15](#)].<sup>558</sup> Also in Zechariah, the Father says of him, “I will strike the *shepherd*, and the sheep will be scattered” [[Zech 13:7](#)]. He says, *With his arm he shall gather together the lambs*, not the bulls, rams, goats and fat sheep, whom Ezekiel threatens, saying that they feed on milk and are clothed with the wool and trample on the weak flock [cf. [Ezek 34:3](#)]; but the still-tender lambs and those in their raw

<sup>556</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 17 (252, 11–2).

<sup>557</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (253, 1–).

<sup>558</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (253, 7–).

infancy in Christ, who have recently been reborn through baptism.<sup>559</sup> The Lord himself spoke to Peter about them: “Feed my lambs” [[John 21:15](#)]. This is also why in the same Ezekiel it is written,

I will set up one *shepherd* over them, and he shall feed them, my servant David, and he shall be their *shepherd*, and I the Lord will be their God, and David [will be] the prince in the midst of them; I the Lord have spoken, and I will make a covenant of peace with David. [[Ezek 34:23–25](#)]

In this connection one should consider that he says that after a long time, when the gluttonous shepherds have been rejected, he will raise up a David, our Lord, who is from David’s stock, who will *gather together the lambs* and nourish them *in his bosom*, and on his shoulder *he himself shall carry them that are with young*, or the young ones of the sheep. This is just what we read in the Gospel, that on his own shoulders he carried back to the sheepfold the lost sheep and the one remaining away from the dense flock [cf. [Luke 15:4–5](#)]. We can say that the sheep who are *with young* are the apostles, apostolic men, and all teachers of the church, who suffer the labor pains of salvation for very many, and say with the Apostle, “My little children, for whom I again suffer labor pains, until Christ is formed in you” [[Gal 4:19](#)].<sup>660</sup>

The Hebrews claim, and among them there is no doubt about this point, that the Holy Spirit is identified in their language in the feminine gender, that is *ruha codsa*. And what is said in the sixty-seventh Psalm, “The Lord shall give the word to them that preach good tidings (*evangelizantibus*) with great power” [[Ps 68:11](#)], they read as follows, “The Lord shall give the word to them that preach good tidings (*evangelizatricibus*)<sup>661</sup> with great power,” namely to those souls who have attained the Holy Spirit. And indeed they interpret the “maidservant” in the following passage, “As the eyes of a maidservant in the hands of her mistress” [[Ps 123:2](#)], of the soul, and the “mistress” of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, in the Gospel according to the Hebrews,<sup>662</sup> which the Nazarenes like to read as Scripture, the Lord says, “My mother, the Holy Spirit, recently bore me.” Now no one should be scandalized about this, that among the Hebrews “Spirit” is expressed in the feminine gender, though in our language he is addressed in the masculine gender, and in the Greek language in the neuter; for in the deity there is no gender. And therefore in the three principal languages in which the inscription of the Lord’s passion was written [cf. [John 19:20](#)], he is identified by three genders, that we may know that what is diverse has no gender.

25. ([40:12–17](#)) *Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and weighed the heavens with his palm? Who has poised with three fingers the bulk of the earth, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? (13) Who has aided the spirit of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor, and has shown him? (14) With whom has he entered into counsel,*

<sup>559</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (253, 12–3).

<sup>660</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (253, 16–9).

<sup>661</sup> This is a feminine form in contrast with the masculine form previously cited.

<sup>662</sup> Jerome believed that the Gospel according to the Hebrews was essentially the same as the Gospel according to the Nazarenes and the Gospel according to the Apostles. For comparison, see bk. 4, n. 25.

*and he has instructed him, and taught him the path of justice, and educated him in knowledge, and showed him the way of prudence?* (15) *Behold, the nations are as a drop in a bucket, and are counted as the movement of a balance. Behold, the islands are as a little dust.* (16) *And Libanus is not enough to burn, nor shall its beasts be sufficient for a burnt offering.* (17) *All nations are before him as if they had no being, and are counted to him as nothing and vanity.* Septuagint: “Who has measured the water in his hand, and the heaven with a palm, and all the earth in the hollow of his hand? Who has set the mountains in a scale, and the cliffs in a balance? (13) Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor, who has taught him? (14) Or with whom has he taken counsel, and he has instructed him? Or who has taught him judgment, or who has shown him the way of understanding? (15) If all the nations are counted as a drop in a bucket, and as the movement of a balance, and are reckoned as spit, (16) and Libanus is not enough to burn, nor all four-footed beasts enough for a burnt offering, (17) and all the nations are as nothing, and are counted to him as nothing.”

God’s greatness is being described, so that no one should think that the calling of the nations was a difficult thing, and that all flesh saw the salvation of God [cf. [Isa 40:5](#)], and that those who brought good tidings to Zion were commanded to go up upon a high mountain [cf. [Isa 40:9](#)], and that the Lord himself came in strength [cf. [Isa 40:10](#)] and repaid to each one according to his work [cf. [Isa 40:10](#)], and nourished the lambs in his bosom like a shepherd, and himself carried those with young [cf. [Isa 40:11](#)]. For let nothing be impossible for him, and let the one who established the universe and is Creator of all things be able to carry out even these things that are trivial in comparison with those things.

Now when he speaks of *the hollow of his hand* and the *palm*, he is using the words and measurements that derive from human custom. This is so that we may learn about the power of God through our words. What the Septuagint translated as, “Who has measured the water in his hand,” or as we rendered it, *Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand*, Aquila translated as, “Who has measured the waters with his smallest finger?” For this is what *λιχας* means, namely, that the great enormity of the waters were weighed not with the entire hand, but with a little finger, which they commonly call the taster.<sup>663</sup> On the other hand, *σπιθαμη*, that is, *palm*, signifies the extended hand, from the thumb to the last finger. But if we clench the hand, it becomes a fist. Consequently by means of the *palm* and the *hollow of the hand* we recognize the heavens extended and the globe of the earth. “Hollow of the hand,” which the Septuagint translated into a measurement of land, is written in Hebrew as *salis*. Symmachus translated this as *τριτον*, Aquila as *τρισσωμα*, and we, to make the meaning clearer, rendered *with three fingers*, namely that *he has poised* as it were *with three little fingers the bulk of the earth, and the heights of the mountains and hills* and with a slight *movement of a balance*. By this means the majesty of God and the power of the Creator are shown.

*Who, he says, has aided the Spirit of the Lord, or who has been his counselor, and shown him, and so on.* Symmachus translated this,

Who has prepared the Spirit of the Lord, and who has shown to him a man of his counsel? With whom has he entered into counsel, and he has given him understanding,

<sup>663</sup> I.e., the forefinger.



and taught him the way of judgment and instructed him in knowledge and shown him the way of prudence?

By this he has shown more clearly that that Spirit was prepared or strengthened, of whom it is read in the Apostle, “But the Lord is the Spirit” [[2 Cor 3:17](#)], and “upon whom the Spirit of God rested, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding” [[Isa 11:2](#)], and so on. He says in what comes later, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me” [[Isa 61:1](#); cf. [Luke 4:18](#)]. For he is the Spirit of the Lord and the man of his counsel, in whom dwelled “all the fullness of divinity bodily” [[Col 2:9](#)]. He *entered into counsel* with him of whom also we said above, “Wonderful counselor” [[Isa 9:6](#)]; and in Proverbs it is written, “God founded the earth by wisdom, but he prepared the heavens by prudence” [[Prov 3:19](#)]. The Septuagint, on the other hand, which said, “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” wants this to be understood to mean that the mind and reason and understanding of God, through whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made [cf. [John 1:3](#)], is that one of whom it is sung in the Psalms, “By the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and by the Spirit of his mouth all their power” [[Ps 33:6](#)].

In comparison with God all the *nations*, which did not know their Creator, or the race of all mortals, are as a *drop in the bucket* and as a *movement of the balance*, which is tipped in the other direction by a light weight. And just as if a small drop that drips from a bucket is overlooked by the carrier, so the whole multitude of nations is regarded as nothing when compared with the celestial services and the multitude of angels. The *islands* too are “reckoned as spittle” that falls, or as Symmachus and Theodotion recorded the Hebrew word itself, *doc*. Aquila translated this as λεπτον βαλλομενον [a small coin that has been thrown down]. But the Hebrews say that by this word very thin dust is signified, which often is cast into the eyes by a gust of wind and is felt rather than seen. Therefore the minutest and nearly invisible particles of dust are identified by this word, which perhaps Democritus<sup>664</sup> along with his Epicurus<sup>665</sup> call atoms. And there are many terms that are read in Greek just as they were recorded in Hebrew, because of the difficulty of translating them and because of the poverty of both the Greek and Latin speech in comparison with the Hebrew language.

And at the same time, that he might gradually draw men away from idolatry, he removes the sacrificial ceremonies and teaches that all the wood of *Libanus* and the cattle that graze in it would not be *sufficient* for its *burnt offerings*. But if *all the nations* are like this *in his sight*, as if they *have no being*, and as if they are *counted as nothing and vanity*, but Israel too is among *all nations*, then Israel too is just as if it *has no being*, and is *counted as nothing and vanity*. We say this that Israel’s pride may be broken and they might recognize themselves to be like the other

<sup>664</sup> Democritus (c. 460–70 BC) was a Greek philosopher of Abdera in Thrace, none of whose works survive. He influenced Epicurus, and is chiefly remembered for his development of atomic theory, which he learned from his teacher Leucippus. According to this theory, everything occurs due to the chance collision of indivisible particles.

<sup>665</sup> Epicurus (341–71 BC) was a Greek philosopher and founder of the school of Epicurean philosophy, which is based on Democritus’ atomic theory. In ethics this is developed to mean that though the gods exist, they are unconcerned with the affairs of men.

nations.

26. (40:18–20) *To whom then have you likened God, or what image will you make for him? (19) Has the workman cast a graven statue? Or has the goldsmith formed it with gold, or the silversmith with plates of silver? (20) The wise craftsman has chosen strong wood that will not rot, and he will seek how he may set up an idol that may not be moved.*

God's greatness has been described and his power has been shown in part. The nations, too, have been reckoned as a drop in the bucket and as the movement of a balance, and the islands as dust [cf. [Isa 40:15](#)]. Moreover, the sacrificial ceremonies have been suppressed. In light of this, he shows in what follows why all the nations are counted as nothing in his sight and as vanity: *To whom then have you likened God, or what image will you make for him*, who is spirit and is in all things, and wherever he goes, he holds the earth as it were in the hollow of his hand? [cf. [Isa 40:12](#)]. And at the same time he ridicules the folly of the nations, because the craftsman or workman in copper, or goldsmith or silversmith, make a god for themselves, and they construct it with *rivets* and thin sheets and boldly set it up, to keep it from being toppled over by the blowing of the wind. And what he has added, *The wise craftsman has chosen strong wood that will not rot*, is expressed in Hebrew as *amsucchan*. This is a kind of wood that does not rot, of which idols especially are made.<sup>666</sup> Now he says this in order to prepare the way for the teaching of the Gospel, once the idols have been repudiated, and all the crooked places may be straightened out, the valleys raised, and the hills brought low, and the glory of the Lord may be revealed and all flesh may see the salvation of God [cf. [Isa 40:3–5](#)].<sup>667</sup>

According to tropology, we can say that the princes of the heretics are being rebuked. They fabricate diverse idols out of their own heart, either from the charm of their eloquence, which is what the *silver* means, or from the splendor of their *gold*, which is related to the understanding, or from *wood that does not rot*, which are their more worthless doctrines. And they are thought to be eternal by the fabricators, and they are established by dialectical art, in order that they not be moved and fall, but stand with a solid root.

27. (40:21–26) *Will you not know? Will you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood the foundations of the earth? (22) It is he that sits upon the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are as locusts, he that stretches out the heavens as nothing, and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in. (23) He that brings the searchers of secrets as if they have no being, who has made the judges of the earth as vanity. (24) And surely their trunk was neither planted, nor sown, nor rooted in the earth; suddenly he has blown upon them, and they withered, and a whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. (25) And to whom have you likened me, or made me equal, says the Holy One? (26) Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things: the one who brings out their host (militiam) by number, and calls them all by name because of the greatness of his might, and strength, and power; not one of them was missing. Septuagint: "Will you not know? Will you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not known the foundations of the earth? (22) It is he who holds the circle of the earth and its inhabitants as if locusts, who has set up the heaven as a*

<sup>666</sup> Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, [3:54](#)n68, says that Jerome may be correct in his explanation of the meaning of this difficult Hebrew word.

<sup>667</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 18 (255, 16–3).

chamber and stretched it out as a tent to dwell in, (23) who appoints princes to rule for nothing, and has made the earth as nothing. (24) Surely they shall not be planted, nor shall they be sown, nor shall their root be fixed in the ground. He has blown upon them, and they have withered, and a whirlwind shall carry them away like stubble. (25) Now, then, to whom have you likened me, and I will be made equal to them? The Holy One has spoken. (26) Lift up your eyes above, and see who has displayed all these things. He who brings forth according to his own distinct number, he has called all by name, from his great glory and by the power of his might, nothing has been hidden from you.”

*From the beginning*, he says, I have taught you, by natural law; and later, through Moses, I have testified through written law that the idols were nothing, and that the Creator of the world was himself God, who had founded such a great bulk of the earth upon the seas and placed it upon the rivers [cf. [Ps 24:2](#)]. Thus by God’s choice the heaviest elements were suspended upon the light waters. *He who sits upon the circle of the earth* like a king—from which some claim<sup>668</sup> that the earth is like a point and a sphere—and *its inhabitants are as locusts*; for if we consider the various nations in the whole world from ocean to ocean, that is from the Indian Sea to the British, and from the Atlantic to the rigor of the North, where the waters freeze and the fair amber forms, we perceive that the whole human race lives in the middle *like locusts*. “Why therefore are earth and ashes proud?” [[Sir 10:9](#)]. Because if the “heaven,” or rather, that we may make use of the authority of the Scriptures, the *heavens* are *spread out* like a “chamber,” or, as the Hebrew contains, like a *doc*, of which we have spoken above—which the Septuagint translated there as “spittle,” and they rendered the same word now as “spit,” now as “chamber,” that is, “vault”; and he *stretches out* such a great breadth of them *as a tent* and pavilion above, so that he was covering men in the manner of a roof and as if he were making them dwell in a very large house, why should we be surprised if the small bodies of men are reckoned as if they are *locusts* and tiny animals?<sup>669</sup> On the other hand, even in this passage they make use of the term “vault” who claim that a  $\eta\mu\kappa\upsilon\kappa\lambda\iota\omicron\nu$  [semicircle] of the heavens hangs over the lands and that the heaven is like a sphere, namely, because the half part of a sphere covers the lands, though we read in the Hebrew not “vault” but *doc*, that is, the thinnest dust. [The Septuagint translated] this as “spittle,” which is projected onto the ground and mixes with the dust and perishes. This shows that the entire greatness of bodies must be *reckoned as nothing*.

Now he who *stretches out the heavens* and spreads them out, either so that the multitudes of angels may live above them, or men may dwell beneath them, and who has made a large home, as it were, for rational creatures, he himself has appointed “princes” in view of the nature of the times, or *searchers of secrets*, so that they may be as if they are not, and he *has made the judges of the earth as vanity*. The Septuagint translated this as “But he has made the earth as nothing.” For indeed even in the beginning of Genesis, where it is written, “But the earth was invisible and unfurnished” [[Gen 1:2](#)], the others translated, “But the earth was vanity and nothing.” How many kings does history recount, both Greek and Roman! Where is that infinite army of Xerxes? Where is the Israelite multitude in the desert? Where is the unbelievable power of the kings? Why should I speak about the ancient ones? Let examples

<sup>668</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (255, 31–56, 2).

<sup>669</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (256, 2–0).

from the present instruct us that “princes” are as nothing, and *judges* of the earth are reckoned as *vanity*. These “princes” and *judges of the earth*, or, as others surmise, the heavens, are not *sown* nor *planted* nor “fixed” with a firm “root”; and *suddenly* by the command of God they are *taken away* and perish, just as *stubble* is seized by a *whirlwind* and a “tempest,” in accordance with what it written: “And I passed by, and he was not, and I sought him, and his place was not found” [[Ps 37:36](#)].

Since then the Creator’s power and majesty are so great, to which likeness do you compare God? Do you not instead understand the Creator from the greatness of his creatures?<sup>770</sup> If you do not believe his words, at least believe your eyes and think about the Lord’s power from the service of the heavens and of all the elements, *who brings out their host by number*, that is, the host of the heavens, *and calls them all by name*. Understand stars here as those of which it is also sung in the Psalms, “Who numbers the multitude of the stars and calls them all by name” [[Ps 147:4](#)]. Or we may interpret the *host* as the angels of heaven and all the armies of the heavens, of which also Daniel speaks, “Thousands of thousands were serving him, and ten hundred thousand were assisting him” [[Dan 7:10](#)]. This is why he is called the Lord Sabaoth, which means in our language Lord “of the *host*” and “of the armies” or “powers.” Now he *brings out the host* of the heavens, so that the sun, the moon, and the other stars, which Abraham was unable to count [cf. [Gen 15:5](#)], may be counted by him and may serve their appointed duty, while the sun fulfills the same course of heaven in one year, and Lucifer the evening star in two years, the moon each month, and all the stars traverse in certain times. Some of these are called wanderers [planets], and we perceive their incongruent motions with the eyes, not with the mind, and we do not so much understand them as admire them. For the greatness of the power of God causes all things to serve its own order; or, according to the Septuagint, “from the great glory” and the “power of his might,” “nothing” can “escape” him, but from the majesty of the Creator he knows the ways and reasons for all things and their courses.

<sup>770</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (256, 22–4).

## [THE TWELFTH BOOK]

1. No writer is so unskillful that he fails to find readers who resemble him. More people by far read through Milesian tales<sup>11</sup> than the books of Plato. For the former deal with lovemaking and amusement, whereas the latter are difficult and require effort mixed with sweat. After all, Cicero (*Tullius*), the very man who translated [Plato's] *Timaeus*, admits that he does not understand *Timaeus* when he discusses the harmony of the universe, the course of the stars, and numbers.<sup>22</sup> Yet, throngs of giggling schoolboys reel off the last will and testament of Grunnius Corocotta Porcellus.<sup>33</sup> Let even our Luscius Lanuinus<sup>44</sup> enjoy his witnesses, or rather flatterers; let him win by his multitude, since perhaps he wins in talent.<sup>55</sup> For me the testimony of a few is enough, and I am content with the praise of friends who are dying with longing for my works, with love for me, and in their interest in the Scriptures. And I think that there will be some who try to expose to detraction this very work that I am composing for you, Eustochium. They fail to consider that Huldah [cf. [2 Kgs 22:14–20](#); [2 Chr 34:22–28](#)], Anna [cf. [Luke 2:36–38](#)], and Deborah [cf. [Judg 4–5](#)] prophesied when the men were silent; and that in Christ's service the difference between sexes is not relevant [cf. [Gal 3:28](#)], only that of minds.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, let the twelfth book of the commentary on Isaiah have this opening.

1 Milesian tales refer to short, lewd and obscene stories, from the city of Miletus, in Caria, the birthplace of Thales. Miletus became proverbial for luxury, wantonness, and obscenity. Cf. [Juvenal, Sat. 6.296](#). The nearest modern equivalent might be romance novels.

2 Cf. [Cicero, Fin 2.15](#). Jerome also mentions Cicero's translation in his commentary on [Amos 5:3](#). Cicero only translated a fragment of this dialogue.

3 M. Grunnius Corocotta was the title character in a popular piece of satire from Jerome's day called "the Last Testament of a Little Pig." Cf. D. S. Wiesen, [St. Jerome as a Satirist](#) (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1964), 229. The names mean "runting, crow-like (*korax*), little hog." Cf. [Jerome, Apology against Rufinus, 1.17](#). In his preface to his translation of Origen's *Homilies on Luke*, Jerome had depicted Ambrose of Milan as a "row" because Ambrose had adapted and assimilated Origen's Greek homilies in his own Latin ones. See Rufinus, [Apology against Jerome 2.23](#). The other names may be sarcastic references to Jerome's contemporary Rufinus, who had criticized Jerome as a Judaizer, for his preference for the "ebrew truth" over against the LXX canon of Scripture ([Apology against Jerome 2.32–3](#)). Rufinus had also ridiculed Jerome for teaching pagan literature to children after vowing to Christ never to touch pagan authors again ([Apology against Jerome 2.6–](#); NPNF2, [3:464–5](#)).

4 According to Kelly, [Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies](#) (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 299n23, this fictional name is a sarcastic reference to Rufinus.

5 Jerome had mocked Rufinus's literary talent in his [Apology against Rufinus 2.9](#).

2. ([40:27–31](#)) *Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment will pass over from my God?”* (28) *Do you not know, or have you not heard? The everlasting God, the Lord who has created the ends of the earth, shall not faint nor labor, and there is no searching out of his wisdom.* (29) *It is he that gives strength to the weary, and increases power to those who do not have strength.* (30) *Youths (pueri) shall faint, and labor, and young men shall fall by infirmity.* (31) *But those who hope in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings (pennas) as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.* Septuagint: “For do not say, O Jacob, and why did you say, O Israel, ‘My way is hidden from God, and my God has taken away judgment, and has departed.’ (28) And now, do you not know, and have you not heard? The eternal God, the God who created the ends of the earth, shall not hunger, nor be weary, and there is no finding of his prudence. (29) He who gives strength to the hungry, and sorrow to those who are not suffering. (30) For the young men shall hunger, and the youths shall be weary, and the choice men shall be powerless; (31) but they that wait on God shall renew their strength; they shall take wings (*alas*) like eagles, they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not hunger.”

Since the greatness of the almighty God is so extensive that nothing is hidden from him [cf. [Isa 40:26](#)], and all things are governed by his choice, *Why do you say, O Jacob*, that is, the two tribes that were called Judah, *and speak, O Israel*, the other ten tribes in Samaria, you who have already been led as captives to the Assyrians, *My way is hidden from the Lord, and my judgment has passed over<sup>7</sup> from my God?* And the sense is, You say earthly things do not matter to God, nor does he consider what each one of us does. And so we are unjustly oppressed by enemies, and according to Habakkuk we are scattered like beasts and fish without any guide [cf. [Hab 1:14](#)].

God has responded to them, *Do you not know*, and have the words of the previous Scriptures not taught you; or, according to the Septuagint, “Do you not know,” because you “have not heard” that the “eternal God” and Creator of all things, the “Lord,” knows all things, contains all things, governs all things by his majesty [cf. [Wis 1:7](#); [8:1](#)]?<sup>88</sup> And he never *faints* or *labors*, so that he would not understand your “judgment,” and so that your ways would be hidden from him. *Neither is there a searching out of his wisdom*, he says. It is from this passage, I think, that the Apostle’s following words are taken: “Incomprehensible are his judgments, and his ways beyond searching out” [[Rom 11:33](#)]. Or, as the Septuagint has translated, “He shall not hunger, nor be weary.” For where there is food, there is often hunger, if you take away the food; and where there is hunger, there is also weariness (*labor*). Now since this is not the case with God, why do you associate human passions with him? As a matter of fact, he himself “gives strength to the hungry” and to the weary, and [to those] who seem to be as nothing in this world [cf. [1 Cor 1:28](#)], he *increases* virtue and *power*. Or, according to the Septuagint, he grants “sorrow to those who are not suffering.” For there is a grief that leads to death, and there is a grief that leads to life [cf. [2 Cor 7:10](#)]. This is why he gives grief to those who have an impenitent

6 Jerome’ intimate friendships with females had been the subject of reproach in times past. See his *In Soph, Prol*.

7 The lemma uses the future tense.

8 Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 19 (257, 18–9).



heart [cf. [Rom 2:5](#)], that they may understand their own sins.

And since many rejoice in bodily health and think that youth and childhood are perpetual, he goes on to say that the flower of youth quickly declines, and strong bodies become weak. But let those who place their trust not in their own strength but in God, and who always hold out hope for his mercy, *renew their strength*, and go from virtue to virtue [cf. [Ps 84:7](#)]. And let them *take wings* (pennas) *as eagles* and hear, “Your youth will be renewed like an eagle’s” [[Ps 103:5](#)]. Let them *run* to the Lord and not become *weary* in their desire for him; let them *walk* and never *faint*.

We have said repeatedly that the old age of eagles grows strong again by a change of their *feathers*, and that they alone are able to stare without blinking<sup>9</sup> at the brilliance of the sun and the splendor of its rays.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, they test their young ones to see whether they are of noble birth by this test. In the same way the saints are made young again and do not feel the weariness of mortals as they put on their immortal bodies, but they are taken up into the clouds to meet Christ [cf. [1 Thess 4:17](#)], and according to the Septuagint, they do not “hunger,” since they have the Lord present to them as food.

3. ([41:1–7](#)) *Let the islands keep silence toward me, and the nations take new strength, let them come near, and then speak; let us come near to judgment together. (2) Who has raised up the just one from the east, has called him to follow him? He shall give the nations in his sight, and he shall rule over kings, he shall give them as the dust to his sword, as stubble driven by the wind, to his bow. (3) He shall pursue them, he shall pass in peace, no path shall appear after his feet. (4) Who has wrought and done these things, calling the generations from the beginning? I the Lord, I am the first and the last. (5) The islands saw it, and feared, the ends of the earth were astonished, they drew near, and came. (6) Every one helps his neighbor, and says to his brother, “Be of good courage.” (7) The coppersmith striking with the hammer encouraged him that forged at that time, saying, “It is ready (bonum) for soldering.” And he strengthened it with nails, that it should not be moved.* Septuagint: “Be renewed toward me, you islands, for the princes shall take new virtue, let them draw near and speak together. Then let them declare judgment. (2) Who has raised up justice from the east, has called it to his feet and it will go? He shall give in the sight of Gentiles, and shall send kings in a stupor, and put their swords in the earth, and their bows as stubble cast forth, (3) and he shall pursue them; the way of his feet shall pass in peace. (4) Who has wrought and done these things? He has called it who called it from the beginning of generations. I, God, [am] the first, and to these things that shall come, I am. (5) The nations saw and feared; the ends of the earth were astounded and approached; they came together, (6) every one judging for his neighbor and to assist his brother, and he says, (7) ‘The craftsman has become strong, and the coppersmith who strikes with the hammer, producing together; sometimes he indeed says, “The solidity is good.”’ They have strengthened them, they will fasten them with nails, and they shall not be moved.”

The *nations*, that is, the *islands*, which are pounded by the salty and bitter waves of this world, are commanded to listen and to shut their mouths and know what has been spoken to Israel: “Listen, Israel, and be silent” [[Deut 27:9](#)]; and to *take new strength*, lest through their

9 Lit., “ith gleaming eyes.”

1<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 19 (257, 35–6).

original weakness they may not be able to hear the word of God, so that they would first *come near* to the Lord. And let them not be content with their own salvation, for they should teach others what they have learned. Let them discuss with the Lord whether the God of all has preserved what is just.

And he asks them in this way and *calls* them to respond, so that he teaches them what they do not know by asking questions: *Who has raised up the just one*, or “justice,” *from the east*? For [he is] not merely the God of the Jews, but also of the *nations* [cf. [Rom 3:29](#)], who has *called* Christ the Lord and Savior, “who became for us wisdom from God, justice and sanctity and redemption” [[1 Cor 1:30](#)], in whom, according to the same Apostle, the “justice” of God is revealed [cf. [Rom 1:17](#)]. But he *called him to follow him* in all things, and to do the works of the Father [cf. [John 10:37](#)], and to fulfill the following, saying, “God, I have wanted to do your will” [[Ps 40:8](#)].

*In his sight kings and nations will lower their necks, and to his sword and arrows the hostile powers will be subjected like stubble and dust. He shall pursue them*, plainly the *kings* and princes of each of the *nations*, and *he shall pass through in peace*, calling everyone to *peace*, that they may be reconciled to God [cf. [Rom 5:10](#)]. *No path shall appear after his feet*, that is, he will not feel the weariness of the journey nor any fatigue of human weakness, but “he will drink from the torrent on the way, and therefore, will lift up his head” [[Ps 110:7](#)].

*Who has wrought and done this?* he says. *Who has raised up the just one*, or “justice”? Who has delivered *nations* and *kings* over to him? Who has subjected all things *to his sword and bow*? Assuredly it is he who *from the beginning* of the world predicted that these things would happen, he who is the Creator of all things. And since he had spoken with the disposition of a questioner, *Who has raised up the just one from the east?* and so on, when all are silent he himself has given the answer to himself: *I am the Lord, I am the first and the last*. It is he who says in the Apocalypse of John: “I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end” [[Rev 1:8](#)].

*The islands saw* [it], that is, the *nations* or the churches gathered from the Gentiles,<sup>111</sup> which endure the storms of this world; *and they feared* the Lord: “For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” [[Ps 111:10](#)].<sup>112</sup> All the *ends of the earth* trembled at the words of the apostles, simultaneously *drawing near* and *approaching* the gospel of Christ. And when they discerned that they themselves were saved, they fulfilled in deeds what they had heard above: *Let them come near and then speak*. Thus did they *help* their *neighbors*, and wanted to encourage their *brothers* in the Lord, and said to them, “Draw back from idols, despise the ancient images of demons, which a human hand has fabricated, which have been *produced* by the *pounding hammer*, things which have been fastened together by *soldering*, which have been made stable *by nails*, so that *they should not be moved*; and when they stand up, they cannot walk.”

Some refer to Cyrus king of the Persians these things that we have interpreted concerning the person of Christ and the calling of the Gentiles and the proclamation of the gospel, and the condemnation of idols. For [God] *raised him up from the east* against the Babylonians and made

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (258, 23–5).

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (259, 21–3).

him obey his command, to strike down very many nations before him and to subject all things to his *sword* and *bow*. They also relate the other things that follow to Cyrus's person, because, of course, their idols did not profit the Babylonians, which were made by human zeal and set up by the coppersmith's craft.

Some Hebrews think that this has been said about Abraham, who was called *the just one from the east*, that is, from the Chaldeans [cf. [Gen 11:31](#)], because he alone was found *just* and *he followed him* [cf. [Gen 18:16–33](#)], going forth from his homeland into a land that he did not know [cf. [Heb 11:8](#)]. Moreover, God delivered *kings* into his hand, who had come against Sodom and Gomorrah [cf. [Gen 14:20](#)], and before his *sword* and *bow* he made them to be as *stubble* and *dust*, and he *pursued* them [cf. [Gen 14:15](#)] and returned *in peace*. Moreover, he did not feel the course of a long journey, and he did this not by his own strength but by the mercy of the Lord, who knew *from the beginning* that these things would happen. *The islands saw*, it says, that is, the surrounding *nations*, and they were terrified by his virtue, and the *ends of the earth*, namely, Shem the son of Noah [cf. [Gen 6:10](#)], who at the earth's last moment had escaped with his father and brothers from the flood [cf. [Gen 7:13](#)].<sup>113</sup> Moreover, up to that time he had been spared. They want Shem to be understood as Melchizedek, who went to meet Abraham who was returning from battle [cf. [Gen 14:17–18](#); [Heb 7:1](#)]; and he received and blessed him and strengthened him with God's blessings [cf. [Gen 4:19](#)]. They think that he is the *coppersmith craftsman* who melted down Abraham and *produced* him with the *hammer* of his skill for better things, and said to him, *It is good* that you are *soldered* by the fear of the Lord and are joined to him. And he encouraged him or *strengthened* him *with the nails* of the precepts of the Lord, that he *should not be moved*, but should abide in the fear of him.

4. ([41:8–16](#)) *And you, O Israel, my servant (serve), Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend, (9) in whom I have taken you from the ends of the earth, and from its remote parts I have called you, and said to you, "You are my servant, I have chosen you, and have not cast you away." (10) Fear not, for I am with you: turn not aside, for I your God have strengthened you, and have helped you, and the right hand of my just one has upheld you. (11) Behold, all who fight against you shall be confounded and ashamed, they shall be as if they are not, and the men shall perish that speak against you. (12) You shall seek them, and shall not find the men that resist you; they shall be as if they are not, and as a thing consumed the men that war against you. (13) For I the Lord God have taken you by the hand, and say to you, "Fear not, I have helped you." (14) Fear not, worm of Jacob, you who are dead of Israel. I have helped you, says the Lord, and your Redeemer the Holy One of Israel. (15) I have placed you as a new thrashing wagon, with teeth like a saw. You shall thrash the mountains, and break them in pieces, and shall make the hills as dust. (16) You shall winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them, and you shall exult in the Lord, in the Holy One of Israel you shall rejoice.* Septuagint: "But you, O Israel, my servant (*puer*), Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, whom I have loved, (9) whom I have adopted from the ends of the earth, and from the high places of it I have called you, and said to you, 'You are my servant (*puer*), I have chosen you, and I have not forsaken you.' (10) Fear not; for I am with you;

<sup>113</sup> See [Jerome' Ep. 73.4–](#) to Evangelius for more of Jerome's discussion of contemporary Jewish traditions about Melchizedek.

wander not, for I am your God, who have strengthened you; and I have helped you, and have established you with my just right hand. (11) Behold, all your adversaries shall be confounded and ashamed; for they shall be as if they are not, and all your enemies shall perish. (12) You shall seek them, and you shall not find the men who shall insolently rage against you; for they shall be as if they are not, and they that war against you shall not be, (13) for I am the Lord your God, who holds your right hand, who says to you, (14) ‘Fear not, Jacob, and Israel few in number.’ I have helped you, says God, I who redeem you, O Israel. (15) Behold, I have made you as new saw-shaped threshing wheels of a wagon; and you shall thresh the mountains, and beat the hills to powder, and make them as dust, (16) and you shall winnow them, and the wind shall carry them away, and a tempest shall scatter them. But you shall rejoice in the holy ones of Israel, and they shall exult.”

The Apostle Paul teaches that there is a fleshly and a spiritual Jacob and Israel: “Consider Israel according to the flesh” [[1 Cor 10:18](#)]. From this we understand that there is another according to the Spirit, and it is said to the fleshly Israel, “If you were sons of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham” [[John 8:39](#)].<sup>114</sup> And up above it is said to them, “Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, ‘My way is hidden from the Lord and my judgment has passed from my God?’ ” [[Isa 40:27](#)].<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, God is now speaking to the spiritual Israel, who has received the coming of his Lord, whom he calls first For previously we received the Spirit of slavery unto fear [cf. [Rom 8:15](#)], and afterward we are joined in friendship with God as *chosen ones*.

Therefore, after the calling of the Gentiles, when “the islands saw and feared, the ends of the earth were astonished, they drew near and came” [[Isa 41:5](#)], “a remnant according to the election of grace” [[Rom 11:5](#)] is called. The Gospel also writes about them, “Jesus chose these twelve, whom he also named apostles” [[Luke 6:13](#)]. They were chosen in the gospel after their servitude to the pedagogue of the law [cf. [Gal 3:24](#)],<sup>116</sup> and they earned the right [cf. [Luke 20:35](#)] to be *the seed of Abraham, God’s friend*. For *in him he took them from the end of the earth, and from its remote parts* and borders he called Israel from all nations. They first gathered the Jewish people, of whom Paul the Apostle also says, “It was necessary first to preach the word to you; but since you have rejected it, we are going to the Gentiles” [[Acts 13:46](#)].<sup>117</sup>

To you, therefore, who are both my *servant* and my *chosen one*, you who will preach among the Gentiles and will endure very many persecutions, I say, *Fear not, for I am with you*. In the Gospel, I say to you, “Behold I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age” [[Matt 28:20](#)].<sup>118</sup> “Do not wander,” and *do not turn aside* from the truth, and do not deceive yourselves by a false persuasion, that you would be entering the forest of the Gentiles unskilled and stripped bare, in your own strength, and that you would be calling the fiercest nations to gentleness. *I have strengthened you, and have helped you, and have upheld you, or the right hand of my just one has protected*, that is, the hand of the Lord and Savior, or “my right hand,”

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 20 (260, 32–4).

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (260, 12–7).

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (260, 25–9).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (261, 7–1).

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (261, 25–5).

as the Septuagint has translated it. For *behold*, “your adversaries,” the Jewish people and *all who fight against you*, and your persecutors will be turned to nothing, and you will *seek* “your adversaries” and you will not *find* them. And the reason is given why he does not find his adversaries: because *they will be as if they are not*, [that is], the “adversaries” who are said to “rage against” the apostles, or according to the Hebrew, that have been *consumed*.

For this reason, however, you should not fear, because I have *taken your hand*, I who say to you, *Fear not, I have helped you, fear not, you worm Jacob, who are the dead of Israel*; or, as the Septuagint says, “the fewest from Israel.” What we have recorded as, *I have helped you, fear not, worm of Jacob*, is not found in the Septuagint. Now the chorus of apostles is called a *worm*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *tholath*, because of their humility and contempt. They imitate the Savior, who says in the Psalm, “I am a worm and not a man, a reproach of men and the outcast of the people” [[Ps 22:6](#)].<sup>119</sup> For just as a worm enters the earth, so the apostolic discourse has penetrated the cities of the Gentiles, and has entered hearts that were previously very hardened. And they are rightly called “the few out of Israel” because in comparison with the entire Jewish nation, very few became believers. The Lord says to them in the Gospel, “Do not be afraid, *little flock*” [[Luke 12:32](#)]; or, according to the Hebrew, *the dead of Israel*, who say with the Apostle, “I die daily” [[1 Cor 15:31](#)], and elsewhere, “Since I have been crucified with Christ, but I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” [[Gal 2:19–20](#)].

And what follows, *I have placed you as a new thrashing wagon, with teeth like a saw*, indicates that the preaching of the Gospel crushes the adversarial powers and the spiritual forces of wickedness [cf. [Eph 6:12](#)] that raises itself up against the knowledge of God [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)].<sup>220</sup> They are called *mountains* and *hills* because of the various kinds of pride; and when these have been removed and *scattered* like a *whirlwind*, *Israel exults and rejoices in the Lord, the holy one of Israel*. We can also say that the man of the church has *teeth like a saw on a new wagon* in the preaching of the Gospel, because he does not work at all in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit; he *wears away* the hardest hearts of unbelievers, separating the wheat from the chaff, and *breaking in pieces* the *mountains* and the *hills*, that is, all the leaders of the heretics. When they have been broken in pieces and crushed, they are reduced to dust and are shown to be nothing, so that those who had been wickedly gathered are divided for their own good.

5. ([41:17–20](#)) *The needy and the poor seek for waters, and there are none; their tongue has been dry with thirst. I the Lord will hear them, the God of Israel, I will not forsake them. (18) I will open rivers in the high hills, and fountains in the midst of the plains; I will turn the desert into pools of waters, and the impassable land into streams of waters. (19) I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, and the thorn (spinam), and the myrtle, and the olive tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, the elm, and the box tree together, (20) that they may see and know, and consider, and understand together that the hand of the Lord has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it.* Septuagint: “And the poor and the needy shall exult; for they shall seek water, and there shall be none; their tongue was parched with thirst. I the Lord God will hear, the God of Israel, and I will not forsake them, (18) but I will open rivers on the mountains, and

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (262, 18–3).

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (263, 1–).

fountains in the midst of the plains; I will turn the desert into swamps, and a thirsty land into watercourses. (19) I will plant in land without water the cedar and box, the myrtle and cypress, and white poplar, (20) that they may see, and know, and perceive, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done these things, and the Holy One of Israel has displayed [them].”

The *poor* and thin people of the Gentiles, who did not possess knowledge of the truth, *seek for saving waters* through the various teachers and the diverse teachings of the philosophers, and they do not find, because *there are none*;<sup>221</sup> *their tongue has been dry with thirst* without the law and the prophets. For they had spent their entire subsistence on doctors, according to the faith of the Gospel, and they were not able to be delivered from the blood of idolatry and the blood of sacrificial victims [cf. [Luke 8:43](#)].

For this reason, *the Lord God* “of Israel” has not completely *forsaken* them, and he has not allowed them to perish forever, but he has *opened rivers on the high hills* or “on the mountains” and *fountains in the midst of the plains*. These rivers traced their source to that river that is spoken of in the Psalm, “The force of the river gladdens the city of God” [[Ps 46:4](#)], and in another passage, “The river of God is full of water” [[Ps 65:9](#)]. These *rivers* and *fountains* have flowed from that fountain that speaks through Jeremiah, “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water” [[Jer 2:13](#)]; and above, in this same prophet it is said, “They will drink water from the fountains of salvation” [[Isa 12:3](#)]. Also in the Psalms it is sung about this, “Bless the Lord God from the fountains of Israel” [[Ps 68:26](#)].

And it says, he has *turned the desert into pools of water and the impassable land into streams of waters*. The Savior was speaking about these waters using mystical speech in the Gospel: “He that shall drink of my water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever, but the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water, springing up into eternal life” [[John 4:13–14](#)]; and again: “If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink; he that drinks from the water that I shall give him, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Now this,” the Evangelist says, “he said of the Holy Spirit that they would receive who believed in him” [[John 7:37–39](#)].

Since the multitude of the church, formerly a desert, had been watered with living waters, for this reason, according to the Septuagint, the “cedar, box, myrtle, cypress and poplar” grow in it. According to the Hebrew, and the other translators, it is the *cedar, thorn, myrtle, olive tree, fir, elm*, as well as the *box*. The various trees signify the diversity of spiritual graces. And since their nature is known to all, let us discuss only the thorn (*setta*) from the Hebrew, which Theodotion translated as *thorn tree (spina)*. Now it is a type of tree that grows in the desert, similar to the whitethorn. All the wood of the ark [of the covenant] was made from it [cf. [Exod 25:5](#)], as well as the furnishings of the tabernacle, which are called acacia wood (*settim*). This wood, which does not decay and is very light, surpasses all woods, both in strength and sheen, solidity and beauty. But the *cedar*, “cypress,” and *myrtle* have the finest fragrance and do not rot. The *elm*, too, and the “poplar” or “box” are connected for vines to be fastened to, or are very useful for various tasks. And all of these *are planted together in the wilderness*, lest even one string from the Lord’s harp and any virtue of the graces of the church seem to be missing,

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (263, 22–6).



so that all *understand and know together* in their mind *that the hand of the Lord has done all these things*. Consequently, rivers of virtues were found in the dry places of the Gentiles, and in a formerly deserted land full of salt, the “cedar” and the “cypress” and other trees sprang up, whose height and crown aim toward heavenly things. They are illumined by the *olive tree*, which supplies light<sup>222</sup> and rest for those who labor.

6. (41:21–24) *Bring your judgment near, says the Lord. Present it, if you have anything perhaps [to allege], said the King of Jacob. (22) Let them come, and tell us all things that are to come. Tell us the former things, what they were, and we will set our heart [upon them], and shall know the latter end of them; and reveal to us the things that are to come. (23) Declare the things that are to come in the future, and we shall know that you are gods. Also do good or evil, if you can, and let us speak, and see together. (24) Behold, you are of nothing, and your work of that which has no being; he who has chosen you is an abomination.* Septuagint: “Your judgment is near, says the Lord God; your counsels have drawn near, says the King of Jacob. (22) Let them draw near, and declare to you what things shall come to pass; or tell [us] what the former things were, and we will apply our understanding, and we shall know what are the last things. And tell us the things that are coming, (23) and declare to us the things that will happen at the last time, and we shall know that you are gods. Do good, and do evil, and we shall wonder, and see at the same time (24) where you come from, and whence is your work; they have chosen you an abomination out of the earth.”

As we said above that Jacob and Israel are twofold, comprising those who do not believe and those who believe in the Lord and Savior, so, when the Gentiles have been called, and when the rivers and fountains of the church burst forth in the former desert [cf. [Isa 41:18](#)], and when a variety of trees is furnished with leaves in a marvelous manner [cf. [Isa 41:19](#)], when all things are completely filled with abundance, those who were unwilling to believe in Christ from the Gentiles are summoned to *judgment*, in order that they may give an answer to the question of why they have been unwilling to see, know, consider, and understand [cf. [Isa 41:20](#)]. For the hand of the Lord has done these things, and the Holy One of Israel has created all things [cf. [Isa 41:20](#)].

He says, “Let” your idols, which you think are very powerful, “come near,” or *present it, if you have anything perhaps* in you, and disclose your “counsels,” the cause, the “understanding” that made you unwilling to receive the plain truth. At the same time, an apostrophe<sup>223</sup> is addressed to the idols themselves, which are without senses and have neither the capacity to hear nor to respond. Tell us, he says, either the past or the future, and show your power from the outcomes of events. Now this indicates that after the advent of Christ all idols have fallen completely silent.

Where are Apollo of Delphi and Apollo Loxias<sup>224</sup> and Apollo of Delos and Clarius<sup>225</sup> and the

<sup>222</sup> Because olive oil was used in lamps.

<sup>223</sup> Cf. n. at [1.50](#).

<sup>224</sup> A surname of Apollo, on account of his obscure (λοξοῖς) oracles.

<sup>225</sup> I.e., the Apollo of Κλάρος, a small town in Ionia near Colophon celebrated for a temple and an oracle of Apollo. Cf. [Ovid Met 1.516](#); [Vergil, Aeneid 3.360](#).

other idols who promised knowledge of the future, who deceived the most powerful kings?<sup>226</sup> Why were they not able to foretell anything about Christ, about his apostles, about the overthrow and abolition of their temples?<sup>227</sup> Well, if they were unable to predict their own destruction, how could they announce things that pertain to foreigners, either evil or good? But if anyone says that many things were foretold by idols, it must be remembered that they always mingled in lies with the truth; and they qualified their pronouncements in such a way that whatever good or evil came to pass, each could be understood. This was the case with Pyrrhus king of Epirus: “I tell you, descendant of Aeacus, you can conquer the Romans”;<sup>228</sup> and with Croesus: “Croesus, when he crosses the Halys, will destroy an army.”<sup>229</sup>

Another indication that the idols are not gods is that they can neither *do good nor evil*. This is not because the idols, or the demons attending to them, have not often done evil; but because they couldn’t do this unless the Lord permitted them to have power. After all, in the Gospel demons beg for power over a herd of pigs [cf. [Matt 8:31](#)]; and in Job we read that apart from the Lord’s command, the devil was not able to destroy even the livestock and other possessions of the holy man [cf. [Job 1:12](#)]. And it is not surprising that this is said of God, since even the Apostle Paul hands over certain men to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme [cf. [1 Cor 5:5](#); [1 Tim 1:20](#)].

Or one should say that the images of men are mute and without sensation and are unable *to do good or evil*, nor to know the past or future, because they are *from nothing* and from that which *has no being*. It is not so much they themselves who are fully worthy of *abomination* as the one who worships them. “For the idols of the nations are silver and gold, the works of human hands; they have a mouth and they will not speak” [[Ps 115:4–5](#)], and so on. How then are they able to know and *tell what is coming* or describe the past, and *do good or evil*? For they do not have the understanding of human beings, nor of the brute animals. It does not matter of what material they appear to have been made, since they are all earthly.

7. ([41:25–29](#)) *I have raised up [one] from the north, and he has come from the rising of the sun. He has called my name, and he shall make military commands to be as dirt, and he is as the potter treading clay. (26) Who has declared from the beginning, that we may know, and from the beginning, that we may say, “He is just”? There is none that declares, nor that predicts, nor that hears your words. (27) The first says to Zion, “Behold they are here, and to Jerusalem I will*

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 21 (265, 17–5).

<sup>227</sup> The abolition of temples was a fairly recent development, only fully realized under Theodosius I. See Stephen Williams and Gerard Friell, *Theodosius: The Empire at Bay* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

<sup>228</sup> Pyrrhus, king of Epirus (319–72 BC) defeated the Romans in 279 but with such heavy losses in his own army that a “pyrrhic victory” became proverbial for one gained at too great a cost. Cf. Ennius, quoted by [Cicero, Div 2.116](#).

<sup>229</sup> Croesus was the last king of Lydia, in the mid-sixth century BC, who was overthrown by Cyrus the Elder of Persia. The oracle of Delphi doublecrossed him when it said that if he fought the Persians, after crossing the river Halys, he would bring down a mighty empire; only after the event was it clear to Croesus that the empire was his own. Cf. [Herodotus 1.91](#); Ennius, quoted by [Cicero, Div 2.115](#).

give an evangelist.” (28) *And I saw, and there was no one even among them to consult, or who, when I asked, could answer a word.* (29) *Behold, they are all in the wrong, and their works are vain, their idols are wind and vanity.* Septuagint: “But I have raised up him who is from the north, and those who shall be called by my name from the rising of the sun. Let the princes come, and as potter’s clay, and as a potter treading clay. (26) For who has declared to you the things that are from the beginning, that we may know those things that are in the future, and we will say that they are true? There is no one that predicts, nor anyone that hears your words. (27) I will give dominion (*principium*) to Zion, and I will comfort Jerusalem on the way. (28) For from among the nations there is no one, and of their idols there was none to declare [anything], and if I should ask them, ‘Where are you from?’ they shall not answer me; (29) for they are your makers, and they deceive you in vain.”

He is still speaking against the idols and against those who refused to abandon them after the arrival of Christ. And while they continued on in their error, he says that he has raised up a people of nations from the north;<sup>330</sup> for from the north “shall flame forth evils upon all the inhabitants of the land” [[Jer 1:14](#)]; and it is said to Jeremiah, “What do you see, Jeremiah?” [[Jer 1:11](#)] and he answered, “A caldron on the fire and the face of it is toward the north” [[Jer 1:13](#)]. Now they are raised up from the north so that they might believe in him who comes from the rising of the sun. We read about him above, “Who has raised up the just one” or “justice from the east?” [[Isa 41:2](#)]. And in another passage, “Behold the man, his name is the east” [[Zech 6:12](#)].

He called them “by my name,” so that when they have abandoned “idols,” they might worship God alone. For he himself says in the Gospel, “I have come in the name of my Father, and you have not accepted me; another shall come in his own name, and you will accept him” [[John 5:43](#)]. He himself will *tread upon* “princes” and *military commands* and all the arrogance of the world, and they will be subjected to him as *clay* to the *potter*, so that he makes out of them one vessel for honor, another for dishonor [cf. [Rom 9:21](#)]. In accordance with prophetic custom, I am saying that I have already done these things, as if they were already past events; or, according to Symmachus, I am promising future things, no demon and idol can predict them.

Therefore, all oracles have become silent, because *there is no one to declare them*, “no one to hear,” while the formerly brute hearts of the Gentiles have understood their error and have abandoned their false prophecies. And the Lord first speaks *to Zion*, that is, to his own church, and says to it, “Behold your sons *are here*, whom I have granted to you through my faith” [cf. [Hab 2:4](#)]. But he means the apostles, who proclaimed the gospel in the whole world. *Zion* and *Jerusalem* are different as names; but of course just as there is one city, so also there is one church.

Therefore, let us ask all the Gentiles who follow the error of idols to answer us, “Where do they come from?” And this will be the response of all, that all follow vanity and winds and adore the works of their own hands. Whatever we have said about the idols and the nations we can refer to the dogmas of wickedness and to their princes, the heresiarchs, because when Christ announced peace to the church and showed them the way of truth, they follow error so as to be like wind and a whirlwind.

<sup>330</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 21 (266, 32–67, 2).

The Hebrews interpret the one *raised up from the north* and coming *from the rising of the sun* of the Assyrian and the Persian, who came to Jerusalem and *trampled* upon all its “princes,” and none of the idols that they worshiped knew this would come, except the Lord alone, who exacted vengeance upon them for their sins.

8. ([42:1–4](#)) *Behold my servant (servus): I will uphold him, my chosen one, my soul delighted in him; I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. (2) He shall not cry, nor have respect to persons, neither shall his voice be heard abroad. (3) The bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. (4) He shall not be sad, nor troublesome, till he set judgment in the earth, and the islands shall wait for his law.* Septuagint: “Jacob is my servant (*puer*), I will receive him, Israel is my chosen, my soul has accepted him; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. (2) He shall not cry, nor send away, nor shall his voice be heard abroad. (3) A broken reed shall he not crush, and smoking flax shall he not quench, but he shall bring forth judgment to truth. (4) He shall shine out, and shall not be crushed, until he has set judgment on the earth, and in his name shall the Gentiles hope.”

Jacob and Israel are not recorded in the present section, and the Evangelist Matthew [cf. [Matt 12:18](#)] did not record them, since he followed the Hebrew truth.<sup>331</sup> We say this as an affront to those who scoff at our scholarship. I have discussed this more fully in my brief commentary on Matthew and in the treatise that I recently wrote to Algasia.<sup>332</sup> And for now one should note that when the intention is to write about the band of the apostles, they are called both Jacob, Israel, and Abraham’s seed [cf. [Isa 41:8](#)].<sup>333</sup> To them, as to human beings and servants, it is said as a consequence, “Do not fear, worm of Jacob, and Israel few in number” [[Isa 41:14](#)]. But when there is a prediction about Christ, it is said without Jacob and Israel, *Behold my servant: I will uphold him, my chosen one, my soul delighted in him*, and in what follows, “I have given you for a covenant of the race, for a light of the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, and bring forth the prisoners out of prison, and those who sit in darkness out of the prison house” [[Isa 42:6–7](#)]. Nor is it surprising if he should be called a *servant*, who was “made from a woman, and made under the law” [[Gal 4:4](#)], who “though he was in the form of God, humbled himself, taking the form of a servant, and being found in appearance as a man” [[Phil 2:6–7](#)], in whom God’s *soul was pleased*, when he perceived that all the virtues were in him, no, rather that he himself was the virtue and wisdom of God [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)].

*I have put my spirit upon him*, he says, who descended in the form of a dove [cf. [Matt 3:16](#); [Luke 3:22](#)]. *He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles* because they did not know it previously. *He shall not cry*, for he will be meek and gentle [cf. [Matt 11:29](#)], *nor have respect to persons* in the judgment; or supply in thought “he will not raise”: *his voice* loudly; or, according to Symmachus, “he will not be deceived.” He will understand all the plots of the devil, or

<sup>331</sup> R. Gundry, [Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art](#) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 229, writes, “hough Matthew diverges from the LXX most of the time in the quotation, he follows the LXX in writing *zaic* instead of *δοῦλος* for *abdi*, the Servant of the Lord.”

<sup>332</sup> Jerome does not discuss this particular matter in his [Commentary on Matthew](#) ad loc. Cf. [Ep. 121.2](#) to Algasia.

<sup>333</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 22 (268, 8–3).

according to the Septuagint, “He will not leave,” namely, the Jewish people, calling them to repentance. *Neither shall his voice be heard abroad*, for he did not preach the gospel among other nations outside of Galilee and Judea. But if we read that he was on the borders of Tyre and Sidon [cf. [Matt 15:21](#)], or in the region of Caesarea Philippi [cf. [Matt 16:13](#)], which is now called Paneas, still it must be born in mind that it is not written that he entered those cities.

*The bruised*, or “broken,” *reed he shall not crush*. For he will be ready to forgive everyone, and he will grant pardon to sinners, saying to the woman, “Trust, daughter, your sins are forgiven” [[Luke 7:48](#)]. *And he shall not quench the smoking*, or, as the others have translated, “obscure” and “dark,” *flax*. Those who were close to being snuffed out will be saved by the Lord’s clemency, which we have discussed with respect to the Jews and Gentiles in the above mentioned little works. But he will *judge* all things with *truth*, in no way fearing the scribes and Pharisees, whom he boldly called hypocrites [cf. [Matt 23:13–29](#)].

Now Matthew the Evangelist has not set down what follows, “He shall shine out and not be crushed until he sets judgment on the earth” [cf. [Matt 12:17–21](#)]; or, the things in-between *judgment* and *judgment* were deleted by an error of the copyist. Now the meaning is that by his rising from the dead he will illumine all, he will not be “crushed” by death, “until he has set judgment upon the earth.” In the Gospel, he said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind” [[John 9:39](#)]. We translated this as *He will not be sad or troublesome*, but he will keep the same countenance at all times. The philosophers falsely boast this about Socrates, that he was never unusually sad or happy. Aquila and Theodotion translated this, “He will not hide and run, until he sets judgment on the earth.” And the meaning is, He will not frighten anyone away by the *sadness* of his countenance, and he will be in no hurry to punish. He will reserve the truth of the judgment for the end time.

And what follows, *And the islands shall wait for his law*, the Septuagint has recorded more clearly: “In his name shall the Gentiles hope.” They are called *islands* in the Scriptures, because they stand exposed to the incursions of persecutors from all sides. Now we should understand *his law* not as the one given through Moses, but the gospel. For “from Zion shall come forth a law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” [[Isa 2:3](#)]. Jeremiah also makes a prediction about this law: “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, and I will make a new covenant, not according to the covenant which I once made with their fathers” [[Jer 31:31–32](#)].

9. ([42:5–9](#)) *Thus says the Lord God who created the heavens, and stretched them out, who established the earth, and the things that spring out of it, who gives breath to the people who are upon it, and spirit to those who tread on it. (6) I the Lord have called you in justice, and taken your hand, and preserved [you], and I have given you for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, (7) that you might open the eyes of the blind, and bring forth the prisoner out of prison, and those who sit in darkness out of the prison house. (8) I the Lord, this is my name; I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to graven things. (9) The things that were first, behold they have come, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth, I will make you hear them.*

It was uncertain who had said before, “Behold my servant, I will raise him up, my chosen one, my soul delighted in him, I have put my spirit upon him, he will bring forth judgment to the

Gentiles” [[Isa 42:1](#)].<sup>334</sup> For after the condemnation of idols, an unexpected discussion burst forth: “Behold my servant,” and the rest, which we have interpreted as spoken by the Father concerning Christ. And so, to prevent it from remaining ambiguous who had spoken the things higher up, he goes on to say, *Thus says the Lord God who created the heavens, and stretched them out; or as the Septuagint has translated it, “Who made the heaven and established it.”*

Therefore the Creator and the *Lord* of the universe himself has promised the coming of his Christ, he who not only *stretched out* and “established” *the heavens*, but also made the earth firm with a deep foundation, and everything that grows *out of it*. Thus are his invisible qualities seen, “being understood from the things which have been made, also his eternal power and divinity” [[Rom 1:20](#)]. He has *given breath to* all who live on earth, by the first law of mortals—for “God breathed into the face of Adam the breath of life, and he became a living soul” [[Gen 2:7](#)]. But [he gives] breath in a unique way to those who *tread* the earth and subject the wisdom of their flesh to his authority [cf. [Rom 8:6–13](#)].

That one, therefore, whose heralding is so great, has spoken these things to him whose law the islands and the Gentiles await [cf. [Isa 42:4](#)]: *I the Lord have called you in justice*. He himself says of him in the Gospel, “Just Father” [[John 17:25](#)], and, “The world does not know you” [[John 17:25](#)]. And he says, *I have taken your hand*, in order that you would be not only God of the Jews but also of the Gentiles [cf. [Rom 3:29](#)]. For whatever the Son does, the Father does [cf. [John 5:19](#); [9:4](#)]. *And I have preserved you*, who yourself preserve all things. *And I have given you for a covenant of the people*, to whom I had earlier promised you would come; and *for a light of the Gentiles*, who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death [[Isa 9:2](#)]. *That you might open the eyes of the blind*, who did not see God before, *and bring forth the prisoners out of prison*—for “each one is bound by the cords of his own sins” [[Prov 5:22](#)]. And in the Gospel, the Lord freed the woman whom Satan had bound [cf. [Luke 13:16](#)]. *Those who sit in darkness out of the prison house*, who lived in the night and fog of error.<sup>335</sup>

As for what he adds, *I the Lord, this is my name, I will not give my glory to another*, this does not exclude the Son. For when the Son said in the Gospel, “Father, glorify me with the glory that I had with you before the world existed” [[John 17:5](#)], the Father answered him, “And I have glorified, and I shall glorify” [[John 12:28](#)]. For he did not say, “I shall give my glory to no one”—if he had said that, he would have excluded the Son—but, *I shall not give my glory to another*, besides you to whom I have given it, to whom I will give it. This is why I deeply admire the unique character of Holy Scripture, because with a harmonious voice all the translators have translated the word *aher* as “another,” who in many other instances usually disagree. In order that we may know, however, that it is not the Son who is being excluded by this sentence, but idols, the words that follow testify, *nor my praise to graven things*. The Septuagint rendered this, “nor my virtues to graven images.” For since Christ is the virtue of God and the wisdom of God [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)], he contains all the virtues of the Father in himself.

Then follows, *The things that were first, behold they have come*. Here is the sense: All that I have spoken, what I have promised through Moses and the prophets, has been fulfilled.<sup>336</sup> Now

<sup>334</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (269, 35–70, 23).

<sup>335</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (271, 3–0).

<sup>336</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (272, 2–).



moreover *I am declaring* to you the Gospel, the calling of the Gentiles, the passion of Christ, the newness of faith. Consequently, just as you perceive that the former things have been fulfilled in reality, so also you should believe that those things that I am now promising will come about.

10. [\(42:10–17\)](#) *Sing to the Lord a new song; his praise [is] from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea and its fullness, you islands and inhabitants of them. (11) Let the desert and its cities lift up. Cedar shall dwell in houses, you inhabitants of Petra, give praise, they shall cry from the top of the mountains. (12) They shall give glory to the Lord, and shall declare his praise in the islands. (13) The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, as a man of war shall he stir up jealousy,<sup>337</sup> he shall shout and cry, he shall prevail against his enemies. (14) I have held my peace, I have always kept silence, I have been patient, I will speak now as a woman in labor, I will destroy, and swallow up at once. (15) I will lay waste the mountains and hills, and will make all their grass to wither, and I will turn rivers into islands, and will dry up the standing pools. (16) And I will lead the blind into the way which they know not; in the paths of which they were ignorant I will make them walk. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight; these things (verba) have I done to them, and I have not forsaken them. (17) They have turned back; let them be confounded with confusion, those who trust in a graven thing, who say to a molten thing, “You are our gods.” Septuagint: “Sing a new song to the Lord, his dominion is glorified, and his name from the end of the earth, those who go down to the sea and sail upon it, the islands and their inhabitants. (11) Rejoice, O desert and its villages, the hamlets and the dwellers in Kedar (*Cedar*). The inhabitants of the rock (*petra*) shall rejoice, they shall shout from the top of the mountains. (12) They shall give glory to God, they shall proclaim his virtues in the islands. (13) The Lord God of virtues shall go forth, and crush the war, he shall stir up jealousy, and shall shout mightily against his enemies. (14) I have been silent from the beginning. Shall I always be silent and forbear? I have acted patiently like a woman in labor, I will burst forth and wither at once. (15) I will make desolate mountains and hills, and will dry up all their grass; and I will make the rivers islands, and dry up the marshes. (16) And I will bring the blind by a way that they do not know, and I will cause them to tread paths of which they were ignorant. I will turn darkness into light for them, and crooked things into straight. These things (verba) will I do to them, and I will not forsake them. (17) But they have turned back. Be confounded with confusion, you who trust in graven images, who say to the molten images, ‘You are our gods.’ ”*

He had said before, “The things that were first, behold they have come, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth, I will make you hear them” [[Isa 42:9](#)].<sup>338</sup> Moreover, he had promised that he would say what they were unaware of. By the words that follow he is testifying to what those new things are. He is instructing the apostles and apostolic men to *sing a new song*, not in the oldness of the letter but in the newness of the Spirit [cf. [Rom 7:6](#)], not only in the Old Instrument but in the New; and his *praise* reaches *to the ends of the earth*. For “his going forth is from the top of heaven, and his meeting all the way to its end” [[Ps 19:6](#)]. “The voice” of the apostles “has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world” [[Ps 19:4](#); [Rom 10:18](#)]. Or, in accordance with the Septuagint, “Glorify his name at the ends of

<sup>337</sup> Or “eal.”

<sup>338</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 23 (272, 8–0).

the earth,” so that the name of Christ may be declared among the Gentiles in the whole world.

Now the words that follow testify to who these are who ought to *sing a new song*. It says, *You who go down to the sea* and “sail upon it,” or the *fullness of the sea*. For when Jesus saw the apostles mending their nets on the shore beside Lake Gennesaret [cf. [Matt 4:21](#); [Luke 5:1](#)],<sup>339</sup> he called them and sent them into the great sea, in order to make fishers of men out of fishers of fish [cf. [Matt 4:19](#)]. They preached the gospel from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum [cf. [Rom 15:19](#)]<sup>440</sup> and Spain [cf. [Rom 15:24](#)], capturing in a brief period even the very power of the city of Rome. Or at any rate they *went down to the sea* and “sailed upon it” by enduring the storms and persecutions of this world.<sup>441</sup> Understand *the islands too and their inhabitants* either of the variety of nations or of the large number of churches.

He says, *Let the desert and its cities lift up* its voice, of which we have spoken above.<sup>442</sup> Or, “Let the desert rejoice and its villages,” and “Kedar,” which was once an uninhabitable region of the Saracens beyond Arabia, and *inhabitants of Petra*, which is itself a city of Palestine. Now this signifies that the Gentile people, who were at first bereft of the knowledge of God and fast bound to the errors of idolatry, are converted to the Lord’s praises. Or, since “Cedar” means “darkness,” and according to the Apostle the rock (*petra*) is Christ [cf. [1 Cor 10:4](#)], he is instructing all believers that those who previously were in darkness and now believe in the Lord and Savior should shout from the top of the mountains and openly proclaim Christ. Above it was also said to them, “O you who bring glad tidings to Zion, go up on the high mountain; raise your voice mightily, you who bring glad tidings to Jerusalem” [[Isa 40:9](#)]. And *I shall give his glory in the islands*, of which we have previously spoken.

The prophetic words are describing the glorious advent of the Savior, of which the Apostle Paul also speaks, “In accordance with the illumination of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” [[2 Tim 1:10](#)]. He compares him to a very *mighty man* who will wage *war* against his adversaries and *stir up jealousy*.<sup>443</sup> It is also prophesied about this in the song of Deuteronomy: “They have provoked me to jealousy by that which was not God, and they have exasperated me with their idols; and I will make them jealous by a nation that is not, and I will exasperate them with a very foolish nation” [[Deut 32:21](#)]. *He shall shout too and cry against his enemies*, openly rebuking their unbelief and declaring with a shout, *I have held my peace, I have always kept silence, I have been patient*, or, as the Septuagint translated, “I have been silent.”<sup>444</sup> Shall I always be silent?” This is in order that what is said by Solomon may be fulfilled: “There is a time to be silent and a time to speak” [[Eccl 3:7](#)]. And the meaning is, For a long time I carried you as you transgressed often, but I who had previously *held my peace* will no longer keep silent. And *just as a woman in labor* brings forth an infant into the light and brings into the open what was previously being held confined within, so I will now bring forth my grief and dissimulation that I always had because of your evil deeds, and *I will destroy* your plans. At one time I will *swallow*

<sup>339</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (272, 17–9).

<sup>440</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (272, 23–5).

<sup>441</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (272, 29–3).

<sup>442</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (273, 5–3).

<sup>443</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (273, 28–3).

<sup>444</sup> The lemma adds “from the beginning.”

up every nation and all the pride of *the mountains* and the swelling up of your *hills*, and I will reduce to a desert the *grass*, of which it was said above, “Truly the people is *grass*” [[Isa 40:7](#)], that is, both the princes and the ignoble common people. This was added to the Septuagint from the version of Theodotion. The seventy were silent about these words.

And when I will have *dried you up* and destroyed you from head to foot, at that time *I will cause rivers* of my teaching to flow *to the islands* of the Gentiles, *and will reduce to dryness* your *standing pools*, or “marshes.” Accordingly, the knowledge of the Scriptures will be among the Gentiles, and the *dryness* of doctrine among you. *And I will lead the blind by the way which they did not know before*. We also read about this above, “I have given you for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, that you may open the eyes of the blind” [[Isa 42:6](#)]. They will be led by the way of which Christ speaks: “I am the way” [[John 14:6](#)]; or *I will make them walk* on the way of the knowledge of God and *in the paths* of the prophets. At that time their *darkness* will be turned to *light*, and *crooked things* will be turned to *straight*, so that they understand what they read [cf. [Acts 8:30](#)], and view with the eyes of their hearts the bright light of Christ in the Old Testament.<sup>445</sup>

And at the same time he adds, *These things* (verba) *have I done*, or “will I do,” *to them*. I am not promising additional things to come, but delivering on what I had previously promised. But while I am saying these things, the Jewish people *have been turned back*, so that they did not believe the one who made the promises, and they were *confounded* by their own errors, and they neglected God’s promise, the people who had previously believed in idols. Or, when the fullness of the Gentiles will have entered in, at that time the people of Israel as well will be *converted* [cf. [Rom 11:25–26](#)], and will regret their error by which they had previously served idols. Or, at any rate, after the calling of the Gentiles they return to the beginning, so that he is saying that all Gentiles who were unwilling to believe after the Gospel must be *confounded* by their own idols.

11. ([42:18–25](#)) *Hear, you deaf, and, you blind, behold that you may see. (19) Who is blind, but my servant? Or deaf, but he to whom I have sent my messengers? Who is blind, but he that is sold, who is blind, but the servant of the Lord? (20) You who see many things, will you not observe [them]? You who have ears open, will you not hear? (21) And the Lord was willing to sanctify him, and to magnify the law, and exalt it. (22) But this is a people that is robbed and wasted, they are all the snare of young men, and they are hidden in the houses of prisons! They are made a prey, and there is none to deliver them, a spoil, and there is none that says, “Restore.” (23) Who is there among you who will give ear to this, who will attend and hearken for times to come? (24) Who has given Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to robbers? Has not the Lord himself, against whom we have sinned? And they would not walk in his ways, and they have not hearkened to his law. (25) And he has poured out upon him the indignation of his fury, and a mighty war, and has burnt him round about, and he knew not, and set him on fire, and he understood not. Septuagint: “Hear, you deaf, and look up, you blind, that you may see. (19) Who is blind, but my servants (*pueri*), and deaf, but those who rule over them? Who is blind, but he who receives? Yea, the servants of God have been made blind. (20) You have often seen, and have not taken heed; [your] ears are open, and you have not heard. (21) The Lord God*

<sup>445</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2, 23* (274, 23–75, 1).

wanted to be justified, and to magnify his praise. (22) And I beheld, and the people were wasted and robbed. For there is a snare in the secret chambers everywhere, and in the houses also, where they have hidden them. They became a spoil, and there was no one to deliver, a prey, and there was none who said, 'Restore.' (23) Who is there among you that will give ear to these things and know the things which will come to pass? (24) Who gave Jacob up to spoil, and Israel to the plunderers? Did not God [do it] against whom they sinned? And you were unwilling to walk in his ways, nor to hearken to his law. (25) So he brought upon them the anger of his fury, and the war prevailed against them, and those who set fires round about them; yet no one of them knew it, neither did they lay it to heart."

Lest anyone think what is said, *Hear, you deaf, and, you blind, behold that you may see*, pertains to the Gentile people, who were previously deaf and blind, as the Jews strive to prove in their foolish interpretation, the prophetic discourse itself shows who ought to be understood as deaf and blind. It says, *Who is blind, but my servant, or deaf, but he to whom I have sent my messengers?* Doubtless by *messengers* he means the prophets. *Who is blind, but he that is sold to his own sins? Who is blind, but the one who was first a servant of the Lord?*

It is said to him, O Israel, *you who see many things* and have very many prophets through whom you may know the commandments of God, *will you not observe* what has been commanded to you? *You who have ears open, will you not hear* what is being said? We have also read about this above, "With hearing you will hear and you will not understand, and seeing you will look and you will not see; for the heart of this people is fattened" [[Isa 6:9–10](#)].<sup>446</sup>

He says, *the Lord was willing to sanctify him, and to magnify his own law, and exalt* and lift up the people lying down, but they were unwilling to do the will of God, and for that reason the people were *robbed and wasted* by adversaries, which we ought to understand either as demons or enemies.

*They are all the snare of young men, and they are hidden in the houses of prisons*, or as the Septuagint translated it, "A snare in the secret chambers everywhere, and in the houses also, where they have hidden them." This signifies the scribes and Pharisees, who deceived the wretched people, and "everywhere" plotted against the Lord and Savior and his apostles. They had the key of knowledge, and did not enter themselves and hindered others who want to enter [cf. [Luke 11:52](#)]. And he has nicely called their hearts *prisons*, in which dwell evil thoughts [cf. [Mark 7:21](#)]. Therefore, they were *made a prey and a spoil, and there is none that delivered them and said a word on their behalf*.

And at the same time, the prophet is exhorting them that, if all are unable to hear, at least let a few know what is to come, and let them understand by whom these things have been accomplished, and let them know the causes of their devastation, those who were unwilling either to hear or to do what the law commanded. Therefore, the Lord *poured out upon* them his entire *wrath* and the full *indignation* of his *fury*, so that the one who had previously kept his peace would no longer be silent. Not by words would he correct them, but by punishments and torments, and a very *mighty war* would seize them, which they would be unable to escape. This points to the fierceness of the Romans. And when they have been *burned* on every side and have no soundness in them, nevertheless they *do not understand* the reason for their

<sup>446</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (275, 35–7).

punishment, that the reason they were punished is because they did not receive the Son of God.

12. [\(43:1-13\)](#) *And now thus says the Lord who created you, O Jacob, and formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you, and called you by your name, you are mine. (2) When you shall pass through the waters, I will be with you, and the rivers shall not cover you. When you shall walk in the fire, you shall not be burnt, and the flame shall not burn in you, (3) for I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I have given Egypt for your atonement, and Ethiopia and Seba (Saba) for you. (4) Since you became honorable in my eyes, and glorious, I have loved you, and I will give men for you, and people for your life. (5) Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your seed from the east, and gather you from the west. (6) I will say to the north, "Give up"; and to the south, "Keep not back, bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the end of the earth, (7) and every one that calls upon my name; I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, and made him." (8) Bring forth the people that are blind, and have eyes, that are deaf, and have ears. (9) All the nations are assembled together, and the tribes are gathered. Who among you will declare this, and shall make us hear the former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, let them be justified, and hear, and say. (10) Truly you are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know, and believe me, and understand that I myself am. Before me there was no God formed, and after me there shall be none. (11) I am, I am the Lord, and there is no savior besides me. (12) I have declared, and have saved. I have made it heard, and there was no strange one among you. You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and I am God. (13) And from the beginning I am the same, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand; I will work, and who shall turn it away? Septuagint: "And now thus says the Lord God who made you, O Jacob, and created you, O Israel. Fear not, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by my name; you are mine. (2) And if you pass through water, I am with you; and the rivers shall not cover you. And if you go through fire, you shall not be burned; the flame shall not burn you. (3) For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your savior. I have made Egypt and Ethiopia your exchange, and [have given] Soene for you. (4) Since you became honorable and glorious in my sight, and I have loved you, and I will give men for you, and princes for your head. (5) Fear not; for I am with you; I will bring your seed from the east, and will gather you from the west. (6) I will say to the north, 'Bring'; and to the south, 'Keep not back; bring my sons from the land afar off, and my daughters from the ends of the earth, (7) all who are called by my name; for I have created him for my glory, and I have formed him, and have made him.' (8) And I have brought forth the blind people, who have eyes, and they are blind, and their ears are deaf. (9) All the nations are gathered together, and their princes have come together. Who will declare these things? Or who will declare to you things from the beginning? Let them bring forth their witnesses, and be justified; and let them hear, and speak truly. (10) Be my witnesses, and I too am a witness, says the Lord God, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know, and believe, and understand that I am [he]; before me there was no other God, and after me there shall be none. (11) I am God; and beside me there is no Savior. (12) I have declared, and have saved; I have reproached, and there was no strange god among you: you are my witnesses, and I am the Lord God (13) from the beginning, and there is no one who can deliver out of my hands; I will act, and who shall turn it back?"*



The Hebrews interpret this concerning the second coming of the Savior, when after the fullness of the Gentiles all Israel must be saved [cf. [Rom 11:25–26](#)]. But we do not think that the promise is being made to them, to whom it was said above: “Who is blind, but my servants? and who is deaf, but they that rule over them? Yea, the servants of God have been made blind” [[Isa 42:19](#)]; and again, “The people were spoiled and plundered” [[Isa 42:22](#)], and things similar to these. After all, he adds, “He poured out upon him the indignation of his fury and a mighty war, and he burned him round about, and he knew not and set him on fire, and he understood not” [[Isa 42:25](#)].<sup>447</sup>

Therefore, what we said above must likewise now be understood here, that there are two Jacobs and two Israels, one of the flesh and the other of the Spirit; of those who refused to believe in the Savior, and of those who received the Son of God. Thus the band of apostles and the first church of Christ, which has been gathered from the Jewish people, is being challenged to understand their Creator and molder, who is the maker of its body and soul. *Fear not* the persecutors, because they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ [cf. [1 Pet 1:19](#)], who *called* them by his own *name*, and out of familiarity he calls them his own people; but let them unhesitatingly proclaim this and let them fear no dangers.

And what he adds, *waters, rivers, fire, flames*, describes the violence and fury of the persecutors, who envy the salvation of the Gentiles and do not want the word of the gospel to be preached—although the Jews would like to interpret the *waters* as referring to the Egyptians, the *rivers* as the Babylonians, the *fire* as the Macedonians, and the *flame* as the Romans. Now the reason he commands them not to *fear* is because the *Lord God* their *Savior* and *the Holy One of Israel* is *with* them. He has made them proclaim to “Egypt, Ethiopia, Soene” and to the farthest limits of the world. Instead of “Soene” the other translators recorded Seba (*Saba*), which is where the queen of the south was from, who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon [cf. [1 Kgs 10:1–10](#); [Matt 12:42](#)].<sup>448</sup>

On this account the band of apostles *became honorable* in the sight of the Lord, and was *loved* by him, and became the salvation of all *men* and peoples, who were called to the gospel through them and will be credited for the salvation of their souls. This is why he goes on to say, *Fear not, I am with you*, I who say to you in the Gospel, “Behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the world” [[Matt 28:20](#)]. For *from the east* and *from the west* I will bring your “sons,” who rest in the bosom of Abraham [cf. [Luke 16:22–23](#)]. And a people consisting of my *sons* and *daughters* will be *gathered* from all parts of the world. They would either *call upon my name* or be “called by my name,” so that they are called Christians for the *glory* of their Creator.

As for what follows, *Bring forth the people that are blind, and have eyes, that are deaf, and have ears*, many think that this is said about the Gentile people, who began to hear and see through the teaching of the apostles. But we should understand these things as well of scattered Israel, who was called through the apostles and was the first to believe, to whom even Paul says, “It was necessary first to preach the word of God to you” [[Acts 13:46](#)], and the Lord himself says in the Gospel, “Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” [[Matt 10:6](#)]. Finally, it

<sup>447</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 24 (276, 27–3).

<sup>448</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (277, 22–3.31–2).



follows, *All the nations are assembled together, and the tribes are gathered*, that is with the people who believed from the Jews, so that there is a twofold invitation of the circumcision and of the uncircumcision. The words *Bring forth* are being addressed to the Son, or according to the Septuagint, the Father is speaking about the Son, that he should “bring forth the people who are blind” and “deaf,” and unite them with the Gentiles and make of them many “princes” of the church.

The prophet also expresses astonishment that no one among the Gentiles was able to know these things in advance, nor to recognize the Lord’s plans, but only his people who received the law and had the prophets—for “God is known in Judea, in Israel his name is great” [[Ps 76:1](#)]<sup>449</sup>—or God himself is witness of his own words and the accomplisher; and his servant (*puer*) and slave (*servus*) whom he has chosen doubtless signifies Christ, to whom he also says above, “It is a great thing for you to be called my servant” [[Isa 49:6](#)].<sup>449</sup> And all these things will happen in order that the truth be preached to the world, and that they whose mind was previously brutish and unfeeling may know, believe and understand, that there is no other God but the one God, neither before nor after. For the Creator of time has no beginning at any time, since this very [beginning] would be a point in time.

And just as he has now said, “I am witness, says the Lord God,” *and the servant whom I have chosen*, since the Lord says the same thing in the Gospel: “The testimony of two men is true, I am the one who bears testimony about myself, and the Father who sent me” [[John 8:17–18](#)], so also one should understand concerning his deity, that there is no God but he who speaks, and his “servant” whom he has “chosen.” And it is nicely said that there is no other God besides God the Father, for Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)], who says in the Gospel, “I am in the Father, and the Father is in me” [[John 14:11](#)]. For just as the one Lord, Christ, does not prevent the Father from also being Lord, so the one God, the Father, does not prevent the Son from being God, who “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, this one was in the beginning with God” [[John 1:1–2](#)].

And what follows, *And there is no savior besides me*, shows that the Son saves all things in the Father. The same prophet testifies about this, “And the Lord will send a Savior to them, who will save them” [[Isa 19:20](#)].<sup>550</sup> For God cannot be wise and strong apart from his own wisdom and virtue [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)]. Therefore since *from the beginning* I have predicted these things as coming, there will be no one who rejects my will, or rather, who is able to make void the things that I have done. To be sure these things are said to Jacob and Israel, but they apply to the apostolic chorus and all who have wanted to believe in Christ from the Jewish people.

13. ([43:14–15](#)) *Thus says the Lord your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their bars, and the Chaldeans glorying in their ships. (15) I am the Lord your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.* Septuagint: “Thus says the Lord God who has redeemed you, the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I will send to Babylon, and I will stir up all that flee, and the Chaldeans shall be chained in ships. (15) I am the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, who has shown Israel your king.”

According to the Hebrew text, the prophet’s speech is still being directed toward Israel, that

<sup>449</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (278, 33–5) where [Isa 42:1](#) is cited erroneously as “bove.”

<sup>550</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (279, 24–8).

their Redeemer, the Lord and Holy One of Israel, has said these things to them: For your sake, you who proclaim my gospel, to whom I have said above, "Fear not, for I am with you" [[Isa 43:5](#)], you who are witnesses of my will and you who announce my servant as another witness to an unbelieving world [cf. [Isa 43:10](#)], I have sent my Son to the Babylon and the confusion of this world, and I have *brought down* all its *bars*. These are called *barihim* in Hebrew, and Theodotion translated it as "strong ones." And he says, *I have brought down*, supplying this verb again from the context, *the Chaldeans, who gloried in their ships*, that is to say, in those who were driven here and there, like ships, amongst idols. Of the *Chaldeans*, no one doubts that they signify demons. *I the Lord* have predicted that these things would take place, who am *your Creator* and the *king of Israel*.

On the other hand, according to the Septuagint the sense is much different: "I the Lord who" has delivered "you," from dangers, and "the Holy One of Israel, for your sake I will send to Babylon," and I will cause the king of the Medes and Persians and its inhabitants to "flee," and the "Chaldeans" who had captured you, who have been "chained," will be transferred to other nations beyond the Caspian Sea. "I the Lord" have decreed that these things are coming, I who have "shown" that "Israel" will be "king" of believers.

14. ([43:16–21](#)) *Thus says the Lord, who made (dedit) a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters. (17) Who brought forth the chariot and the horse, the army and the strong, they lay down to sleep together, and they shall not rise again, they are broken as flax, and are extinct. (18) Remember not former things, and look not on things of old. (19) Behold, I shall do new things, and now they shall spring forth; verily you shall know them. I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. (20) The beast of the field shall glorify me, the dragons and the ostriches, because I have given waters in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, to my chosen. (21) This people have I formed for myself; they shall tell of my praise.* Septuagint: "For thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty water; (17) who brought forth chariots and horses, and a very mighty multitude, but they lay down to sleep, and shall not rise, they are extinct, as quenched flax. (18) Do not remember the former things, and consider not the ancient things. (19) Behold, I will do new things, which shall presently spring forth, and you shall know them, and I will make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the dry land. (20) The beasts of the field shall bless me, the sirens and young ostriches; for I have given water in the wilderness, and rivers in the dry land, to give drink to my chosen race, (21) my people whom I have acquired to tell forth my virtues."

The Lord who destroyed and cast down Babylon and brought down its strongest ones from power, and who took captive all the Chaldeans who were sailing blissfully on the waves of this world [cf. [Isa 43:14](#)], has found the *way in the mighty waters* of the Red Sea, so that his people were delivered and passed through from Egypt [cf. [Exod 14:29](#)]. Or, he who *made a way* in the Red Sea has found a *path even in the mighty waters* of the Jordan river, so that both the departure from Egypt and the entry into the promised land contained a miracle [cf. [Josh 3:17](#)]. He himself drowned the *chariots and the horses and the entire army* of Pharaoh in the deep [cf. [Exod 14:27–28](#); [15:4–5](#)], which have *slept* in perpetual sleep. *They were broken and extinguished as flax* in a brief space of time and in an instant and a moment; for *flax* that has not yet been ignited, because of the lightness of its substance, is immediately put out and

*extinguished* in a glimmering spark.

Therefore, I command this to you, that amongst my signs and miracles, by which the most powerful city of Babylon was torn down, and by which a *way* was opened for my people in the Red Sea and the Jordan, *remember not things of old*, because in the gospel I will do much greater things. In comparison with those things, the past things ought to be silent. For *I will* no longer find a *way* in the Red Sea, but *in the wilderness* of the whole world. Not just one river or fountain will burst forth from the rock [cf. [Exod 17:6](#)], but many *rivers*, not to refresh thirsty bodies, as before, but souls. Thus what we read above is fulfilled: “You will drink water from the fountains of salvation” [[Isa 12:3](#)].<sup>551</sup>

Then will occur what has never happened, all the “beasts” and *dragons and the ostriches*, that were staying in the wilderness of the Gentiles, and were like “beasts” in respect to the blood of their idolatry and the wildness of their customs, would *glorify* and highly praise *me*. Instead of *dragons*, which Theodotion alone has called *thennim*, as it is written in Hebrew, the rest translated as “sirens,” portentous creatures, which by their sweet and deadly song were hastening to see sailors torn to pieces by the dogs of Scylla.<sup>552</sup> And this means that those formerly given over to pleasure and excess will be converted to the Lord’s service—although it is better to understand *dragons* here, because they are joined along with ostriches. Thus, since earlier he had spoken about beasts of the desert, he recorded these animals which are common to the desert. But “they will praise me,” he says, and the *beasts of the field* and the *dragons* and the *ostriches will glorify me because I have given waters in the desert and rivers in the dry places of the nations*, so that *my people*, whom I have *chosen* for myself, may *drink*; or “my chosen race and people whom I have acquired” by my blood [cf. [Acts 20:28](#)]. Accordingly, let them *tell forth my praises* and “virtues.”

15. ([43:22–24](#)) *You have not called upon me, O Jacob, neither have you labored about me, O Israel. (23) You have not offered me the ram of your whole burnt offering, nor have you glorified me with your victims. I have not caused you to serve with an oblation, nor wearied you with frankincense. (24) You have bought me no sweet cane with silver, neither have you filled me with the fat of your victims. But you have made me to serve with your sins, you have wearied me with your iniquities.* Septuagint: “I have not now called you, O Jacob; neither have I made you weary, O Israel. (23) You have not brought me the sheep of your whole burnt offering; neither have you glorified me with your victims. I have not caused you to serve with sacrifices, neither have I wearied you with frankincense. (24) Neither have you purchased for me incense with silver, neither have I desired the fat of your sacrifices, but I have defended you in your sins, and in your iniquities.”

While the beasts of the field, the dragons and the ostriches were praising me [cf. [Isa 43:20](#)], you, *O Jacob*, have not wanted to *call upon me*, nor to *labor* afterward in order to atone for your sin by penance. But because you think that you have *offered me victims* and have sacrificed *rams*, you should know that I have not accepted them, because they were common to me and

<sup>551</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 25 (281, 5–2).

<sup>552</sup> A sea monster in the Straits of Messina opposite Charydis, past which Odysseus and also the Argonauts had to sail. For the dogs of Scylla, cf. [Lucretius 5.890](#); [Vergil, Aeneid 3.432](#); [Tibullus 3.4.89](#); [Cicero, Verr. 2.5.56, 146](#); [Lucan 1.549](#).

to idols. And he repeats the notion that he had spoken above: “Of what value to me is the abundance of your sacrifices? says the Lord. I am full of whole burnt offerings of rams; and I do not want the fat of lambs, and the blood of bulls and goats” [[Isa 1:11](#)].<sup>553</sup>

For, he says, I have not sought anything costly from you, such that I would *wear you* in preparing them. I did not demand *oblations* from you, nor have I sought *frankincense*, nor *sweet cane* nor incense and pigments of various kinds, by the smoke of which you would *fill* me and satisfy me. Instead, what I have wanted, what I have sought, is obedience, which is higher than sacrifice [cf. [1 Sam 15:22](#)], and the sacrifice of which David sings in the Psalms, “An afflicted spirit is a sacrifice to God, a contrite and humble heart God does not despise” [[Ps 51:17](#)]. *But you have made me serve and grow weary with your sins*, so that I was forced to say, “I was weary of bearing them” [[Isa 1:14](#)], and I was no longer able to endure you. This is why God says the same thing through Hosea, “What shall I do with you, Ephraim? Shall I protect you, Israel? What shall I do with you? Shall I make you as Adama, and as Seboim?” [[Hos 11:8](#)].

But what the Septuagint has recorded, “But I have defended you in your sins, and in your iniquities,” can be linked with what comes above in such a way that it means that the Lord’s defense of sinners is wearying to him and a source of fatigue.

16. ([43:25–28](#)) *I am, I am he who blots out your iniquities for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.* (26) *Put me in remembrance, and let us be judged together; tell if you have anything to justify yourself.* (27) *Your first father sinned, and your agents (interpretes) have transgressed against me.* (28) *And I have profaned the holy princes; I have given Jacob to slaughter, and Israel to blasphemy.* Septuagint: “I am, I am he who blots out your iniquities, and I will not remember them. (26) But do remember, and let us be judged; do first tell your iniquities, that you may be justified. (27) Your fathers sinned, and your princes acted unjustly against me. (28) And the princes have profaned my sanctuaries, and I gave Jacob that I should destroy him, and Israel to reproach.”

He says, You, O Jacob and Israel, have made me weary by your sins [cf. [Isa 43:24](#)], and I was hardly able to bear the burdens of your *iniquities*, you whom I do not call my slaves and servants, but I address simply by the name of *Jacob* and *Israel*, to show you and reprove you as sinners. But because I am merciful and patient and have much compassion [cf. [Joel 2:13](#); [Jonah 4:2](#)], I will *blot out* all your *iniquities for my own sake*, in the sprinkling and blood of the new covenant, blotting out the old handwritten code that was written against you [cf. [Col 2:14](#)]; *and I will not remember your sins* any longer, which I will forgive you in baptism if you are willing to believe. *Put me in remembrance*, then, *if you have anything* just to say in response to me; I will accept it freely that *we may be judged together* [cf. [Isa 1:18](#)], and you may convict me of not having done to you what I should have done [cf. [Isa 5:4](#)]. In Micah we read this thought more fully: “O my people, what have I done to you, and how have I troubled you? Answer me, for I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and delivered you out of the house of bondage, and I have sent before you Moses and Miriam (*Mariam*)” [[Mic 6:3–4](#)]. And in the fiftieth Psalm David says to God, “That you may be justified in your words and may conquer when you have been judged” [[Ps 51:4](#)].

*Tell, therefore, if you have anything to justify yourself.* And the sense is, I will not mention

<sup>553</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 25 (282, 1–).

the former things against you, lest you say that you have been oppressed by the multitude of words; but you, if you have anything just, speak it on your own behalf, that you may seem to be enduring the great things you suffer undeservedly. And that you may know that I show mercy to you not owing to your merit but for the sake of my clemency, I shall reiterate from your fathers and ancestors so that you may understand that you have been born from sinners. *Your first father sinned* in the wilderness. That is to say, the whole people of Israel, or the author of your race, Abraham, is convicted of having sinned, at that time when the Lord promised the promised land to his seed, and he answered, “How shall I know that I shall possess it?” [[Gen 15:8](#)]. *And your agents (interpretes)*, he says, *have transgressed against me*, Aaron and Moses at the water of contradiction [cf. [Num 20:13](#)], who spoke as mediators between me and you.

And that we may know that this explanation is not forced, it follows, *And I have profaned the holy princes*, of whom also in the Psalm it is sung, “Their judges have been swallowed up near the rock” [[Ps 141:7](#)]. He says that the reason he *profaned* them is because they did not enter the promised land. *And I have given Jacob to slaughter, and Israel to blasphemy*, so that of those who had come forth from Egypt, only two would enter into Judea [cf. [Num 14:30](#)], but their corpses lay in the wilderness [cf. [Num 14:33](#)].

According to the Septuagint, which added on its own, “Do first tell your iniquities, that you may be justified,” God is summoning them to repentance, that they may understand their sins and wicked deeds, and may attain pardon. For it is written in another passage, “The just man is his own accuser at the beginning of his speech” [[Prov 18:17](#)].<sup>554</sup> Their “princes” and “fathers” are said to have “defiled the sanctuaries” of the Lord, by failing to serve God’s law and by pursuing the traditions and commandments of men [cf. [Isa 29:13](#); [Mark 7:8](#)], because of which “Jacob” has perished and “Israel” has been given up to “reproach,” having been cast out of his own province and having become an exile and foreigner in the whole world.

17. ([44:1–5](#)) *And now hear, O Jacob, my servant, and Israel whom I have chosen. (2) Thus says the Lord who made and formed you, your helper from the womb. Fear not, O my servant Jacob, and you the most upright whom I have chosen. (3) For I will pour out waters upon the thirsty [ground], and streams upon the dry land. I will pour out my spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your stock. (4) And they shall spring up among the herbs, as willows beside the running waters. (5) One shall say, “I am the Lord’s,” and another shall call [himself] by the name of Jacob, and another shall write with his hand, “To the Lord,” and surname himself<sup>555</sup> by the name of Israel.* Septuagint: “But now hear, Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen. (2) I am the Lord God who made you and formed you from the womb. You shall yet be helped. Fear not, my servant Jacob; and beloved Israel, whom I have chosen. (3) I will still give water to the thirsty that walk in a dry land, I will put my Spirit upon your seed, and my blessings upon your children, (4) and they shall spring up as grass between brooks (*aquae*), and as a willow near running water. (5) One shall say: ‘I am God’s’; and another shall call [himself] by the name of Jacob; and another shall write with his hand, ‘I am God’s,’ and shall call [himself] by the name of Israel.”

When the Jewish people are accused of unbelief and blasphemy, they are addressed by the

<sup>554</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (282, 18–1).

<sup>555</sup> Lit., “e likened.”



bare terms without any dignities attached to the name.<sup>556</sup> “You have not called upon me, Jacob, neither have you labored about me, Israel” [[Isa 43:22](#)]; and again, “I have given Jacob to slaughter and Israel to blasphemy” [[Isa 43:28](#)]. But when he composes words addressed to the band of apostles, who stem from the Jews, he attaches the privileges associated with the names: *Hear, O Jacob, my servant, and Israel whom I have chosen*. Hence bondage comes first, election second.

*Thus says the Lord, your maker, the one who formed you, who is your helper from the womb*. Thus while you were still in the womb of your mother, you grabbed hold of the heel of your brother [cf. [Gen 25:25](#)]; or he who at the beginning of the church’s birth preserved you from the hands of persecutors. *Do not fear their cruelty, O my servant Jacob, and you the most upright one whom I have chosen*. He is calling Israel by another name. The other translators rendered the Hebrew word *isurun* [cf. [2 Sam 1:18](#)] as εὐθητάτων or εὐθη, that is, “most upright” and “upright.”<sup>557</sup> Only the Septuagint had “most beloved,” adding “Israel” on their own. For technically, according to the Hebrews and fidelity to their literature, “Israel” means “God’s upright one” (*rectus*); but “man who sees God” is [a meaning] not found in letters of the alphabet, but in the sound of the voice. This is why the Book of Genesis is called εὐθους [of the upright], that is, of the just men Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.

Therefore, *fear not, Jacob and Israel, for I will pour out waters upon the thirsty and dry land of which we have often spoken. I will pour out, or put my spirit upon your seed, and my blessing upon your stock*, which will be reborn in baptism by water and the Holy Spirit [cf. [John 3:5](#)].<sup>558</sup> Also, in the Gospel, the Savior promises this when he says, “He who thirsts, let him come to me and drink” [[John 7:37](#)], and it is immediately added, “Now he said this about the Holy Spirit, whom believers were to receive” [[John 7:37](#)].

He also compares those who are reborn in baptism with flourishing plants and with the *willow*, which rises up *near running water*. And contrary to the nature of things, the willow, which was previously barren, bears fruit; or whose seed causes barrenness when consumed as food. Indeed, this is also read in the first Psalm: “And he shall be as a tree planted by the brooks of waters, which shall yield its fruit in its season, and its leaf shall not fall off” [[Ps 1:3](#)]. Others understand the *willows* that are reborn *among the herbs* of the twofold calling, so that the people of the Gentiles are symbolized in the *herbs*, and in the *willow* are signified those who have believed from Israel.

And at the same time he is describing the variety of believers. *One shall say, “I am the Lord’s,”* who trusts that there are works of justice in himself [cf. [Luke 18:9](#)]; *another shall call, understand “sinners to repentance,” in the name of Jacob*, so that they supplant their vices and sins [cf. [Gen 27:36](#); [Jer 9:4](#)]. *Another shall write with his hand, “I am the Lord’s,”* or as the Septuagint translated, “He will write in his own hand: I am God’s,” so that in his new and raw military service, he will boast that he is Christ’s soldier, *and will surname himself by the name of Israel*. For not all are of Israel, but a great part are from the multitude of the Gentiles, which will

<sup>556</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 25 (282, 33–7).

<sup>557</sup> For a discussion of this passage, see Kamesar, [Jerome, Greek Scholarship and the Hebrew Bible](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 124–5.

<sup>558</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 25 (283, 6–0).



surname himself by the name of Israel, so that they receive the law and the prophets and all the graces of the Holy Spirit, which were promised to the people of Israel.

18. ([44:6–20](#)) *Thus says the Lord the king of Israel, and your redeemer the Lord of hosts. I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God. (7) Who is like to me? Let him call and declare and let him set before me the order, since I appointed the ancient people; and the things to come, and that shall be hereafter, let him announce it to them. (8) Fear not, neither be troubled; from that time I have made you hear, and have declared. You are my witnesses. Is there a God besides me, a maker, whom I have not made? (9) The makers of idols are all of them nothing, and their best beloved things shall not profit them. They are their witnesses, that they do not see, nor understand, so that they are ashamed. (10) Who has formed a god, and made a graven thing that is profitable for nothing? (11) Behold, all the partakers of it shall be confounded; for the craftsmen are from men, they shall all assemble together, they shall stand and fear, and shall be confounded together. (12) The craftsman in iron has wrought with his file, with coals, and with hammers he has formed it, and has wrought with the strength of his arm. He shall hunger and faint, he shall drink no water, and shall be weary. (13) The carpenter has stretched out his ruler, he has formed it with a plane, he has made it with corners, and has fashioned it round with the compass, and he has made the image of a man, as it were a beautiful man dwelling in a house. (14) He has cut down cedars, taken the holm, and the oak that stood among the trees of the forest. He has planted the pine tree, which the rain has nourished. (15) And it served men for fuel. He took some of it, and warmed himself, and he kindled it, and baked bread. But of the rest he worked into a god, and adored it, he made a graven thing, and bowed down before it. (16) Part of it he burnt with fire, and with part of it he dressed his meat; he boiled pottage, and was filled, and was warmed, and said, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire." (17) But the rest of it he made a god, and a graven thing for himself; he bows down before it, and adores it, and prays to it, saying, "Deliver me, for you are my God." (18) They have not known, nor understood; for their eyes are covered that they may not see, and that they may not understand with their heart. (19) They do not consider in their mind, nor know, nor have they thought to say, "I have burnt part of it in the fire, and I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have broiled flesh and have eaten, and of the rest of it shall I make an idol? Shall I fall down before the trunk of a tree?" (20) Part of it is ashes; his foolish heart has adored it, and it has not delivered his soul, nor will he say, "Perhaps there is a lie in my right hand."*

This is said after the preaching of the apostles, the calling of the Gentiles, the coming of the Savior and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, whom he promised to give to all believers. At that time, in view of the variety of merits, one will say, "I am the Lord's," another will call on the name of Jacob, another will write with his own hand that he is the Lord's [cf. [Isa 44:5](#)]. And when he has arisen among an unbelieving crowd of Gentiles, he will give a surname to himself, the name of Israel, so that having abandoned his idols he becomes a worshiper of the one God. Then a new section begins, which we have set forth in its entirety in order not to divide up the content from its unified meaning. And since the Septuagint does not differ from the Hebrew, except for one or two words, we are content with our version, which, when it has been understood, the other things will be known as well. Now these words are directed against the

idolaters of that time, when Isaiah the prophet was declaring to the people what was coming and he convicted those who show contempt for the religion of God Almighty and bow down to wooden images and worship the works of their own hands. Therefore let us run through the details.

*Thus says the Lord the king of Israel, he who will believe in me, and his redeemer, he who will receive the coming of my Son, the Lord of hosts and virtues and the omnipotent;*<sup>559</sup> for this is what *sabaoth* means in Hebrew. *I am the first and I am the last, I am the alpha and the omega* [cf. [Rev 1:8](#)], *and besides me there is no God*, for the “servant” (*puer*) whom I have chosen is God in me. I have spoken of him above: “Behold my servant, whom I have chosen, the chosen one, whom my soul has received; he will bring judgment to the Gentiles, and in his name the Gentiles will hope” [[Isa 42:1, 4](#)]. And he does not say that he is alone, but that besides his virtue and his wisdom [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)] there is no other God. Hence he is condemning images and the opinion that there are many gods.<sup>660</sup>

*Who is like me?* he says. Let him call the things that are not as if they are [cf. [Rom 4:17; 1 Cor 1:27–28](#)] and let him explain the progression of my creation, for what reason I will set all things free [cf. [Rom 8:21](#)], why I made man on the earth. And this is not all I want, but I also seek out knowledge of things to come. So you, *Israel*, whose *king and redeemer* I am, *do not fear* idols that on Mount Sinai you have learned to be nothing. Or is there perhaps another Creator of whom I am not aware? Or another world besides this one that shows the power of the unknown God? But not only shall the things that are made be esteemed as *nothing*, but also those who make them. And when the time of vengeance has come, the works of their hands were unable to deliver them, things that are blind and unfeeling and confound their own craftsmen.

For who could believe this, that God would be formed by an axe, a *file*, drill, and hammer? Or that images might even be cast onto *live coals*, or that they might suddenly rise up as gods by means of a *ruler*, a plane, angular instruments, and a pair of *compasses*? Especially since the worthlessness of the art is demonstrated by craftsman’s hunger and thirst? For a wooden statue is made, showing a human appearance; and the more beautiful it is, the more venerable is the god assumed to be. The very wood that grew for a long time in the forest and that, according to the variety of the trees there, was a *cedar* and *holm oak*, an *oak* and a *pine tree*, is placed in a temple and is shut up in an eternal prison. And in a wonderful manner pieces and shavings of it are cast into the fireplace to warm up the god’s craftsman and to cook various appetizers; but another part of it is formed into a god, so that its maker, when his work has been completed, may worship it and may pray for help from his own work. *He does not understand or consider in his mind*, or rather, he sees with the eyes of the flesh, not of the mind, that it cannot be a god when a *portion of it is burned up in a fire*, and that the divine majesty cannot be made by a human hand. The prophetic discourse is quite detailed in its mockery of idols. These things are easy to understand and do not require an intricate, or rather, superfluous explanation. Flaccus [Horace] writes about this as well in a satire, mocking the images of the Gentiles:

<sup>559</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 26 (284, 5–5).

<sup>660</sup> Jerome appears to be guarding against an Arian interpretation of the passage.

Once I was the trunk of a fig tree, a useless lump of wood.  
Then the carpenter, wondering whether to make a bench or a Priapus,  
preferred me to be a god. So a god I am, the terror of thieves and birds.<sup>661</sup>

Whatever is said about idols can also be applied to the leaders of heresies, who compose likenesses of their teachings and of their *lie* with a heart of a craftsman; and they worship those things that they know to be pretend. Moreover, they are not satisfied with this private error, unless they deceive all the simple by their form of worship. They think that piety is for financial gain [cf. [1 Tim 6:5](#)], and they devour the homes of widows [cf. [Matt 23:14](#)], and with dialectical skill they take advantage of untrained minds of the common people, just as with the axe and the bore, the file and the plane, as they form their gods. They *beat with a hammer* and embellish with the charm of their rhetoric. “Their god is their belly, and their glory is in their shame” [[Phil 3:19](#)].

19. ([44:21–23](#)) *Remember these things, O Jacob and Israel, for you are my servant. I have formed you, you are my servant, O Israel, do not forget me. (22) I have blotted out your iniquities as a cloud, and your sins as a mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you. (23) Give praise, O heavens, for the Lord has done it. Shout with joy, O ends of the earth, you mountains, resound with praise, O forest and every tree therein; for the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and Israel shall be glorified.* Septuagint: “Remember these things, O Jacob and Israel; for you are my servant; I have formed you to be my servant, and you, O Israel, do not forget me. (22) For behold, I have blotted out your iniquities as a cloud, and your sins as darkness. Return to me, I shall redeem you. (23) Rejoice, O heavens; for the Lord has had mercy upon Israel. Sound the trumpet, O foundations of the earth, you mountains, shout with joy, you hills, and all the trees that are on them, for God has redeemed Jacob, and Israel shall be famous.”

Since these things are so, and you know that idols are fabrications, *O Jacob and my servant Israel, do not forget your Creator* and do not injure yourself, so that you bow down to the work of your hands. For these things must be completely destroyed at the coming of my “servant,” whom I have chosen. On account of this, learn with all the eagerness of your mind, that just as *clouds*, “darkness” and *mist* are dissipated either by the heat of the sun, or are thinned out by the force of the wind, so I shall cause *your iniquities* to be dissolved and all your *sins* by which you had previously offended me. Just return to me and repent, because you must be redeemed by precious blood [cf. [1 Pet 1:18–19](#)].

But if you do this, be aware that the heavens and earth will rejoice in your salvation and all the elements will sing together.<sup>662</sup> This refers either to the angels who live in heaven, and the other powers upon which the foundations of the earth are supported, or certainly to the apostles and prophets of whom the Apostle spoke: “Having been built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets” [[Eph 2:20](#)]. The *mountains*, and forests too, or *hills*, which in view of the variety of their virtues have occupied the first, middle, and last places, raise a shout of joy and sound a trumpet. They know that the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and they rejoice in the

<sup>661</sup> Translation adapted from [Horace, Satires 1.8.1–](#); trans. Niall Rudd, [Horace: Satires and Epistles, Persius: Satires](#), 2nd edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), 73.

<sup>662</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 26 (286, 18–8).

conversion of Israel, or Israel himself becomes *famous* having converted from his error.

20. [\(44:24–28\)](#) *Thus says the Lord your redeemer and your maker from the womb: I am the Lord, who makes all things, who alone stretches out the heavens, who establishes the earth, and there is none with me, (25) who makes void the signs of diviners, and turns the soothsayers to madness, who turns the wise backward and makes their knowledge foolish, (26) who raises up the word of his servant and performs the counsel of his messengers. It is I who say to Jerusalem, “You shall be inhabited,” and to the cities of Judah, “You shall be built, and I will raise up its desert places.” (27) I who say to the deep (profundo), “Be desolate, and I will dry up your rivers.” (28) I who say to Cyrus, “You are my shepherd, and you shall perform all my will.” I who say to Jerusalem, “You shall be built”; and to the temple, “Your foundations shall be laid.”* Septuagint: “Thus says the Lord who redeemed you and forms you from the womb. I am the Lord who performs all things. I stretched out the heaven alone, and established the earth. (25) Who else has dissolved the signs of those that have divining spirits, and divinations from the heart? Turning the powerful backward, and making their counsel foolishness; (26) and confirming the word of my servant, and verifying the counsel of his angels, who says to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be built’; and to the cities of Judah, ‘You shall be built, and her desert places shall spring forth.’ (27) Who says to the deep (*abyss*), ‘You shall be desolate, and I will dry up your rivers.’ (28) Who tells Cyrus to be wise, and he shall perform all my will, who says to Jerusalem, ‘You shall be built, and I will lay the foundation of my holy house.’ ”

After the idols have been destroyed and the iniquities and sins of Israel have been blotted out [cf. [Isa 44:22](#)], when all creation shall rejoice together [cf. [Isa 44:23](#)], and according to the faith of the gospel the angels in heaven shall rejoice over the repentance of sins [cf. [Luke 15:10](#)], the Lord’s power is described. It is no grand thing for him to redeem Jacob and Israel, and to restore to straightness the one whom he *formed from the womb*; and if this should seem too small to anyone, it would not be difficult to him *who stretched forth the heavens alone*, according to what is read elsewhere, “He who stretches forth the heaven as a tent” [[Ps 104:2](#)]. *Alone* does not mean that the Son is excluded from the *stretching forth of the heavens*—for “all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that has been made” [[John 1:3](#)]<sup>663</sup>—but that, as we have said repeatedly, the idols are being excluded by this statement. For also in the Proverbs of Solomon it is said under the persona of Christ, who is the power of God and the wisdom of God [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)], “When he prepared the heaven, I was with him” [[Prov 8:27](#)]. For “he himself spoke, and they were made, he commanded, and they were created” [cf. [Ps 148:5](#)]; and “by the word of the Lord were the heavens established, and by the breath of his mouth all their power” [[Ps 33:6](#)].<sup>664</sup> We are saying this repeatedly so that no occasion of blaspheming Christ is left to the heretics.<sup>664</sup> In the establishing of the earth as well, when he made firm its foundations, *there was none with God*, except him who was in him.

Therefore, he who is so great like this, when the time of the predetermined mystery has come to destroy all the idols, and when the knowledge of God alone will be preached in the world, will destroy and overthrow all the predictions of the *diviners* and *soothsayers*, as well as

<sup>663</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 27 (287, 28–88, 2).

<sup>664</sup> He again means the Arians.

the signs and portents of the fortune tellers, by which they deceived the human race.<sup>665</sup> Moreover, he will show to be folly the wisdom of the philosophers, which is itself the greatest part of their error, so long as they are proven not to have grasped the wisdom of God by their human reflections. He who will likewise *perform* in reality the *word* of his “servant,” or *slave*, of whom we have spoken above, and the *counsel of his messengers*, namely of the apostles and all the teachers, who will declare the *will* of their master to the nations.

Therefore, the one who will do such great things, whose power I have described in a brief speech, now says likewise *to Jerusalem*, which will have to be demolished by the Babylonians, before it is destroyed, that it is again *inhabited* by people; and *to the cities of Judea* that they will be restored. And he *will raise up its* solitudes so that everything would be filled with worshipers. Therefore, he who *says to Jerusalem and Judea* and to its deserted places that it will be *inhabited* and *built* and *raised up*, here says to the *deep* and to the “abyss,” that is, to Babylon, *Be desolate and I will dry up your rivers*, that is, all the power of your kings. Or, since he had said *deep* and “abyss,” he has correctly recorded also *rivers* as a metaphor, of which the Psalmist also sings, “Upon the rivers of Babylon we sat there and wept” [[Ps 137:1](#)].

And he who restores *Jerusalem* and destroys Babylon also tells *Cyrus* the king of the Persians, who first destroyed Babylon and the Chaldeans, *You are my shepherd*, or, as the Septuagint has translated, “that you may be wise.” The reason for this difference is clear. For if we read the Hebrew word *roi* with a *res*, it means *my shepherd*; if we read it with a *daleth*, it means “knowing” or “understanding.” These letters are similar and are distinguished by a tiny stroke, and this is why they are often confused. At the beginning of *Ezra* it is written that the captivity of the people of Israel was released by the edict of *Cyrus*, king of the Persians and Medes. Those who wanted to return were sent back to *Jerusalem* under *Zerubbabel* son of *Shealtiel* and *Joshua (Hiesu)* the son of *Jehozadak* the high priest [cf. [Hag 1:1](#); [Ezra 1:1–11](#)]. For the Lord inspired this man to do his *will* and carry out his orders. And he has meaningfully added, *I who say to Jerusalem, “You shall be built”; and to the temple, “Your foundations shall be laid.”* For under *Cyrus* the command was given to build *Jerusalem* and the temple. Only the foundations were laid while he was alive. But under *Darius*, in his second year, while *Haggai* and *Zechariah* were prophesying, the temple began to be built [cf. [Hag 2:1–9](#)].

21. ([45:1–7](#)) *Thus says the Lord to my Christ, Cyrus, whose right hand I have taken hold of, that I may subdue nations before his face, and turn the backs of kings, and open the doors before him, and the gates shall not be shut. (2) I will go before you, and will humble the glorious ones of the earth; I will break in pieces the gates of bronze, and will burst the bars of iron. (3) And I will give you hidden treasures, and the concealed riches of secret places, that you may know that I am the Lord who calls you by your name, the God of Israel. (4) For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my elect, and I have even called you by your name, I have made a likeness of you, and you have not known me. (5) I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God, besides me. I girded you, and you have not known me, (6) that they may know, who are from the rising of the sun, and they who are from the west, that there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. (7) I form the light, and create darkness, I make peace, and create evil. I am the Lord who does all these things.*

<sup>665</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 27 (288, 5–3).

I am aware that in this chapter a very great number of interpreters are in serious error, not only of the Latins, but also of the Greeks. They think that it is written, "Thus says the Lord to Christ my Lord," so that it is understood in accordance with what we read elsewhere, "The Lord rained from the Lord" [[Gen 19:24](#)]; and, "The Lord said to my Lord" [[Ps 110:1](#)]. For he does not say, "to the κυριω," which means "to the Lord," but "to Κυρω," which is expressed in Hebrew as *chores*. It refers to the king of the Persians, who defeated Babylon and the Chaldeans. Moreover, we read above that when he was allied with the Medes, he was the driver of a two-horse team, namely of the camel and the ass [cf. [Isa 21:7, 9](#)]. He is called a Christ, that is, "the Lord's anointed," because to the Hebrews he was a symbol of royal authority, so that just as among us a diadem and purple are given to emperors alone, so among the Hebrews those who are going to reign were anointed with ointment. This is why Saul is called the Lord's Christ [cf. [1 Sam 24:7](#)], and why in the Psalms, we read, "Do not touch my christs and do not malign my prophets" [[Ps 105:15](#)].

He *took hold of his right hand* and held it, so that no one would be able to resist his strength. Let us read the history of Cyrus the elder in the eight books of Xenophon, and we see the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled.<sup>666</sup> For what city did not stand open to him? What king failed to subject his *back* to him? What walls, formerly impregnable, were not demolished by his siege? And this is why God makes an apostrophe<sup>667</sup> to Cyrus himself: I have given to you the treasures and the hidden wealth of all the cities, so that you who were previously worshiping idols would perceive the one God by his benefits, especially since you know that your name was predicted a long time before you were born. Josephus also refers to this in the eleventh book of the *Antiquities of the Jews*, that Cyrus had read Isaiah's prediction about himself, with the definitive mention of his name; and on that account he very much esteemed the Jews as God's close friends, as it were.<sup>668</sup>

But I have granted these things to you, he says, *for the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my elect, I have called you by your name*, just as I called Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and well beforehand I have made predictions, as for example in the case of Isaac [cf. [Gen 27:29](#)] and Josiah [cf. [1 Kgs 13:2](#)], lest you should be thought to be that Christ of whom you have been *made a likeness*, and in whose type and image you have come by way of anticipation. But *you*

<sup>666</sup> Cf. Xenophon, [Cyropaedia, or The Education of Cyrus. According to P. Courcelle, Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources](#) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 81, Jerome knew intimately this work of Xenophon. Cf. *In Daniele* 5.1; *In Ezechielem* 8.27.10.

<sup>667</sup> Cf. n. at [1.50](#).

<sup>668</sup> Cf. [Josephus, Ant 11.1.2, 5-](#); *Eus Is* 2, 27 (290, 24-1). E. J. Young, [The Book of Isaiah](#), 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965-2), [3:198](#), writes of Josephus' report, "hat such was the case is not as impossible as some would have us believe. Cyrus was a man interested in various religions, and in his proclamation of emancipation for the Jews he does attribute the deliverance to Yahweh, the God of Israel. Inasmuch as he was interested in the different religions, he may very well have wished to see the sacred writings of the Hebrews, and were that the case, would have read this present prophecy. When one strips away all the presuppositions that must accompany the position that there was a 'second Isaiah' it is quite probable that Josephus' report is correct."



*have not known me*, that is, you have worshiped images, not *God*. *I girded you* with strength, I caused you to be victor over many nations, *and you have not known* your own helper. In this passage I am unable to express my astonishment sufficiently at the folly of readers who relate these things to Christ, through whom the world was reconciled to God [cf. [2 Cor 5:19](#)].

*I am the Lord*, he says, *and there is none else beside me*. For apart from my word (*sermonem*) [cf. [John 1:1](#)], reason, virtue and wisdom [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)], which is in me, there is no other God. And I have done these things, so that from the east and west the whole world may know that there is no other apart from me, God. *I am the Lord, and there is no other*. For the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father [cf. [John 14:10](#)], who says in the Gospel, “I and the Father, we are one” [[John 10:30](#)]. In the Book of Ezra it is recorded that Cyrus wrote to all the nations that there is no God but the God of Israel alone [cf. [Ezra 1:1–2](#)]. Or, it must be understood thus, that the release of the captives and the clemency of God toward his people will make God better known to all the nations.

I, therefore, who have given you strength and who alone am God himself, I make things that are opposite to each other, *light and darkness*, that is, day and night, *peace and evil*, that is peacetime and war, by which things he is indicating that he was angry with his people, when they endured the darkness of captivity and the evils of slavery; and he was again disposed to mercy, when they were sent back to their homeland and received peace and joy. For just as darkness is the opposite of light, so war is the opposite of peace. Hence the heresy that supposes that God is the creator of evils is refuted, since here evil is recorded not as the opposite of good but as affliction and war. This accords with what is written in the Gospel: “The day’s own evil is sufficient” [[Matt 6:34](#)].

We can say this tropologically about the man of the church to whom God has given speech and wisdom [cf. [Luke 21:15](#)], that by his arguments he *overthrows* all who have followed things that are contrary to the truth. This is just what Holy Scripture records concerning Stephen, that no one was able to oppose his wisdom [cf. [Acts 6:10](#)]. Consequently the man of the church *subdues* to his authority *kings*, that is the patriarchs of each of the heresies, and he *opens* and *breaks in pieces* what previously seemed closed by means of dialectical skill; and he brings forth into public the *secret things* of the heretics, overcoming them and refuting them; or, he recognizes the secrets of Christ, “in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” [[Col 2:3](#)]. God *calls* a man of this sort *by his own name*, because he is a defender of his “servant Jacob” and of his “chosen one Israel.” He upholds this man and makes him like his word (*sermoni*), who ought to be on guard lest he should think that what he speaks is his own. Rather, he should refer everything to the glory of the One who gives. Otherwise, he himself may deserve to hear, *I have girded you, and you have not known me*. For when the man of the church has been outfitted with the arms of the apostle [cf. [Eph 6:13](#)], and has taught everyone that there is no other God but one, who is the God of Jacob and Israel, Marcion will be confounded, who conceives of two gods, one good and the other just; one the creator of invisible things, the other of visible things. Of these two the first one makes light, the second darkness, the former peace, the latter evil; although one and the same God created both in view of the diversity of merits.

## [THE THIRTEENTH BOOK]

1. Many misfortunes beset sailors. If too strong a wind starts blowing, they fear the coming of a storm. If too light a breeze ruffles the surface of the sleeping giant, they are terrified of being ambushed by pirates.<sup>11</sup> And so it happens that souls entrusted to the fragile ship either fear danger or experience it, either option being worse than the other: either perpetually to fear death, or actually to experience what you fear. I see this happening to me as I sail out into the open sea of Isaiah; for while the sails are spread on a course that has no obstructions, and the keel is plowing through the level plains of the sea, gliding along by the carefree hands of the sailors, suddenly the storm of an illness arises with such great masses of water and with such a resounding clash of waves colliding into themselves, that my friends have panicked and their hearts have become terrified, so that they have been compelled to say, “Master, save us, we are perishing” [[Matt 8:25](#)]. For this reason, Eustochium, you who in the entire world are a unique model of nobility and virginity, “let not the pupil of your eye be silent” [[Lam 2:18](#)]. Cry out in your heart, “Abba, Father” [[Rom 8:15](#)], and say with the Psalmist, “Rise up, O Lord, why do you sleep?” [[Ps 44:23](#)], so that I may complete the work on Isaiah that has been imposed on me, while you pray and Christ shows his mercy. Indeed, the thirteenth book is now being hammered into shape of a commentary that has not yet reached the finish line. And in the meantime, while the merciful and compassionate Lord [cf. [Ps 86:5](#)], who is patient and full of pity, is restoring my former health, I have dictated this brief preface with hastily composed words. Thus let the things that are contained in it be written down on sheets of paper, and let a full correction be reserved to the judgment of the reader.

2. ([45:8](#)) *Drop down dew, you heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened, and bud forth a savior, and let justice spring up together; I the Lord have created him.* Septuagint: “Let the heaven rejoice from above, and let the clouds sprinkle justice, let the earth bud forth, and let mercy spring up, and let it bud forth justice together; I am the Lord who created you.”

The interpretation of this passage is twofold. For some think that it is rooted in what is said above, and that *heaven* and *earth* “rejoice” when Cyrus lets the captives go, the terms being used metonymically for those things that live in heaven and on earth. Others separate this verse from what comes above it and want it to be the proper beginning of this section. Moreover, they say that it is a prophecy about the Lord’s coming, that it is commanded to the *clouds*, of which it was written above, “I shall command the clouds not to rain a shower of rain upon it” [[Isa 5:6](#)],<sup>22</sup> that is, upon the vineyard of Israel; and to those to whom the truth of God has reached [cf. [Ps 36:5](#)], that they should *rain the just*, or “justice” in the world; and let the *earth* be *opened and bud forth a savior*, [the earth] of which it is also sung in the Psalms, “Truth has sprung out of the earth, and justice has looked down from heaven” [[Ps 85:11](#)]. Or, according to the Septuagint, the “earth shall bud forth mercy and justice together,” so that both sinners attain mercy and the just attain their rewards. And as for what follows, *I the Lord have created*

1 Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 14.6](#).

2 Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 27 (290, 7–).

him, or “I am the Lord who created you,” the use of the language of creating will not be a source of scandal to one who reads that he is a worm [cf. [Ps 22:6](#)] and a slave [cf. [Isa 42:1](#)] and a thing that has *budded forth from the earth*.<sup>33</sup>

3. ([45:9–13](#)) *Woe to him who speaks against his maker, a shard of the earthen pots. Does the clay say to him that fashions it, “What are you making, and your work is without hands?”* (10) *Woe to him who says to his father, “Why do you beget?”* And to the woman, “Why do you bring forth?” (11) *Thus says the Lord the Holy One of Israel, his maker. Ask me of things to come, concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, you have commanded me.* (12) *I made the earth, and I created man upon it; my hands stretched forth the heavens, and I have commanded all their host.* (13) *I have raised him up to justice, and I will direct all his ways. He shall build my city, and let go my captivity, not for a price, nor for presents, says the Lord the God of hosts.* Septuagint: “What better thing have I made as clay of the potter? Will the ploughman plough the earth? Shall the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you doing, since you do not work, and do not have hands?’ (10) Woe to the one who says to his father, ‘Why do you beget?’ And to his mother, ‘Why do you bring forth?’ (11) For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, who has made the things that are to come: Ask me concerning my sons, and concerning the works of my hands command me. (12) I have made the earth and man upon it, I with my hand have established the heaven; I have commanded all the stars. (13) I have raised him up to be a king with justice, and all his ways are right. He shall build my city, and shall convert the captivity of my people, not with a price, nor with presents, said the Lord Sabaoth.”

Those who want what has been said to be applied to Cyrus’s per son interpret this passage as follows:<sup>44</sup> Since I am promising enormous things, that on account of the return of my people into Judea I will overthrow all kingdoms for Cyrus, woe to him who is incredulous and does not think that what I say will come to pass, as if *clay* and a broken-off *shard* would find fault with their own *potter*, by asking why they were made, or why they were made that way; and as if a *work* should speak against the *hands* of the craftsman, and a son should find fault with his father and mother, asking why he has been brought forth on earth by the law of nature. Since therefore *I the Lord, the Holy One of Israel* have formed Cyrus, and he was begotten by my command, you are doing what is superfluous by wavering about the future; but you ought to know this instead, that I govern my sons, the people of Israel, and the work of my hands, not by your choice, but by my will. Hence I who have first created darkness and evil now bestow light and peace [cf. [Isa 45:7](#)]. For I am God, who did not create the earth for emptiness, that it would be deserted and barren, but that human beings might dwell in it [cf. [Isa 45:18](#)]. I have *stretched forth* or “established” *the heavens*, that they might be the habitation of angels, and I have distinguished them by the variety of the stars, and I have *commanded* each of them that they should run their course in progression, and complete the various intervals of the days, months, and years. What great thing is it, therefore, for me who has made heaven and earth to *create* one king who keeps my commands, and to *direct* all his ways? For he will give the command for my city Jerusalem to be built and for the captives to return to Judea, not because of a *price* or *presents*, but because of my will, *says the Lord God of hosts*.

3 This is directed against the Arians.

4 Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 28 (292, 34–93, 6).

But the one who relates the interpretation that was begun to Christ qualifies the words of his explanation in the following way.<sup>55</sup> *Woe to those who speak against God and do not think that Christ will come, as if clay and a shard of the potsherds should speak against him that fashioned it. Woe to him who says to the almighty Father, Why do you beget the Son? And to the woman, holy Mary, Why do you bring forth?* The Apostle also writes of her that that Christ was born of a *woman*, and was born under the law [cf. [Gal 4:4](#)]. Therefore, *the Lord, the Holy One of Israel says these things*, who formed the Savior in the virgin's womb, saying through Gabriel, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you; but that which shall be born in you will be called holy, the Son of God" [[Luke 1:35](#)]. Let the *shard ask me* and inquire about the secrets of the future, and let it instruct me how I ought to rule my adoptive *sons*, who will believe in my Son. Moreover, John the Evangelist says, "As many as received him, he gave them the power to become sons of God" [[John 1:12](#)]. But if *I have made the earth*, that it be inhabited by men [cf. [Isa 45:18](#)], and *I have stretched forth the heavens* from above, and I have adorned them with the variety of the stars, that worshipers of God might dwell on earth, what wonder is it if I shall send my Son, a just "king," to the world? Or *raise* him from the lower world, since all his "ways are right"? For "he committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth" [[1 Pet 2:22](#)]. It is he who *builds my city* upon the rock, against which the gates of the netherworld do not prevail [cf. [Matt 16:18](#); [7:24](#)], and that is set on a mountain and cannot be hidden [cf. [Matt 5:14](#)]. Moreover, he first *lets go* all his children who have been bound with demonic chains, *not for a price or for gifts*; for we have been saved freely [cf. [Eph 2:8](#)], since the apostles both hear and practice the words, "Freely you have received, freely give" [[Matt 10:8](#)].

Some relate these things to Zerubbabel,<sup>66</sup> who led the captives forth from Babylon and built the city and constructed the temple, since Haggai and Zechariah prophesy and say, "The hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it" [[Zech 4:9](#)]. But we say more correctly and truly that Cyrus did not *build the city*, which was constructed later under Nehemiah; and that not "all of his ways" were "straight," to whom it was said above, "I have adopted and girded you, and you have not known me" [[Isa 45:5](#)]; and that the conditions of Zerubbabel, who was under the command and authority of the Medes and Persians, go beyond everything that is said. For Zerubbabel did not build the city, he did not let the captivity go, and he was not able to be called "king," who lacked this title since he lived under other kings.

However, I am unable to understand the meaning of the Septuagint, which translated the beginning of this section as, "What better thing have I made as clay of the potter? Will the ploughman plough the earth?" unless perhaps I follow the version of Theodotion, who recorded this as, "Woe to him who contends against his own maker, plowing those who plow the earth," that is to say, that he wounds the hearts of mortals unto repentance, and he digs up and turns over these things like furrows. But even this is a frivolous interpretation. On the other hand, that God is called a "potter," that is our creator and maker, even the Apostle Paul says in the Epistle to the Romans: "Does the thing fashioned say to the one who fashioned it, 'Why did

5 Cf. *ibid.* (293, 12–5).

6 Cf. *ibid.* (293, 6–2).

you make me this way?’ Or does the potter have no authority over the clay to make from the same lump one vessel for honor, but another for dishonor?” [[Rom 9:20–21](#)]. Moreover, it is written in greater detail in Jeremiah, who says after other things,

I went down to the potter’s house, and behold, he was making a work on the wheel, and the vessel that he was making with his hands was broken. So he again made another vessel from the same clay, as it seemed good in his sight. And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Shall I not be able, O house of Israel, to do to you as this potter? says the Lord. Behold, as the clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hands, O house of Israel. [[Jer 18:3–6](#)]<sup>77</sup>

And that which is written, “I have instructed all the stars,” gives a pretext to some to say that the stars are rational and have a soul and thought. For he would not instruct them, they say, unless they were intelligent. They fail to remember that it is also written to Jonah, “The Lord commanded a burning wind” [[Jonah 4:8](#)], and again, “He commanded a worm in the morning” [[Jonah 4:7](#)]. Moreover, in the Gospel the Savior rebuked the winds and the sea, [cf. [Matt 8:26](#)] in which obviously thought and reason do not exist.

4. ([45:14–17](#)) *Thus says the Lord: The labor of Egypt, and the merchandise of Ethiopia, and the Sabeans (Sabaim), men of stature (sublimes) shall pass over to you, and shall be yours; they shall walk after you, they shall go bound in fetters and they shall worship you, and shall make supplication to you: only in you is God, and there is no God besides you. (15) Truly you are a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Savior. (16) They are all confounded and ashamed; the forgers of errors have gone away together into confusion. (17) Israel is saved in the Lord with an eternal salvation; you shall not be confounded, and you shall not be ashamed unto the age of the age. Septuagint: “Thus says the Lord Sabaoth, Egypt has labored, and the merchandise of the Ethiopians and the Sabeans, men of stature (exce/si), shall pass over to you, and they shall be your servants, and they shall follow after you bound in fetters, and they shall pass over to you, and shall worship you, and shall pray to you, because God is in you; and there is no God beside you. (15) For you are God, yet we knew it not, the God of Israel, the Savior. (16) Let all his adversaries be confounded and ashamed, and let them walk in confusion. You islands, be renewed to me, (17) Israel is saved by the Lord with an eternal salvation; they shall not be confounded nor ashamed for evermore.”*

In this passage, too, those who follow history say that Egypt, the Ethiopians, and the Sabeans nation, which is beyond Ethiopia, served Cyrus and were the last nations to have been subjected to him. And moreover, these nations understood from his remarkable victory that *God was in him*, and that *there was no other God besides him* who was dwelling in him. But how they can link what follows to the person of Cyrus, I do not understand: *Truly you are a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Savior*; unless perchance they make use of the version of Theodotion, who translated this, “The strong one is in you, and there is no other God besides him; therefore you are the strong hidden God of Israel, the Savior.” Whichever way they turn, they will not be able to escape the snares of truth. For grant that God is in Cyrus, and that there is no other God but him who is in Cyrus. How will it be fitting to say to the person of Cyrus, *Truly you are a hidden*

7 Cf. *ibid.* (291, 18–3).

*God, the God of Israel, the Savior?* Therefore the God in whom *God is*, is more correctly and truly understood of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is called a *hidden God* because of the mystery of the body he assumed, and *the God of Israel, the Savior*, which is the translation of *Jesus*; for according to the angel Gabriel he will save his people [cf. [Matt 1:21](#)].

*They are all confounded and ashamed together*, namely, the scribes and Pharisees, and *the forgers of error have gone away into confusion* who have spread falsehood throughout the entire world. Hence they said that the apostles removed him by theft [cf. [Matt 28:13](#)]. But *Israel*, who is *saved in God with an eternal salvation*, means the chorus of the apostles and those who believed through the apostles. This is why it is said to them, *You shall not be confounded or ashamed*, not merely in the present *age* but in the future as well. No one doubts that Egypt, the Ethiopians, and the Sabeans have served him, *lofty men* “of stature,” since he sees that the world has been subjected to him, and perceives that from the naming of a few nations, which dwell at the extreme edges of the earth, all the poles of the heavens and all the shores of the earth will believe in him. This is why *the labor of Egypt* is beautifully expressed, as it were, to those who are laboring to cease in the error of idolatry.<sup>88</sup> For no nation was as devoted to idolatry as Egypt, and so revered countless omens. We read about this higher up: “Behold the Lord will ascend on a light cloud, and he will enter Egypt and Egypt’s images will be moved from his face, and the heart of Egypt will melt in his midst” [[Isa 19:1](#)]. On the other hand, what was added in the Septuagint, “You islands, be renewed to me,” we can explain as follows. Let us say that the churches gathered from the Gentiles are “renewed” in Christ, and they are called “islands,” because they endure the fury and storms of persecutors, and having their foundations on rock, they are not shaken by the calamity of storms [cf. [Matt 7:24](#)].<sup>99</sup>

By a foolish claim, the Hebrews endeavor to maintain that the words down to that passage where it is read, *Only in you is God, and there is no God besides you*, are spoken either to Jerusalem or to Cyrus. But all of the sudden what follows becomes an apostrophe<sup>110</sup> to the almighty God: *Truly you are a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Savior*. Yet it is clear even to fools that the words have a single context; a meaning that is linked together by the very progression and reasoning of the narrative cannot be divided.

5. ([45:18–24\[25\]](#))<sup>111</sup> *For thus says the Lord who creates the heavens, God himself who forms the earth, and makes it, the very maker of it; he did not create it in vain, he formed it to be inhabited. I am the Lord, and there is no other. (19) I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth. I have not said to the seed of Jacob, “Seek me in vain.” I am the Lord who speaks justice, who declares right things. (20) Assemble yourselves, and come, and draw near together, you who are saved of the Gentiles; they have no knowledge who lift up the sign (signum)<sup>112</sup> of their graven work, and pray to a god that cannot save. (21) Announce, and come, and consult together; who has caused this to be heard from the beginning, and from that time have I foretold this? Have not I the Lord, and there is no God else besides me? A just and saving God,*

8 Cf. *ibid.* (294, 6–0).

9 Cf. *ibid.* (295, 8–).

<sup>110</sup> Cf. n. at [1.50](#).

<sup>111</sup> The critical text heads this lemma as [45:18](#) and proceeds to v. [25](#), omitting reference to v. [25](#).

<sup>112</sup> A textual variant reads *lignum* (wood).



*there is none besides me. (22) Be converted to me, and you shall be saved, all you ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is no other. (23) I have sworn by myself, the word of justice shall go out of my mouth, and shall not return: (24) For every knee shall be bowed to me, and every tongue shall swear. (25) Therefore shall he say in the Lord, "They are my justices and empire; they shall come to him, and all that resist him shall be confounded."* (26)<sup>113</sup> *In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and praised. Septuagint: "Thus says the Lord who made the heaven, this God who showed the earth, and made it; he separated it, he made it not in vain, but formed it to be inhabited. I am the Lord, and there is none beside. (19) I have not spoken in secret, nor in a dark place of the earth. I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek vanity.' I am the Lord who speaks justice, I declare truth. (20) Assemble yourselves and come together, you who are saved of the Gentiles; those who carry the wood of their graven image had no knowledge, they pray to gods that do not save. (21) If they declare, let them draw near, that they may know together, who has caused these things to be heard from the beginning, then was it declared to you. Am I not the Lord God, and there is not another beside me? A just one who saves, there is none but me. (22) Be converted to me, and you shall be saved from the ends of the earth. I am God, and there is no other. (23) By myself I swear, justice shall surely proceed out of my mouth; my words shall not be turned aside; for to me every knee shall bend, and every tongue shall swear and confess by God, (24) saying, 'Justice and glory shall come to him, and all who separate themselves from the Lord shall be confounded.' (25) They shall be justified and in God shall all the seed of the sons of Israel be glorified."*

When Egypt, Ethiopia, and the men of stature of Sabaim have been called [cf. [Isa 45:14](#)], by which things the salvation of all foreign nations is being shown and the conversion of the entire world to God, God reveals his own *justice*, that he is Lord not only of the Jews but also of the Gentiles [cf. [Rom 3:29](#)]. For the very maker of heaven and earth is the God of all equally; and he created the earth for no other reason but that it be a habitation for human beings, who would worship and understand their own Creator and despise all idols. For even on Mount Sinai from its lofty peak, he said to the people who heard these things, "You shall not have other gods beside me, and you shall not make to yourself an idol" [[Exod 20:3–4](#)]. But it would be preferable for us to believe this statement from the preaching of the gospel; for Moses *spoke* only to one people in the *secret* solitude, but the sound of the apostles has gone forth into the whole world, and their words have reached to the ends of the earth [cf. [Rom 10:18](#); [Ps 19:4](#)].<sup>114</sup>

He says, *I have not said to the seed of Jacob, "Seek me in vain."* For I promised the kingdom of heaven to them, and at first I said to them, "I have come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel" [[Matt 15:24](#)]. And therefore I have spoken *justice* and have declared *right things*, or "truth," in order that they would forsake the images and ceremonies of the law and follow the truth of the gospel. But because they refused to believe and judged themselves unworthy of salvation [cf. [Acts 13:46](#)], for this reason I say to the Gentiles, *Assemble yourselves* from the whole world, *and come and draw near* to me *together, you who are saved of the nations*. By this he shows that not all nations immediately will believe, but gradually and in stages.

After all, he chastises those who continued in their former error, and says, *They had no*

<sup>113</sup> The critical text omits "6."

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 29 (296, 8–6).

*knowledge who lift up the sign (signum)<sup>115</sup> of their graven work, and pray to a god that cannot save.* And the meaning is, They did not understand my words, they were weighted down with the burden of their own images, setting their hope in those things in which there is no salvation. This is why the apostles are commanded to “declare the truth” “in season and out of season” [[2 Tim 4:2](#)], and consult over the salvation of the Gentiles. But he spoke this *from the beginning*, that is, that the very great number *who were saved* were to *assemble themselves* and come *from the Gentiles*; and the mouths of all the prophets sang it, who spoke by the word of the Lord, besides whom *there is no one else*; for the Son is not apart from him, but is “God in him” [cf. [Isa 45:14](#)]. And he nicely adds, *A just God*, not of a single nation but of the whole world, to which he says, *Be converted to me, and you shall be saved, all you ends of the earth*, when that is fulfilled which the Father promised the Son: “Ask of me, and I shall give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession” [[Ps 2:8](#)].

And he *swears by himself*, that the pronouncement of his own *mouth* and the *word* that he has once brought forth concerning the salvation of the Gentiles would never be nullified, but the promise of him who says above, *Be converted to me, and you shall be saved, all you ends of the earth*, would be fulfilled in deeds. Now according to the Apostle, he *swears* “so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong comfort” [[Heb 6:18](#)].<sup>116</sup> Moreover, he swears that the idols be forsaken and that *every knee shall be bowed to him*, “of things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth” [cf. [Phil 2:10](#)], and the *tongue* of all mortals *shall swear* by him. Clearly the Christian people are being signified here.<sup>117</sup> For it is a church custom to genuflect before Christ, which the Jews do not do at all, showing the pride of their minds. Moreover, *every tongue* of all the foreign nations confesses God, not in the synagogues but in the churches of Christ.

But *every tongue* that confesses Christ will speak *in the Lord* and say, *They are my justices* and it is my *empire*, not that of the Jewish people. All nations *shall come to him*, and those who were previously *resisting* his gospel *shall be confounded*, and *all the seed of Israel shall be justified and praised*, whose preaching and very fertile sowing has borne an extremely abundant harvest in the whole world. Or, according to the Septuagint, “every tongue” that “swears and confesses” God, will say that the “justice and glory” of the whole world “comes to him,” and the Jews, “who separate themselves from” him “are confounded,” but those who have arisen from the stock “of the sons of Israel” and who have sprouted “from the seed” of the apostles, and who have believed in Christ, have justice and everlasting glory.

6. ([46:1–2](#)) *Bel has been melted down, Nebo (Nabo) has been broken to pieces, their idols have been made for the beasts and cattle, your burdens of heavy weight even unto weariness. (2) They were consumed, and broken together; they could not save him that carried them, and their soul shall go into captivity.* Septuagint: “Bel has fallen, Dagon has been broken to pieces, their graven images have been made for the beasts and the cattle, you carry them packed up as a burden to one who is weary, exhausted, hungry, and at the same time helpless; (2) those who were not able to save from war; but they themselves were led away captive.”

<sup>115</sup> A textual variant reads *lignum* (wood).

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 29 (297, 19–2).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (297, 30–3).

He testifies coherently that the idols have fallen, after the calling of the Gentiles and the election of believers from Israel. “It has fallen, fallen” [cf. [Rev 18:2](#)], or *Bel has been melted down*. This is the one whom the Greek call Belus, that is, Saturn.<sup>118</sup> Among the ancients the worship of him was so great that they sacrificed to him not merely the human victims of captives and of lowborn mortals, but even their own children. Now Nebo (*Nabo*) is the idol itself, which means “prophecy” and “divination.” He means that this was utterly silenced throughout the whole world after the truth of the gospel. Or, according to the Septuagint, “Dagon,” which, however, is not found in the Hebrew and is an idol of Ashkelon, Gaza, and the rest of the cities of the Philistines [cf. [Judg 16:23](#): [1 Sam 5:2–7](#)].

Then he transitions from specific to general: *Their idols have been made for the beasts and cattle*, not that the idols of the pagans have been exposed as prey for beasts and cattle, but that the worship of the nations consists in idols of beasts and brute animals. Particularly in Egypt are these consecrated to the divine worship. Even Virgil says of them, “Monstrous gods, of every form and fashion, one, Anubis, shaped like a dog.”<sup>119</sup> Indeed, even the majority of their towns derive their names from beasts and cattle, ΚΥΝΩ from “dog,” ΛΕΟΝΤΩ from “lion,” in the Egyptian language *Thmuis* from “goat,” ΛΥΚΩ from “wolf,” to say nothing of the frightening and terrible onion and farting that is the form of religious worship in Pelusium.<sup>220</sup>

These *idols*, he says, which *cannot save* those who *carry* [them], are nothing else than *burdens* on the priests, pressing down on them *even unto weariness*. When the *captivity* comes, because of the value of the metals from which they were made, they are led away as the first things captured, and *they are not able to deliver their own soul* or that of those who *carried them*. It is not that mute idols have a soul and any sensation of pain, since they are insensible things. But one speaks of soul and limbs ΚΑΤΑΧΡΗΣΤΙΚΩΣ (in an improper sense) of those things that are without sensation and limbs. In addition to these considerations, even in the Proverbs one reads, “Life and death are in the tongue’s hand” [[Prov 18:21](#)], though clearly the tongue does not have a hand. Or, one should say that the error of idolatry was a very heavy burden among the nations. It pressed their worshipers down to the ground, and was not able to save them, and caused their souls to be captives of the devil and the demons.

7. (46:3–7) *Hear me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, who are carried by my uterus (utero), who are borne up by my womb (vulva). (4) Even to [your] old age I am the same, and to [your] grey hairs I will carry you; I have made [you], and I will bear, and I will carry and will save. (5) To whom have you likened me, and made me equal, and compared me, and made me like? (6) You that contribute gold out of the bag, and weigh out silver in the scales, and hire a goldsmith to make a god, and they fall down and worship. (7) They bear him on their shoulders and carry him, and set him in his place, and he shall stand, and shall not be moved out of his place. But even when they cry unto him, he shall not hear, he shall not save them from tribulation.* Septuagint: “Hear me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of Israel, who are carried from the uterus, and taught from infancy even to old age. (4) I am he; and until you grow old, I am he. I sustain you, I have made, and I will let go, I will take up and save you. (5)

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 30 (298, 26–4).

<sup>119</sup> [Virgil, Aeneid 8.698](#).

<sup>220</sup> A city on the Eastern mouth of the Nile.

To whom have you likened me? See, consider, you who go astray and (6) contribute gold out of the bag, and weigh silver on the scales, and you hire a goldsmith. They have made the works of their hands and have bowed down and worshiped; (7) they bear it upon their shoulders, and go. But if they put it in its place, it remains and will not be moved, and whosoever shall cry to it, it will not hear, and will not save him from troubles.”

He does not address him as “Jacob” nor as “Israel,” which, as we have explained above, are said without the addition of “slave,” “servant,” and “chosen one” as an affront to the people.<sup>221</sup> Instead he calls them by the much more contemptible term *house of Jacob* and *remnant of Israel*, on account of their affinity of flesh and blood, and as if they are the dregs of the *remnant of Israel*. And he shows that they have been carried thus by God out of Egypt, like children and nursing babies, as if by the *uterus* of a mother and the *womb* of a pregnant woman. It is not that the ineffable and incomprehensible majesty of God has either a *uterus*, or a *womb*, and feet, hands, and other members of the body; but that by means of our words we may learn of God’s affection. Apart from these considerations, in the [109th Psalm](#) as well this same thing [uterus] is sung about under the persona of God [cf. [Ps 110:3](#)]. For in that passage, where the Septuagint translated, “I have begotten you from the uterus before the morning star,” the Hebrew has it written, *merehem*, which means “from the womb (*vulva*).” In fact, in the present context, not only is it written *from the uterus* and *from the womb*, that is *mebeten* and *merehem*, but *menni*, a preposition which means “from my uterus” or “from my womb.” And the meaning is, *I who have begotten you from infancy and have carried you in my uterus and womb will myself protect you until old age*, not my *old age* but yours. Thus he shows them that they are to be saved by the divine mercy. For the Creator of all spares his creatures, and “the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” [[John 10:11](#)]. But the hired worker who is not the owner of the sheep, when he sees the wolf, he flees [cf. [John 10:12](#)]. *I therefore who have made and begotten the children will bear and carry them myself.*

According to the Septuagint, which said, “Who are borne from the uterus, and taught from infancy even to old age,” this means that it is in vain that they meditate on the law day and night [cf. [Ps 1:2](#)], since they do not possess the knowledge of God, but worship the images of men and beasts, to such an extent that they require a prophetic rebuke, through which God says to them, *To whom have you likened me, and made me equal*, and the rest, that they have *contributed gold and silver*, and *hired a statue maker to make idols*, and have *worshiped* “the works of their hands,” which are borne *on their shoulders*. And when they have been fixed in place and made stable, they are unable to move themselves, nor to benefit those by whom they are worshiped. We are passing over the clear things, that we may disclose things that have been closed off by the mercy of Christ.

8. ([46:8–11](#)) *Remember this, and be established and return, you transgressors, to the heart.* (9) *Remember the former age, for I am God, and there is no God beside, neither is there the like to me,* (10) *who declares from the beginning the things that shall be at last, and from the beginning the things that as yet are not done, saying, “My counsel shall stand, and all my will shall be done,”* (11) *who calls a bird from the east, and from a far country the man of my own will, and I have spoken, and will bring it, I have created, and I will do it.* Septuagint: “Remember

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 31 (299, 25–7).

these things, and groan, repent, you who are going astray. Return in your heart; (9) and remember the former things from the age, for I am God, and there is none other beside me, (10) I who declare beforehand the latter events before they come to pass and are accomplished, and I said, 'All my will shall stand, and I will do all things that I have considered,' (11) I who call a bird from the east, and from a far country, for the things that I have considered; I have spoken, and brought; I have created and made."

Since I myself have begotten you, I myself have carried [cf. [Isa 46:3](#)], and from infancy until old age you are being saved [cf. [Isa 46:4](#)], not by your merit, but by my piety, leave the idols that you have made and *return* to the worship of the one God. "Repent," "groan" for the error that has held you in its grip; or rather, *be established*, lest once again the sudden whirlwind of idolatry overthrow you; and *return to the heart*, that is to your mind, you who by your frenzied veneration of images were even, so to speak, flinging stones at the cross (wood). "Consider" *from the beginning* of the world that *there is no God beside me*, nor is another able to know what will come to pass, except for me *who announces* through the prophets what I will *do*. Consequently when I have carried out what was predicted, by the divination I prove my divinity. For I am now saying that the mystery that was unknown to all previous generations [cf. [Eph 3:5](#); [Col 1:26](#)], or rather *my counsel, shall stand*, so that when you see it carried into effect, you know that there is no God but him who knows that these things are coming, nay rather, who ordered them *to be done*.

I am he *who calls a bird from the east*: Cyrus king of the Persians, according to the thinking of the Hebrews, or Darius ruler of the Medes [cf. [Dan 5:31](#)], *and from a far country the man of my own will*, who fulfills "all my will" against Babylon and the Chaldeans; or, as we are convinced is the truth, the Lord and Savior, of whom even Balaam prophesies, "A star shall rise out of Jacob and a man out of Israel" [[Num 24:17](#)], whose name is the East [cf. [Zech 6:12](#)], whom the magi worshiped, having come from the east [cf. [Matt 2:1, 11](#)]. For he says in the Psalms, "God, I have willed to do your will" [[Ps 40:8](#)], of whom the Father spoke, and he proved his own promise by deeds. What we have expressed on the basis of the Hebrew as, *the man of my own will*, the Septuagint recorded as, "for the things which I have considered." Therefore, according to them, we can understand the birds summoned from the east as the ministries of angels, which scamper about the entire world at the Lord's command. They are ministering spirits sent for the salvation of believers [cf. [Heb 1:14](#)].<sup>222</sup> And in the Psalm it is sung of them, "He makes his angels his spirits and his ministers, a burning fire" [[Ps 104:4](#)].

9. ([46:12\[11c\]–13](#)) *Hear me, O you hardhearted, who are far from justice. (12) I have brought (feci) my justice near, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry. I will give salvation in Zion, and my glory in Israel.* Septuagint: "Hear me, you who have ruined [your] heart, who are far from justice. (13) I have brought near (*adduxi*) my justice, and I will not be slow with the salvation that is from me. I have given salvation in Zion to Israel for glory."

To those to whom he had said above, "Hear me, house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel" [[Isa 46:3](#)],<sup>223</sup> and again, "Return, you transgressors, to the heart" [[Isa 46:8](#)], he now likewise addresses them, according to the Hebrew, on account of their unbelief: *O you*

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (300, 15–0).

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 32 (300, 28–1).



*hardhearted*; and according to the Septuagint: “You who have ruined [your] heart” and mind. A very learned man, Stephen the martyr, who was worthy of his name,<sup>224</sup> followed this [reading] and says in the assembly of the Jews, “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you have always resisted the Holy Spirit, just as your fathers [did]” [[Acts 7:51](#)]. Therefore, they are *far* from the *justice* of God, because they have not believed in that which God *brought near* in view of his own mercy, and caused to come to the lands and *tarry* no longer and not be *far off*. For he gave his *salvation* to *Zion*, and his *glory* to *Israel*. This would have been spoken as a prediction of future things and of the advent of the Lord and Savior. On the other hand, according to history, salvation is given to Zion and glory to Israel, since God *brought his justice near*, in that he summoned a bird from the east and a man of his will from a distant country [cf. [Isa 46:11](#)], who avenged the injuries done to Israel and of the overthrown city of Jerusalem. Moreover, by means of the conquering Medes and Persians, he destroyed Babylon and the Chaldeans, just as the words of the subsequent prophecy attest.

10. ([47:1–3](#)) *Come down, sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground; there is no throne for the daughter of the Chaldeans, for you shall no more be called delicate and tender. (2) Take a millstone and grind meal, lay bare your disgrace, strip your shoulder, reveal your legs, pass over the rivers. (3) Your shame shall be revealed, and your reproach shall be seen. I will take vengeance, and no man shall resist me.* Septuagint: “Come down, sit on the ground, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground; there is no throne for the daughter of the Chaldeans, for you shall no more be called delicate and tender. (2) Take a millstone, grind meal, reveal your covering, lay bare your white hairs, uncover your legs, pass over the rivers. (3) Your shame shall be revealed, your reproaches shall be brought to light. I will remove what is just from you, I will no longer deliver [you] to men.”

Just as in Ezekiel, under the figure of a ship and of all its equipment, the adornment of Tyre is described [cf. [Ezek 27:27](#)], a city devoted to trade; and just as the king of Egypt is called a dragon on account of the abundance of waters [cf. [Ezek 29:3](#)], and its scales, reed, papyrus, and little fishes are described [cf. [Ezek 29:4](#)]; and just as a comparison to a brothel and prostitutes attests to the fornication of Jerusalem with her idols; so in the present passage, under the persona of a captive woman, who was once a queen, the enslavement of Babylon is being indicated. And she is told to *come down* from the pride of her kingdom and *sit in the dust*.<sup>225</sup> Now she is called a *virgin* and a *daughter*, either because all of us human beings are God’s creatures, and Babylon is not damned by nature, according to the heretics;<sup>226</sup> or because of the luxuriousness and adornment of the once extremely powerful city, which, although it had grown old and was near to its downfall, boasted that it was a young maiden and a girl. I grant that on the basis of the Septuagint, which wrote, “daughter of Babylon,” some interpret this not of Babylon itself but of the city of Rome, which both in the Apocalypse of John [cf. [Rev 14:8; 18:2](#)] and in the Epistle of Peter [cf. [1 Pet 5:13](#)] is called “Babylon” in a unique way. They would attest that everything that is now being said to Babylon corresponds with that city’s collapse, in opposition to which [city] a bird and the justice of God will have to be summoned [cf. [Isa 46:11](#)].

<sup>224</sup> In Greek, *stephanos* means “rown.”

<sup>225</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 32 (301, 11–2).

<sup>226</sup> This appears to be directed against Valentinian Gnosticism.



Thus after Zion is saved, that is the church, that city would perish forever.

Therefore it is said to Babylon the queen and to the *daughter of the Chaldeans*—for it was founded by the Chaldeans—that she *shall no more be called delicate and tender* and overflowing with delights, she who was being carried by the hands of all nations, so that she scarcely pressed her soles on the ground, and she is commanded to *take a millstone and grind meal*. This is a sign of a hard captivity and of final enslavement, that she who once had been queen later on is in service to the task of grinding meal. But since it follows, *Lay bare your disgrace*, even the millstone is understood figuratively by the Hebrews, namely, that she lies exposed like a prostitute to the lust of the victors. And that which is written in the Book of Judges about Samson, that he was condemned to a mill by the Philistines [cf. [Judg 16:21](#)], they think that this means that he was compelled to do this among the Philistine women on behalf of the race of the mightiest men.

In that place where we translated *lay bare your disgrace*, which the Septuagint translated as “reveal your covering,” Theodotion recorded the Hebrew word itself, *samthech*, Aquila *semmathech*, Symmachus [ΤΟ ΣΩΠΩΜΕΝΟΝ ΣΟΥ](#), which we can express as “your silence.” For they ought to be silent out of modesty. Indeed, we also read about this in the Song of Songs, when the bride’s beauty is described, and at the very end it is added, “apart from your silence” [[Song 4:1](#)]. Those who were unwilling to translate the term rendered it this way, because in Holy Scripture it signified *disgrace*. And he correctly uses immodest terms against Babylon—granted that there is no disgrace in calling a member of the human body by its own name—whom he orders to lay bare breasts and legs, and let a female uncover, and let it go into captivity, and let its “shame” *be seen* and let it be exposed to everlasting *reproach*.

And the Lord says that he himself has done this, that he *took vengeance* for this, that he oppressed his own people; and he does not listen to any sinner who would try to alleviate the Lord’s anger by his own meeting. Now he is indicating the presiding angel of the nation of Babylon, who together with the other angels says, “We healed Babylon, and she was not healed” [[Jer 51:9](#)]. The Septuagint, however, translated this as “I will remove what is just from you, I will no longer deliver [you] to men,” understand “Babylon,” or at least what is just and has been removed from Babylon. The Stoics argue that many things that are in fact shameful, by a perverse human custom, are not shameful to name, such as parricide, adultery, murder, incest, and other things like this; and, on the other hand, things that are not shameful in the thing, such as begetting children, diffusing the swelling of the belly by passing gas, relieving the bowels through defecation, emptying the bladder through an outpouring of urine, seem indecent to name.<sup>227</sup> After all, [they say that] we cannot make a diminutive ([ΥΠΟΚΟΡΙΣ ΜΩ](#))<sup>228</sup> of the word

<sup>227</sup> Cf. [Cicero, Off 1.128](#). P. G. Walsh, in [Cicero: On Obligations](#), trans. P. G. Walsh, Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 151, comments on this Ciceronian passage, “arly Stoicism, and notably its founder Zeno, adopted with much else the frankness of the Cynics in speaking of sexual and other social matters; see [Diogenes Laertes 7.4](#), and [Cicero, Fam. 9.22.5](#), citing Zeno: ‘he wise man will call a spade a spade.’ Cicero himself rejects this attitude in this letter and at [De oratore 2.242](#).”

<sup>228</sup> LSJ lists the noun as [ὑποκορίσμα](#).

mint (*menta*), in the same way that we speak of “a bit of rue” (*rutula*) from “rue” (*ruta*).<sup>229</sup> Therefore, a woman’s shameful parts are called *semmathech*, which is what Aquila recorded, as we said. Its etymology means among us “your thirsting one.” Thus it indicates the unsatisfied pleasure of Babylon.

11. (47:4–7) *Our redeemer the Lord of hosts, his name [is] the Holy One of Israel. (5) Sit in silence, enter into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans, for you shall no more be called the lady of kingdoms. (6) I was angry with (super) my people, and I have polluted my inheritance, and I have given them into your hand. You showed no mercy to them, upon the elderly man you laid your very heavy yoke. (7) And you said, “I shall be a lady forever.” You did not lay these things to your heart, neither did you remember your own latter end.* Septuagint: “The one who delivers you, the Lord Sabaoth, the Holy One of Israel [is] his name. (5) Sit down pierced with remorse, go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans; you shall no more be called the strength of a kingdom. (6) I was angry with (*contra*) my people; I have polluted my inheritance. I gave them into your hand, but you did not give them mercy. You made the yoke of the elderly man very heavy, (7) and said, ‘I shall be a lady forever.’ You did not understand these things in your heart, nor did you remember the latter end.”

In the Septuagint the first verse is linked with what precedes, so that the sense is, “The one who delivers you, the Lord Sabaoth, the Holy One of Israel is his name,” will do thus and so. In the Hebrew, on the other hand, the prophet is speaking under the persona of the people, that *the Lord of hosts, whose name is the Holy One of Israel*, will do these things against Babylon. And then the discourse is again directed to Babylon itself: *Sit in silence*, or “pierced with remorse,” and remember your wicked deeds. “Go into darkness,” since out of shame and disgrace you cannot endure the light. *For you are not called the lady of one kingdom, but of all kingdoms.*

At the same time, because the hidden question arose, why was God angry with the Chaldeans, whom he himself sent to capture Israel, he answered that he was angry with his own people, he wanted to chastise not destroy them, to beat not kill; but they indulged in their own cruelty and inflicted more blows than the vengeance of God demanded.<sup>330</sup> And a great indication of the cruelty of Babylon is that they did not even spare the elderly, whose age is respected even among enemies. Moreover, this is a sign of pride that they were deceived by their present prosperity and did not taken into consideration the uncertain future. Therefore, during prosperous circumstances, we should always be on guard for what is coming in the future, that the things entrusted to us do not overwhelm those who are being taught that they should become better through such things.

12. (47:8–11) *And now hear these things, you who are delicate, and dwell confidently, who say in your heart, “I am, and there is none else besides me, I shall not sit as a widow, and I shall not know barrenness.” (9) These two things shall come upon you suddenly in one day: barrenness and widowhood. All things have come upon you, because of the multitude of your*

<sup>229</sup> Cicero discusses this in [Fam 9.22.3](#). The diminutive of *menta* would be *mentula*, which means “ale sexual organ.” Cicero’s correspondent Paetus had used *mentula* but Cicero regards it as obscene and improper.

<sup>330</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 32 (302, 11–4).

*sorceries, and for the great hardness of your enchanters. (10) And you have trusted in your wickedness, and have said, "There is no one who sees me"; your wisdom and your knowledge, these things have deceived you. And you have said in your heart, "I am, and besides me there is no other." (11) Evil shall come upon you, and you will not know of its rising, and calamity shall rush in upon you, which you cannot keep off; misery shall come upon you suddenly, which you shall not know.*

Two things are coming upon Babylon at once, *barrenness and widowhood*, so that she does not have children, that is, people subjected to her, nor a husband, which we can understand to refer to a king.<sup>331</sup> These things she has sustained suddenly, though not expecting them. For she was unable to imagine that the Persians, who formerly had no strength, would defeat her during Cyrus's reign, and subject her to their own authority. You have suffered these things, he says, not only because of your pride and the abundance and comforts of all your wealth, but also *because of the multitude of your sorceries and enchanters in whom you have trusted, and evil shall come upon you, which you did not previously know about, and you will not know of its rising*; or, as the Septuagint translated it, "Destruction shall come upon you, and you shall not be aware, a pit, and you shall fall into it." Accordingly, things that you were preparing for all nations, the *evil* of captivity, you yourself will fall into the pit that you prepared [cf. [Ps 9:15](#)]. We are quickly skipping past the things that are clear in our speech.

13. ([47:12–15](#)) *Stand with your enchanters, and with the multitude of your sorceries, in which you have labored from your youth, if perhaps it may profit you anything, or if you may become stronger. (13) You have failed in the multitude of your counsels; let the augurs of the sky stand and save you, those who gazed at the stars and counted the months, that from them they might tell the things that shall come to you. (14) Behold they have become as stubble, fire has burned them; they shall not deliver their life from the power (manu) of the flame; there are no coals with which they may be warmed, nor fire, that they may sit by it. (15) Such have all the things become to you, in which you labored; your merchants from your youth, everyone has erred in his own way; there is none that can save you.* Septuagint: "Stand now with your enchantments, and with the abundance of your sorceries, which you have learned from your youth, if they can profit you. (13) You have labored in your counsels; let the astrologers of the sky stand and save you, who gaze at the stars; let them tell you what is about to come upon you. (14) Behold, they all shall be burnt up as sticks in the fire; and they shall not deliver their life from the flame, because you have coals of fire, you shall sit upon them; (15) these shall be your help. You have labored with your change from youth. A man has wandered into himself; but you shall have no salvation."

Reading the prophet Daniel proves that Babylon and all of Chaldea were zealous for enchanters, augurs, fortunetellers, and Gazarenes, whom we call soothsayers.<sup>332</sup> He relates that the kings of Babylon did all things by their *counsel* [cf. [Dan 2:2](#)]. And what we interpreted in accordance with Symmachus and Theodotion, *Let the augurs of the sky stand and save you*, the Septuagint translated more clearly: "Let the astrologers of the sky stand and save you."

<sup>331</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (302, 18–0).

<sup>332</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (302, 30–7).

Commonly they are called mathematicians,<sup>333</sup> and they make judgments about human affairs for the king based on the course of the stars and setting of constellations. Hence the magi came from the east, saying that they saw the Lord's star [cf. [Matt 2:2](#)], either from the knowledge of their art or from their own prophet Balaam's prophecy, who had said in Numbers, "A star will rise out of Jacob, and a man out of Israel" [[Num 24:17](#)].

Those, therefore, who *count the months*, and number the years, and promise knowledge of the future by weighing in the balance the moments of time, let them *tell you* what the Lord thinks about you. And when they keep silence about what shall come to be, the prophet responded, *Behold they have become as stubble, fire has devoured them*. Thus those who were promising "salvation" to others were not aware of their own punishment. Doubtless when a city burns a devouring *flame* consumes its inhabitants. And as for what follows, *There are no coals with which they may be warmed, nor fire, that they may sit by it*, the Hebrews have explained this as follows: they do not have any knowledge of heat nor illuminating thought, which would be able to disperse their darkness and drive away the chill of their error.

I do not know what the Septuagint meant when it translated this as, "You have coals of fire, you shall sit upon them, these shall be your help," unless perhaps we can say that fire and burning would be far more useful to Babylon than were the magi and Gazarenes, the astrologers and enchanters. For the former summons them to repentance by means of punishments and penalties, the latter lead them into pride by means of error. All its labor and *merchants*, whom we understand as referring to the magi, have been useful for this purpose, that *everyone has erred in his own way*, and the very one who had perished did not provide "salvation" to the other.

Let us ask those who claim that there are different kinds of natures whether Babylon had an evil or a good nature.<sup>334</sup> If they say evil, which will undoubtedly be their response, how is it that they are being summoned to repentance, and it is said to her, "Sit pierced with remorse, go into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans" [[Isa 47:5](#)]? And what is more, why is it said next, after the listing of her sins and wicked deeds, "You have coals of fire, you shall sit upon them; these shall be your help"? And what does it mean when the same Septuagint adds, "You have labored with change from youth"? What is this "change"? Surely it is that from good into evil. From this it is clear that those who are good by nature become evil by their own will. After all, he goes on to say, "A man has wandered into himself," not by means of his nature, but by the choice of his mind.

<sup>333</sup> "athematically" were quite popular individuals in late antiquity. They were experts in divination and oracles, and were repeatedly criticized in the works of the Church Fathers. The term derives from the science (*mathesis*) of astrology. According to G. S. Gasparro, "[Mathematici](#)," in *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, ed. Di Berardino, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 1:542–3, they formulated prescriptions for the use of their clients, with personal horoscopes indicating how they should behave to attract positive astral influences and avoid negative ones. It is noteworthy that Rufinus of Aquileia was asked by Macarius to translate Origen into Latin in order to be able to refute the "athematically." Rufinus responded to that request by first translating Pamphilus' [Apology for Origen](#).

<sup>334</sup> This is directed against Valentinian Gnosticism.

14. (48:1–2) *Hear this, O house of Jacob, you who are called by the name of Israel, and have come forth out of the waters of Judah, you who swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in justice. (2) For they are called of the holy city, and are established upon the God of Israel; the Lord of hosts is his name.*

I have predicted that these things will come upon the Chaldeans and Babylonians, and it is necessary that what I have spoken through my prophets be fulfilled in reality. But you, *O house of Jacob*, and *you who are called by the name of Israel*, and you who *have come forth out of the water of Judah*, and the other things that follow, listen more attentively to what I am going to say.<sup>335</sup> And one should take note that he does not call them Jacob, but *house of Jacob*, nor Israel who are called this by a false name, since they do not have the achievement of the name. He says, *And you have come forth out of the waters of Judah*, solemnly (σεμνοπρεπως) calling them “waters” instead of “seed.” Thus he has shown that they were not sons of the virtues of the patriarchs, but of the flesh. And he has rightly called Judah *waters*, because at that time it was still the only tribe remaining in the land of Judea, and the royal seed of David was being preserved at that time. He says, *You who swear by the name of the Lord*, not that you bring honor to God, but that you do harm by adopting his name, so long as you want him to be a witness of your lies, and you repose in the “holy city,” and “lean on the God of Israel,” in order that you may boast to be inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem and have the privileges of the “Lord Sabaoth,” though you are adopting the bare names of Jacob and Israel, of the “holy city,” and of “God almighty.”

15. (48:3–11) *The former things of old I have declared, and they went forth out of my mouth, and I have made them to be heard; I did them suddenly and they came to pass. (4) For I knew that you are stubborn, and your neck is as an iron sinew, and your forehead as brass. (5) I foretold to you of old; before they came to pass, I told you, lest you should say, “My idols have done these things, and my graven and molten images have commanded them.” (6) See all the things which you have heard, but you have not declared them. I made known to you new things from henceforth, and things are kept which you do not know; (7) they are created now, and not of old, and before the day, and you did not hear them, lest you should say, “Behold, I knew them.” (8) You have neither heard, nor known, neither was your ear opened of old; for I know that transgressing you will transgress, and I have called you a transgressor from the womb. (9) For my name’s sake I will remove my wrath far off, and for my praise I will bridle you, lest you should perish. (10) Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have chosen you in the furnace of poverty. (11) For my own sake, for my own sake will I do it, that I may not be blasphemed, and I will not give my glory to another. Septuagint: “(2c) The former things I have already declared, (3) and they have proceeded out of my mouth, and it has been heard; I did [them] suddenly, and they came to pass. (4) I know that you are stubborn, and your neck is an iron sinew, and your forehead brass. (5) And I declared to you of old, before they came upon you. I made it known to you, lest you should say that ‘my idols have done it; my graven and molten images have commanded me.’ (6) You have heard all things, and you have not known, but I have made known to you the new things from henceforth that are coming to pass. And you did not say, (7) ‘Now they come to pass, and not long ago, and not in former days.’ Likewise do not say,*

<sup>335</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 33 (303, 23–1).

'I know them'; (8) you have neither known, nor understand, neither from the beginning have I opened your ears. For I know that transgressing you will transgress, and you will be called wicked even from the womb. (9) For the sake of my name I will show you my wrath, and will bring upon you my glorious acts, that I may not kill you. (10) Behold, I have sold you, not for silver, but I have rescued you from the furnace of poverty; (11) for my own sake I will do this, because my name is profaned and I will not give my glory to another."

I am predicting to you that the Babylonians are to be conquered by the Medes [cf. [Isa 13:17](#)] and Persians, and what I have threatened, I shall do *suddenly, lest* when the things that have been predicted *come to pass*, you should think that these things happened either by the will of the gods whom you worship, or by chance. I am not vaunting my knowledge of the future, but I am speaking for your benefit, whose heart I have known to be unbelieving from the beginning, *and your neck is of iron, and your forehead is of brass*. Behold, *you have heard all the things that will come to pass*, and yet you conceal the truth in silence. And I am not telling of past events, in which my power was often proven, how I led forth the people from Egypt, drowned the Egyptians in the Red Sea, handed over the promised land, subjugated various nations to you; but I am announcing *new things* that I will do against Babylon, so that the impudent lies of your mouth may be silenced, you who claim that you know things that you do not know.

For from the beginning you are *a transgressor* of my commandments, and God has called you a *transgressor from the womb*, when, having been liberated from Egypt, you were conceived from my womb, as it were, and you were brought up and educated. You longed for the head of the Egyptian bull, saying, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt" [[Exod 32:4](#)]. Therefore, it was not because of your merit but by my mercy that I postponed *my wrath, lest you should perish* completely; *and for praise of my name I will bridle you*, so that you, an unwilling horse in a bridle and a beast of burden, as it were, may follow me. *Behold, I have refined you*, that is, tested, just as *silver* is melted down; or I have willed to test you not by wealth, but *in the furnace of poverty*. From this it is shown that very many are tempted both by wealth and by poverty, if they either use the wealth badly, or if they fail to endure poverty virtuously. Therefore, *for my own sake, will I do it, that "my name" may not be blasphemed* among the nations [cf. [Isa 52:5](#)], and they should think that you were conquered, not by my wrath, but with the help of their own idols.

As for what he adds, *I will not give my glory to another*, this indicates that idols should not be thought to have oppressed the people of God. Or, surely when he says, *I will not give to another*, he shows he has already given it to another, for "another" is said to distinguish from one who is prior. If I may touch on a few things that are based on the Septuagint translators, very many of our people claim that these things are being prophesied about the coming of Christ, that he comes "suddenly" and unexpectedly, and shows his presence to his own very "stubborn" people, whose ears God never opened, because their heart was fat, and they heard with their ears with difficulty [cf. [Isa 6:10](#)]; and as soon as the Lord was brought forth from the virgin's womb, the people "was called a transgressor" and wicked, when they sought to "kill" him.

As for what he adds, "For the sake of my name I will show you my wrath, and will bring upon you my glorious acts," he is making use of a thought of the Apostle; or the Apostle Paul takes a



testimony from this passage, that the wrath of God is being revealed to frighten those who sin [cf. [Rom 1:18](#)], and afterward glory is offered to those who have converted [cf. [Rom 2:6–7](#)]. “Behold,” he says, “I have sold you, not” for money, but I have sold you to your sins [cf. [Isa 50:1](#)].<sup>336</sup> And “I have rescued from the furnace of poverty.” On this account, Solomon wants to have neither riches nor poverty, but asks only for what is necessary, lest his heart either be lifted up to pride by the former, or he be compelled by the latter to do what he does not want, and overwhelmed by need, blaspheme God [cf. [Prov 30:8–9](#)]. This is why the Apostle says, “Having food and clothing, we are content with these” [[1 Tim 6:8](#)].

16. ([48:12–16](#)) *Hear me, O Jacob, and Israel, whom I call. I even I am the first, and I am the last. (13) My hand also has founded the earth, and my right hand has measured the heavens; I have called them, and they shall stand together. (14) Assemble yourselves together, all you, and hear: Who among them has declared these things? The Lord has loved him, he will do his will in Babylon, and his arm [shall be] on the Chaldeans. (15) I, even I have spoken and called him, I have brought him, and his way has been made straight. (16) Come near unto me, and hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time before it was done, I was there, and now the Lord God has sent me, and his Spirit.* Septuagint: “Hear me, O Jacob and Israel, whom I call. I am the first, and I [endure] forever, (13) and my hand has founded the earth, and my right hand has fixed the sky; I will call them, and they shall stand together (14) and all shall be gathered, and shall hear: Who has told him these things? Out of love for you I have done your will on Babylon, to remove the seed of the Chaldeans. (15) I have spoken, and I have called, I have brought him, and made his way prosperous. (16) Draw near to me, and hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; when it took place, I was there. And now the Lord God has sent me, and his Spirit.”

To those to whom he had previously said, “Hear this, O house of Jacob, you who are called by the name of Israel, and have come forth out of the waters of Judah” [[Isa 48:1](#)], he now says to the same ones, *Hear me, O Jacob and Israel, whom I call*. “For many are called, and few are chosen” [[Matt 20:16](#)]. The reason he addresses them not as chosen but as called is because they had not yet received the Savior. He says, “I am” [[John 8:58](#)], “the alpha and the omega, *the first and the last*” [[Rev 22:13](#)], “who am alive, and I was dead” [[Rev 1:17–18](#)]. Consequently you should relate the beginning to life, *the last* to him who died, who “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,” and having become obedient” to the Father, “he humbled himself to the point of death, even death on the cross” [[Phil 2:7–8](#)]. *My hand has founded the earth*—and this is why it is said in the Proverbs, “God founded the earth by his wisdom” [[Prov 3:19](#)],<sup>337</sup> *and his right hand has measured*, or “fixed” *the heavens*, or “heaven,” as the Septuagint translated it. Now he *calls* them *heavens* in order that they may obey his command and tell of his glory [cf. [Ps 19:1](#)]. But if the *heavens* obey the Lord’s will and move according to his progression, “why should earth and ashes boast?” [[Sir 10:9](#)] and not know their own frailty?

*Assemble yourselves together, all you, and hear*, either the *heavens* or all creation, or the whole multitude of Israel. What are they commanded to hear? That *the Lord has loved him*, doubtless he means Cyrus and Darius, who did the Lord’s *will* against *Babylon*, and trained his

<sup>336</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (304, 35–05, 2).

<sup>337</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 34 (305, 14–8).

*arm on the Chaldeans.* And he himself has *spoken and called him* by his name, and has *brought him, and his way has been made straight*, so that no one dared to resist his strength. This is why he challenges them to *come near and hear*, and according to the Lord's prediction, let them know that the king of the Medes and Persians will come, who overthrows Babylon and destroys the Chaldeans. And the prophet says that he has been *sent* by the *Lord* and by *his Spirit* to declare this. This is according to the Hebrews and their opinion.

On the other hand, this refers to the persona of the Lord according to Symmachus, who translated it: "Who has announced these things to them? The one whom the Lord has loved, who will do his will on Babylon"; and according to the Septuagint: "to remove the seed of the Chaldeans." The Lord was truly loved by the Father, and he did the Father's entire will, and in Babylon, that is, in the confusion of this world, he overthrew all "the seed of the Chaldeans," which refers to the demons. He himself "spoke" and "heard" the Son and "brought him," who says to believers, "Come to me, all you who are burdened down" [[Matt 11:28](#)], and hear the things that I have "spoken in secret from the beginning," that is, through the  $\alpha\iota\nu\iota\gamma\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  (enigmas) and mysteries of the prophets, which were unknown to all the former generations [cf. [Eph 3:5](#)]. "When" everything "was being made" by the Father, he himself was with him [cf. [John 1:1](#)], he rejoiced with him [cf. [Prov 8:30](#)], who even now says, "I who was always with the Father and in the Father [cf. [John 14:20](#)], and I have never been without the Father, even now I speak and say according to the frailty of the flesh I have assumed, that 'the Lord God has sent me, and his Spirit.'" And in this brief little verse, the mystery (*sacramentum*) of the Trinity is being shown to us.

17. ([48:17–19](#)) *Thus says the Lord your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: I am the Lord your God who teaches you profitable things, who governs you in the way that you walk.* (18) *Would that you had attended to my commandments! Your peace would have been as a river, and your justice as the waves of the sea,* (19) *and your seed would have been as the sand, and the offspring of your womb like its gravel; his name would not have perished, nor have been destroyed from before my face.*

He who promises things to come to Israel gives the reasons why he has first afflicted them; reasons that, if they will avoid them, they will not suffer similar things. He says, "If you had attended to my commandments," as the Septuagint translated it; or at any rate with the emotion of one who is asking, *Would that you had attended to my commandments!* If you had done that, *your peace would have been as a river, and your justice as the waves of the sea.* This indicates the abundance and supply of all things. And as for what follows, *And your seed would have been as the sand, and the offspring of your womb like its gravel*, this indeed seems to be continuing against the Jewish people,<sup>338</sup> who up to the present day breed children and grandchildren like rabbits.<sup>339</sup> But how must this be understood in respect to the promise, since

<sup>338</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (306, 32–9).

<sup>339</sup> Lit., "rubworms, maggots." Harsh and offensive invectives against the Jews like this one can be found in Jerome's writings. After assembling several offensive passages, J. Braverman, [Jerome's Commentary on Daniel: A Study of Comparative Jewish and Christian Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible](#) (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1978), 9n52, comments, "t should be kept in mind that Jerome did not direct his harsh invectives solely against the Jews.

they do not have peace and justice? For he was either angry with them, or placated. If he was angry, how does their seed multiply on a daily basis? If he has been placated, how is it that they are enslaved and do not possess peace and justice? Therefore it is clear that this is being said about the apostolic seed, of which we also read above, “Unless the Lord Sabaoth had left us seed, we would have been as Sodom” [[Isa 1:9](#)]. Because it does not appear to have been accomplished at that time, it is fulfilled at Christ’s advent, and the seed of Israel remains *before* his face.

18. ([48:20–22](#)) *Come forth out of Babylon, flee from the Chaldeans; declare it with the voice of exultation, make this to be heard, and speak it out even to the ends of the earth, and say, “The Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob.”* (21) *They thirsted not in the desert, when he led them out; he brought forth water out of the rock for them, and he split the rock, and the waters gushed out.* (22) *There is no peace to the wicked, says the Lord.*

Those who understand the preceding passage of Cyrus and Darius, where it is written, “I, even I have spoken and called him; I have brought him, and his way has been made straight” [[Isa 48:15](#)], refer these things as well to that time period. This was when the people *came forth from Babylon* and *fled from the Chaldeans* and were *redeemed* by the Lord their God.<sup>440</sup> They relate this, too, that is said, *They did not thirst in the desert, when he led them out; he brought forth water out of the rock for them, and he split the rock, and the waters gushed out*, although they are unable to show that this was accomplished historically—for they did not come through the desert under Zerubbabel and Ezra, and his offering them waters by splitting the rock is narrated to have taken place to those who came forth from Egypt [cf. [Num 20:11](#)]*—*nevertheless they attest that they were fulfilled in a hyperbolic sense in resemblance to the former blessing, when they came through a desert of nations into Judea and were delivered from captivity. And that we may know that this was not prophesied about Christ, but about Cyrus, they say, it is added, *There is no peace to the wicked, says the Lord*, and that the meaning is that there will not be perfect blessedness except under Christ, which is reserved for the end times.

On the other hand, those who apply these things more truly and correctly to the advent of the Savior, of whom it is said, “He sent me to declare to the poor, to preach remission to the captives” [[Isa 61:1](#); cf. [Luke 4:18](#)], understand it to be an exhortation of those who declare the gospel, or of the Lord and Savior himself, that they should *come forth from Babylon*, that is, from the confusion of this world, and we should *flee from the Chaldeans*, of whom it has been frequently spoken. *For the Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob* by his own most precious blood, and *has brought him through the desert* of the world, and has *split the water* from the rock, of which the Apostle also says, “but the rock was Christ” [[1 Cor 10:4](#)]. Now the divine word is *split* and divided into many portions, so that we take in parts anything we are not able to receive whole. And what is more, lest that prediction be thought to be said to the entire seed of Jacob, and not to those only who will believe through the apostles, it is added and joined, *There is no peace to the wicked, says the Lord*, namely to those who have remained in their former

He was often vitriolic against anyone who opposed him, and made many unkind and unwarranted remarks toward Christians and non-Christians alike.”

<sup>440</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 34 (307, 30–08, 7).

error, who have not deserved to drink from the *rock*, the side of which, if I may speak with newness, was wounded by a spear and *gushed out waters* and blood [cf. [John 19:34](#)], consecrating for us baptism and martyrdom.

19. ([49:1–4](#)) *Listen, you islands, and attend, you peoples from afar. The Lord has called me from the womb, from the belly of my mother he has been mindful of my name. (2) And he has made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he has protected me, and has made me as a chosen arrow, in his quiver he has hidden me. (3) And he said to me, “You are my servant Israel, for in you will I be glorified.” (4) And I said, “I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength without reason and in vain; therefore my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.”* Septuagint: “Listen, you islands, and attend, you Gentiles. After a long time it shall stand, says the Lord. From my mother’s belly he has called my name, (2) and he has made my mouth as a sharp sword, and he has hidden me under the protection of his hand. He has made me as a choice arrow, and he has hidden me in his quiver, (3) and said to me, ‘You are my servant, O Israel, and in you I will be glorified.’ (4) And I said, ‘I have labored without reason, I have given my strength in vain and for nothing; therefore is my judgment with the Lord, and my labor before my God.’ ”

I know and will speak about the fact that both this and what comes below it relate to the understanding of a single section, and that everything needs to be understood as having been spoken by Christ’s persona; but I did not want to burden the reader’s sense by setting forth everything at once, and to cause confusion by the great size of the passage when it can be learned more easily bit by bit. This is also why I have recorded both versions, so that what seems obscure in one may be disclosed by the other reading. Therefore, after the calling of the remnant of Israel and the casting aside of the people who continued in unbelief, of whom he had said, “There is no peace for the wicked, says the Lord” [[Isa 48:22](#)],<sup>441</sup> he transitions to the churches that have been gathered from the Gentiles and addresses them by the term of *islands*, which lie exposed to persecutors, as it were, to the waves of the sea, and they are battered on every side by the violence of a shipwreck rather than be moved. And moreover, lest anyone think that our explanation is forced, and that what is said does not apply to the Gentiles, but to the synagogues of the Jewish people, it follows, *and attend, you peoples*, or “Gentiles,” *from afar*, that is, from the very ends of the earth. Or, as the Septuagint has translated it, “After a long time it shall stand,” that is, it will happen not at this time, when these things are being said, but after a long time.<sup>442</sup>

He says, *The Lord has called me from the womb, from the belly of my mother he has been mindful of my name*. Things that now for the time being seem obscure to those who hear them, later on however will be known to all the nations, when Gabriel speaks to Joseph about the virgin birth: “And you will call his name Jesus; for he will save his people” [[Matt 1:21](#)]. *He has made his mouth, too, like a sharp sword*, so that he kills the ungodly by the spirit of his mouth [cf. [2 Thess 2:8](#)]. And he himself speaks of this sword in the Gospel: “I have not come to bring peace on earth, but a sword” [[Matt 10:34](#)], by separating the evil from the good [cf. [Matt 13:48–](#)

<sup>441</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 35 (308, 13–1).

<sup>442</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (308, 29–1).

[49](#)];<sup>443</sup> for he came “to divide a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law” [[Matt 10:35](#)]. And he says, *In the shadow of his hand he has protected me*. Thus his lowly flesh was covered with the power of his deity, when the angel announced to the virgin, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you” [[Luke 1:35](#)].

Also *he has made me as a chosen arrow, in his quiver he has hidden me*. By speaking of a *chosen arrow*, he shows that God has a large number of arrows, but they are not *chosen*; these arrows are the prophets and apostles who fly throughout the entire world. And in another passage he sings of them, “Your arrows are sharp, Most Powerful One, peoples shall fall under you” [[Ps 45:5](#)]; and again, “Sharpened weapons of the mighty, with coals of the desert” [[Ps 120:4](#)]. But out of many arrows and very many sons, Christ is the one *chosen arrow* and the “only begotten Son” [cf. [John 3:16](#)], whom he *hid in his quiver*, that is, in a human body, so that the fullness of deity might dwell bodily in him [cf. [Col 2:9](#)], and the faith of believers would be rare. And it is said to him above, “You are a hidden God, and we did not know” [[Isa 45:15](#)]. And the bride who receives a wound from this arrow says in the Song of Songs, “I have been wounded by love” [[Song 2:5](#)].

And he said to me, “You are my servant Israel, for in you will I be glorified.” He is a *servant*, because although he was in the form of God, he deemed it fitting to assume the form of a servant [cf. [Phil 2:6–7](#)];<sup>444</sup> and he is *Israel*, because he was born from the seed of the Jews. And he adds something that can be understood of no other servant: *For in you will I be glorified*. For he himself also says in the Gospel: “Father, I have glorified your name” [[John 12:28](#); cf. [17:4](#)]. In the Psalm, the Father says to the Son, “Rise up, my glory, rise up, psaltery and harp” [[Ps 57:8](#)], that is, chorus of all virtues.<sup>445</sup> But when the Father said these things to me, which I have related, I myself responded to him, “How is it, Father, that you have been glorified in me, one who *has labored in vain*, and who was unable to call the majority of the Jewish people back to you?” But all this is said in order that the human being’s free choice may be shown; for it is God’s to call, and ours to believe. And God is not immediately without ability, if we ourselves do not believe, but he leaves his power to our choice, so that [our] will justly obtains its reward.

Therefore, because they were unwilling to believe in you through me, *my judgment is with you*, because I have done everything that I ought to have done for them [cf. [Isa 5:4](#)], I who say in the Gospel, “I have glorified you on earth, having completed the work that you gave me to do” [[John 17:4](#)]; and again, “I have made known your name to men” [[John 17:6](#)]. And *my work*, or my labor and pain, for this is what ΠΟΝΟΣ signifies, is “in your sight.” For even in the Gospel he wept over Jerusalem [cf. [Luke 19:41](#)], and in the Psalm, on account of the great number of unbelievers, he says that in a way he has suffered in vain: “What benefit is there in my blood, when I go down to corruption?” [[Ps 30:9](#)].<sup>446</sup> And while hanging on the cross, he says, according to the Hebrew, “The words of my laments are far from my salvation” [[Ps 22:1](#)].

20. ([49:5–6](#)) And now says the Lord, who forms me from the womb to be his servant, that I

<sup>443</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (309, 3–).

<sup>444</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (309, 21–5).

<sup>445</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (309, 30–5).

<sup>446</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (310, 13–7).

may bring back Jacob unto him, and Israel will not be gathered together, and I have been glorified in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has been made my strength. (6) And he said, "It is a small thing that you should be my servant (servus) to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to convert the dregs of Israel; I have given you to be the light of the Gentiles, that you may be my salvation even to the end of the earth." Septuagint: "And now, thus says the Lord who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to gather Jacob to him and Israel; I shall be gathered and glorified before the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. (6) And he said to me, 'It is a great thing for you to be called my servant (*puer*), and to rouse the tribes of Jacob, and to convert the dispersion of Israel; behold, I have appointed you to be the covenant of a race, a light of the Gentiles, that you should be salvation to the end of the earth.' "

When I say, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength without cause and in vain," because the Jews refused to believe; and "my judgment is with the Lord, and my work," which I have accomplished with him looking on, "with my God" [[Isa 49:4](#)], the Lord replied to me, *who formed me from the womb to be his servant*. By this he shows that he is called a *servant*, who is formed from the womb, who also says in the Psalm, "You are my God from my mother's womb" [[Ps 22:10](#)]. What then did the Lord say to him? That he should *bring back Jacob unto him*, who had gone astray, who was enslaved to idols and had abandoned the Creator. And this is why he himself says to the disciples, "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter into the city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" [[Matt 10:5–6](#)]; and in another passage, "I have come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel" [[Matt 15:24](#)].<sup>447</sup> This therefore was the Father's will, that the wicked vinedressers would have received the son who had been sent and would have rendered the fruit for the vineyard, who [instead] killed him, saying, "Come, let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours" [[Matt 21:38](#)].

And this is what he says now: *And Israel will not be gathered together*, that is, it will not turn back to the Lord. And I am quite surprised at how the common translation<sup>448</sup> undermines this very forceful testimony against the faithlessness of the Jews by rendering it differently, when it says, "I shall be gathered and glorified before the Lord," seeing that Theodotion and Symmachus agree with our translation. But I am not surprised about Aquila, that a man who was very learned in the Hebrew language and who rendered word for word in this passage should have either feigned a lack of skill, or was deceived by the perverse exposition of the Pharisees. He wanted to translate it, "And Israel will be gathered to him," that is, "to God," though the Hebrew word *lo* is not written in this passage with *lamed* and *uau*. Had those letters been written, it would have meant "to him" or "to that one." But instead it is written with *lamed* and *aleph*, so that it properly means "not."<sup>449</sup>

<sup>447</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (310, 9–1).

<sup>448</sup> This refers to the Old Latin translation of the Greek Septuagint.

<sup>449</sup> J. Cameron, "[The Rabbinic Vulgate?](#)" in *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings and Legacy*, ed. A. Cain and J. Lössl (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 117–0 (124n42), comments on this passage, "on this occasion, he disagrees with Aquila, ... Thus Jerome appears to have had some awareness that Aquila's translation had its own exegetical background and, as noted above, he could refer to him as *Iudaeus Aquila*. However this passage from *In Es.* suggests that Jerome felt able to discern those passages in which Aquila was influenced by the *pharisaeorum perversa expositio*,



Thus because Jacob has not been led back to God, and Israel has not been gathered, therefore the Son speaks to those who do not believe, *I have been glorified in the eyes of the Lord*—for the entire world has come to believe in me—and *my God has been made my strength*, who has also consoled me in my sadness over the casting aside of my people. *And he said “to me,” It is a small thing if you serve me to raise up the tribes of Jacob*, who fell through their own fault, *and to convert the dregs, or remnants of Israel*; for this is what the Hebrew word *nesure* means. For because of them *I have given you as a light of all the Gentiles*, that you may enlighten the whole world, and cause *my salvation*, through which everyone becomes saved, to reach *even to the ends of the earth*.

Now as for what one reads in the Septuagint, “I shall be gathered and glorified before the Lord,” it can be understood as follows: that the Lord has been gathered with believers. And as for what follows, “He said to me: It is a great thing for you to be called my servant (*puer*),” we may apply “great thing” to the man and to the “boy” (*puerum*), who is *small* in comparison with God.

21. (49:7) *Thus says the Lord, the redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to the life (animam)<sup>550</sup> that is despised, to the nation that is abhorred, to the servant of rulers: “Kings shall see you, and princes shall rise up, and worship for the Lord’s sake, because he is faithful, and [for the sake of] the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”* Septuagint: “Thus says the Lord who delivered you, the God of Israel: ‘Sanctify him who despises his own life (*animam*), him that is abhorred by the nations, who is a servant of princes; kings shall see him, and princes shall arise, and shall worship for the Lord’s sake, because the Holy One of Israel is faithful, and he has chosen you.’ ”

What we have expressed as, *To the life that is despised, to the nation that is to be abhorred, to the servant of rulers*, Theodotion translated, “To him who despises his life, who is abhorred by the nation, who is a servant of princes.” This manifestly corresponds with Christ’s person. For the good shepherd himself laid down his own “life” (*animam*) for the sheep [cf. [John 10:14–15](#)] and “despised” it; he is “abhorred by the nation” of the Jews, who curse him three times a day in their synagogues under the name of “the Nazarenes.”<sup>551</sup> He was a “servant of princes,” and was so humble that he stood before Annas and Caiaphas and was sent to be crucified by Pilate and Herod. Aquila agrees with this translation, as does the Septuagint to some extent, although it altered and weakened the meaning, in that for *nation* it translated “nations,” and for *servant* it translated “servants.” In fact others think that this is being said to the Jewish nation that “despised its own life” and is “abhorred” by the whole world, and serves the princes of whom it is written, “Those who devour my people as the food of bread” [[Ps 14:4](#)]. But the interpretation that applies this to Christ is better.

What then does the Father, who was once *the redeemer* and *Holy One of Israel*, say to his Son? *Kings shall see, and princes shall rise up, and worship*, when he comes in the glory of his Father with his angels [cf. [Matt 16:27](#)] and sits on the throne of his glory [cf. [Matt 25:31](#)],

leaving him otherwise free to utilize the fruits of Aquila’ *verbum de verbo* approach to translation.”

<sup>550</sup> Or “oul.”

<sup>551</sup> Cf. n. at [2.51](#).

judging [cf. [Luke 22:30](#)] the living and the dead.<sup>552</sup> At that time all will *worship* him *for the sake of Lord* his Father, *because he is faithful who chose* him. Or, one should understand it this way: *kings* whose hearts are in the hand of God [cf. [Prov 21:1](#)] and the *princes* of the church *shall worship* you, because the Lord *is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you*. But refer all these things to him who despised his own life, who is abhorred by a nation, who is a servant of princes.

22. ([49:8–13](#)) *Thus says the Lord: In a pleasing time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you, and I have preserved you, and given you to be a covenant of the people, that you might raise up the earth, and possess the inheritances that were scattered, (9) that you might say to them that are bound, "Come forth," and to them that are in darkness, "Show yourselves." They shall be fed in the ways, and their pasture shall be in every plain. (10) They shall not hunger, nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun strike them, for he that is merciful to them shall rule them, and carry them to the fountains of waters. (11) And I will make all my mountains a way, and my paths shall be exalted. (12) Behold, these shall come from afar, and behold these from the north and from the sea, and these from the south country. (13) Give praise, O you heavens, and exult, O earth; you mountains, give praise with jubilation, because the Lord has comforted his people, and will have mercy on his poor ones.* Septuagint: "Thus says the Lord: At an opportune time have I heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you, and I have formed you, and given you for a covenant of the nations, to establish the earth, and to cause to inherit the inheritances that were deserted, (9) and to say to them that are in bonds, 'Come forth,' and to them that are in darkness, 'Show yourselves.' They shall be fed in all the ways, and in all the paths shall be their pasture. (10) They shall not hunger, neither shall they thirst; neither shall the heat nor the sun strike them; but he that has mercy on them shall comfort them, and by fountains of waters shall he lead them. (11) And I will make every mountain a way, and every path a pasture to them. (12) Behold, these come from far, these from the north and the sea, but others from the land of the Persians. (13) Rejoice, you heavens; and let the earth exult; let the mountains break forth with joy; for God has had mercy on his people, and has comforted the lowly ones of his people."

The Apostle Paul made use of this testimony in the second [letter] to the Corinthians, saying, "At an opportune time have I heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you; behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation" [[2 Cor 6:2](#)]. If therefore the vessel of election [cf. [Acts 9:15](#)] relates the things that are said to the understanding of the first advent, let us too follow in the tracks of his explanation, and trace his letters the way children trace the shadowy outlines of their teacher. The *pleasing* and "opportune" *time* and *the day of salvation* signify the passion and resurrection of the Savior, when he prayed on the cross, "God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" [[Matt 27:46](#)].<sup>553</sup> And he *preserved* or "formed" him when he conquered death, and he *gave* him *to be a covenant of the people* of the Jews, namely, to those of them who were willing to believe, *that he might raise up the earth*, which was lying prostrate in the errors of idolatry, *and possess the inheritances that were scattered*, or

<sup>552</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 35 (311, 15–6).

<sup>553</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (311, 24–2).

“deserted,” which did not have God dwelling in them,<sup>554</sup> and *might say to them that were “in bonds,” Come forth, you who were drawn tight by the chains of sins, for “each one is tied up by the cords of his own sins” [Prov 5:22], and to them that were in darkness, Show yourselves, you who were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death [cf. Isa 9:2], and were unable to see the light.*

After they have been converted and look upon the bright light of Christ, *they shall be fed* (pascentur) *in the ways* and paths of the Holy Scriptures, and they will say, “The Lord is my shepherd (*pascit*), I shall not want; he has made me dwell in a place of *pasture*, he has led me out to the waters of rest” [Ps 23:1–2].<sup>555</sup> Now one who has been *fed* and nourished on *ways* and paths of this sort *shall not hunger, nor thirst, neither shall he feel the heat of the sun;* and what is written about this will be fulfilled: “The *sun* will not burn you by day, nor the moon by night” [Ps 121:6]. Accordingly, he feels neither adverse nor prosperous circumstances of this world. For indeed, *the merciful* and compassionate Lord [cf. Ps 111:4] himself “shall comfort” and *rule them, and “lead” them to the fountains of waters, or shall carry them to the fountains* of which it is written, “Bless the Lord from the fountains of Israel” [Ps 68:26]; and in another passage, “Draw waters from the saving fountains” [Isa 12:3]. These fountains are in the Old and New Testament. And the Lord will turn every little stumbling block that could have impeded the steps of believers into a plain, and he will lay low the high places, and raise up the lowly places, so that they may have a level and smooth journey.

He records quite clearly who these are for whom the way was prepared: *Behold, these shall come from afar, and behold, these from the north and from the sea, and these from the south country.* While pointing out the four regions of the world, east, north, west, and south, he recorded *from afar* for “east”; for the southern region the Hebrew reads *sinim*, which the Septuagint translated “of the Persians.” The others expressed it just as it reads in the Hebrew, *sinim*, which we have translated *from the south*. I suspect that Mount Sinai is located in a southern region, in accordance with the prophet Habakkuk: “God will come from the south, and the Holy One from the shadowy and dense Mount Pharan” [Hab 3:3]. But if we understand *sinim* as the “Persians,” as the Septuagint translated it, who were situated toward the east, we will be able to refer to the south what is said above: *Behold, these will come from afar.*<sup>556</sup>

And it is commanded to the *heavens and earth*, either to those powers that live in heaven and on earth, or to the angels and men, to sing God’s *praises*.<sup>557</sup> And let those who are found at the summit of the virtues give witness to the joy of their mind with jubilation and exultation, *because the Lord has comforted his people*, those Jews who were willing to believe. And he has had *mercy on his poor* and “lowly” *ones*, or on all his people. They were called to him from the east, west [cf. Matt 8:11], north and south, though they have neither the law nor the prophets nor spiritual riches, but they are a deserted, poor, and lowly people, who were subjected to all the demons.

23. (49:14–21) *And Zion said, “The Lord has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me.”*

<sup>554</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (312, 11–4).

<sup>555</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (312, 18–2).

<sup>556</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (313, 14–6).

<sup>557</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (313, 26–8).

(15) *Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet I will not forget you.* (16) *Behold, I have written you down on my hands; your walls are always before my eyes.* (17) *Your builders have come; those who had destroyed and scattered you shall go out of you.* (18) *Lift up your eyes round about, and see: all these have been gathered together, they have come to you. I live, says the Lord, for you shall be clothed with all these as with an ornament, and as a bride you shall put them about you.* (19) *For your deserts, and your desolate places, and the land of your destruction shall now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and those who swallowed you up shall be chased far away.* (20) *The sons of your barrenness shall still say in your ears, "The place is too narrow for me, make me room to dwell in."* (21) *And you shall say in your heart, "Who has begotten me these? I was barren and brought not forth, led away, and captive, and who has brought up these? I was destitute and alone, and these here, where were they?"* Septuagint: "But Zion said, 'The Lord has forsaken me,' and, 'The Lord has forgotten me.' (15) Will a woman forget her little child, so as not to have compassion upon the offspring of her womb? But if a woman should even forget these, yet I will not forget you, says the Lord. (16) Behold, I have painted your walls on my hands, and you are always before me. (17) And you shall soon be built by those by whom you were destroyed, and those who had scattered you shall go out of you. (18) Lift up your eyes round about, and see, all those have been gathered together, and have come to you. I live, says the Lord, because you shall be clothed with them all as with an ornament, and you shall put them around you as a bride a necklace. (19) Your deserts and desolate places and those that had fallen, since you shall now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and those who had humbled you shall become far from you. (20) For your sons whom you lost shall say in your ears, 'The place is too narrow for me, make room for me to dwell.' (21) And you shall say in your heart, 'Who has begotten me these? I was childless, and a widow; but who has brought these up for me? And I was left alone; but where were these?'"

We have mentioned often that in the Holy Scriptures Jerusalem and Zion ought to be understood in four ways. First, very near to the Jews, the one that the Lord laments in the Gospel, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you" [[Matt 23:37](#)], and in another passage, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by an army, then know that its desolation has approached" [[Luke 21:20](#)]. Second, when there is a gathering of saints who are established in the Lord's peace and in the watchtower of the virtues, they are rightly called Zion, of which it is said, "Its foundations are in the holy mountains; the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the tabernacles of Jacob" [[Ps 87:1-2](#)]; for the foundations of the Judaic Zion are not loved by the Lord, since we see that that city has been destroyed, or what was beloved by the Lord was able to be destroyed. Third, the multitude of angels, lordships, and powers is called Jerusalem, and everything that has been appointed for God's service. The Apostle has also spoken of this Jerusalem: "But the Jerusalem that is above is free, she is the mother of us all" [[Gal 4:26](#)]; and in another passage, "But you have come near to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" [[Heb 12:22](#)]. Fourth, Jerusalem is the name given by the Jews and by our Judaizers to that which they do not understand according to the Apocalypse of John [cf. [Rev 21:2](#)]. They regard it as golden and bejeweled, about to be let down from heaven, whose measureless borders and breadth are likewise described in the final

part of Ezekiel [cf. [Ezek 40–48](#)].

Since these things are so, one must now look more carefully into which of the four Zions says, *The Lord has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me*. Doubtless it is the assembly of the saints that had existed previously among the Jews and was forsaken by the Lord. Let this one recall and complain with a tearful voice that she has been deserted and is destitute of the Lord's help. God responded to her by using a comparison from nature: If it can possibly happen that a mother *can forget her infant*, and not be moved to *pity* at a birth from her own womb, so will I forget you. Let me say something more: "Even if she should forget," overcoming the law of nature by the hardness of her mind, "yet I will not forget" my creatures and I will always keep the souls of the saints in my heart. Indeed, you who think that you have been completely forsaken, know this: you have been *written down* and "painted" *on my hands*, and *your walls* abide continually *before my eyes*. We learn from this that the Jerusalem that is to be sought is not the one in the country of Palestine, which is the worst of the whole province, and is made rough by rocky mountains and suffers the lack that consists in thirst, so that it consumes heavenly rains, and it grows accustomed to the lack of springs by the construction of cisterns. Rather, we are to seek the Jerusalem that is in the hands of God, the one to which it is said, *Your builders* have hastened, or according to the Septuagint, "You shall soon be built by those by whom you were destroyed." For that [city] that was destroyed by Jews was built by Jews, because having been deserted through the fault of the scribes and Pharisees, it has been gathered together out of both Jews and Gentiles at the preaching of the apostles of Christ.

Then follows, *And those who had destroyed and scattered*, namely, the very wicked teachers, *shall go out of you*, so that you do not follow the commands and traditions of men, but the law of God [cf. [Mark 7:7–8](#)]. And she is told to *lift up her eyes round about, and see the sons who have been gathered together*, of whom the Lord also spoke: "*Lift up your eyes and see that the fields are already white for harvest*" [[John 4:35](#)]. And in order to make us sure, the Lord says, *I live*, which is the customary way of taking an oath in the Old Testament, *for you shall be clothed with all these as with an ornament, and you shall put them about you as a bride* puts a "necklace" on herself. Blessed is the one who has such great virtue and merit that he may be called an *ornament* of the church! Now I think that various spiritual graces are being signified, by means of which a bride's ambition is adorned. The forty-fourth Psalm sings about this as well: "The queen stood on your right hand, surrounded with variety in clothing wrought with gold" [[Ps 45:13–14](#)]. For the things that had previously been deserted and had fallen into desolate places and ruins will be restored though the advent of the gospel of Christ. And they will have such a great number of *inhabitants* that they will not be able to have room for them, at least so that persecutors *shall be chased far away*, or those of whom we said higher up, *Those who were destroying and scattering you shall go out of you*.

And *the sons of your barrenness*, whom you thought you had utterly destroyed, and that you were bereft of them, *shall say in your ears*, "*The place in the synagogues is too narrow for me, make me room to dwell* more spaciously in the churches, so that I am not compressed by the blasphemies of the Jews, so that your breadth with me may make room for the whole world." But you, being unable to express the extent of your joy with your mouth, will quietly reflect *in your heart* and *you will say*, "*Who has begotten me these? I was barren and a widow,*

deserted *and captive* among the Jewish people; I had ceased having *sons*, for a long time I had not given birth; after Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, I had seen no other prophets until John the Baptist [cf. [1 Macc 4:46](#)]. How then have I now begun to have so many sons, I who *was alone and destitute* of the help of a husband?" Now in order that we may know that Zion is built out of both peoples upon the rock and foundation of Christ, the Apostle Paul says to believers, "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with himself the cornerstone, who is Jesus Christ" [[Eph 2:20](#)]. This makes it clear that there is one foundation of apostles and prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ.

24. ([49:22–23](#)) *Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and will set up my sign to the people. And they shall bring your sons in their arms, and carry your daughters upon their shoulders. (23) And kings shall be your nursing fathers, and queens your nurses. They shall worship you with their face lowered toward the earth, and they shall lick up the dust of your feet. And you shall know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be confounded that wait for him.* Septuagint: "Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I lift up my hand over the nations, and I will lift up my sign over the islands, and they shall bring your sons in their bosom, and shall carry your daughters on their shoulders. (23) And kings shall be your nursing fathers, and princesses your nurses. They shall worship you upon the face of the earth, and shall lick the dust of your feet; and you shall know that I am the Lord, and they that wait on him shall not be confounded."

The church had said, "I was barren and captive, who has begotten me these? I was destitute and alone; and these here, where were they?" [[Isa 49:21](#)]. The Lord responded to this, Why are you surprised that these things have happened? You will not be surprised when you hear that I will *lift up my hand to the Gentiles*. The saint speaks about this, "You have formed me and have set your *hand* upon me" [[Ps 139:5](#)]; and the Savior himself says, "No one can snatch from my Father's *hand*" [[John 10:29](#)]; and the Apostle Paul, "Humble yourselves under the mighty *hand* of God, that he may lift you up in his time" [[1 Pet 5:6](#)].<sup>558</sup> This *hand* has itself been *lifted up to the Gentiles*, of which the same prophet says, "There will be a root of Jesse, and he who shall arise to be prince of the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope" [[Isa 11:10](#)]. Not only will he *lift up his hand to the Gentiles*, but also he *will set up his sign among the people*, doubtless the banner of the cross,<sup>559</sup> that what is written may be fulfilled: "The earth is full of his praise" [[Hab 3:3](#)], and again: "His name is wonderful in all the earth" [[Ps 8:1](#)].

Then *they shall bring the sons of Zion in their arms*, or "bosom," *and will carry their daughters upon their shoulders*. Such was both Lazarus and all the saints who rest in the "bosom" of Abraham [cf. [Luke 16:22](#)], and the souls of the believers to whom the Apostle Paul was speaking: "I gave you milk to drink" [[1 Cor 3:2](#)], and elsewhere: "My little children, for whom I am again suffering birth pains, until Christ is formed in you" [[Gal 4:19](#)]; and in another passage: "As a nurse cherishes her sons, so we long and desire to impart to you not only the gospel of Christ but also our souls" [[1 Thess 2:7–8](#)]. Otherwise, it is ridiculous in a Judaic fashion to carry aged sons and daughters in the arms and on the shoulders. Now the *kings* who are *nursing fathers and the queens* who are princess-nurses point obviously to the apostles and apostolic men, of the sort that Abraham also was, to whom it is said, "You are among us a *king*

<sup>558</sup> Notice the misattribution to Paul.

<sup>559</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 36 (316, 1–).



from God” [[Gen 23:6](#)]; and as are those [kings] whose heart is in the hand of God [cf. [Prov 21:1](#)], who say to believers, “As newly born infants, long for the rational milk that is without deceit” [[1 Pet 2:2](#)].<sup>660</sup>

There is a “princess” too, that is, *αρχουσα*, which is the meaning of Sarah’s name, and “queens” or queen, of whom it is sung in the forty-fourth Psalm, “The *queen* stood at your right hand in gilded clothing” [[Ps 45:9](#)]. She daily nourishes Christ’s infants and leads them to the age of maturity. And every age, sex, and office *shall worship* Zion on account of him who dwells in it. For if Christ is the head of the church [cf. [Eph 5:23](#); [Col 1:18](#)], then the head is worshiped in the body. And if it is said to some, “Exalt the Lord our God and worship his footstool” [[Ps 99:5](#)], not that the stool should be adored, but to indicate the majesty of his feet, why should the church not be worshiped, which embraces the whole body of Christ? In this way what is written in Zephaniah is fulfilled: “They shall all adore him from his own place, all the islands of the Gentiles” [[Zeph 2:11](#)]. Hence it is not in a Judaic fashion that the tribes come from the villages every year to Jerusalem, but they worship the Lord and possess Jerusalem in “their own place.”

And as for what follows, *And they shall lick up the dust of your feet*, this signifies that the kings and princes by their speech wipe off and lick up whatever earthly work clings to the feet of the church. And this is why the apostles are commanded to shake the dust from their feet [cf. [Matt 10:14](#)], and why it is said to Peter that one who has washed once has no need to wash anything but his feet [cf. [John 13:10](#)]. Through all of this, the church learns that there is no other *Lord* but him, and that those who will *wait for him* will possess eternal glory.

25. ([49:24–26](#)) *Shall the prey be taken from the strong? Or can that which was taken by the mighty be saved? (25) For thus says the Lord: To be sure, the captivity shall be taken away from the strong, and that which was taken by the mighty shall be saved. But I will judge those who have judged you, and your sons I will save. (26) And I will feed your enemies with their own flesh, and they shall be made drunk with their own blood, as with grape juice, and all flesh shall know that I am the Lord who saves you, and your Redeemer the Mighty One of Jacob.* Septuagint: “Will anyone take spoils from a giant? And if one should take captives unjustly, shall he be saved? (25) Thus says the Lord: If one should take a giant captive, he shall take spoils, and he who takes them from a strong man shall be saved. But I will judge my judgment, and I will deliver my sons, (26) and those who have afflicted you shall eat their own flesh; and they shall drink their own blood, as new wine, and shall be drunk, and all flesh shall know that I am the Lord who has delivered you, and I am the helper of the strength of Jacob.”

Our Lord and Savior, who had previously spoken through Isaiah, himself repeats the same meaning in the Gospel: “How can anyone enter into the house of the *strong*, and plunder his goods, unless he first binds up the *strong* man? And then he will plunder his house” [[Matt 12:29](#)]. The *strong* and the “giant” is the devil, who has subjugated all nations to his command, daring to say to the Savior, “All this has been handed over to me, and I shall give them to you, if you fall down and worship me” [[Matt 4:9](#); cf. [Luke 4:6](#)]. For “the world is placed in the evil one” [[1 John 5:19](#)]. None of the just were able to conquer him. According to Amos, no one can remove the *prey* from the mouth of the lion [cf. [Amos 3:12](#)]. Having posed this question, therefore, about no one being able to conquer the *strong* and the “giant,” or to save what had

<sup>660</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (316, 6–).

been seized by him, the Lord responded that all things are to be achieved at his advent, namely that formerly captive nations are *taken away* from the “giant,” and all his household goods and all the members of his household are divided up by the apostles, when that which was written is fulfilled: “The king of the powers of the beloved, and for the beauty of the house to divide the spoils” [Ps 68:12]. For he is the one who “ascending on high led *captivity* captive, and gave gifts to men” [Eph 4:8]; that is to say, he captured unto life those who had previously been captured unto death. Hence Symmachus has translated it more clearly: “Moreover, a strong captivity will be removed, and a terrible booty will be saved,” intending that the devil, strong and terrible, be understood, who was conquered by the power of the Lord.

Therefore, the Lord, when judging those who had oppressed Zion, or “judging his judgment,” will liberate and *save* his *sons* who had been captured by the “giant.” And he will *feed* the hostile powers *with their own flesh*, and will make them *drunk, as with grape* juice. Thus they are not satisfied by the killing of others, but by their own death. And those who are *flesh*, since they have destroyed the Spirit of God, are fed on their own flesh. Indeed the saint also says this in the Psalms: “When those who were afflicting drew near to me to eat up my flesh” [Ps 27:2]. For it is not spirit that is consumed, since it is incorporeal, but flesh. It lies exposed to the bites of ferocious beasts. And at that time Zion, or rather, *all flesh*, which will see the salvation of God [cf. Isa 40:5], will learn that its *Redeemer* and Savior is he who struggled with Jacob [cf. Gen 32:24–28], or was “the helper of the strength of Jacob.” The result was that when he was overcome by those who crucified him in his passion, he blessed them: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” [Luke 23:34].

26. (50:1–2a) *Thus says the Lord: What is this bill of the divorce of your mother, with which I have put her away? Or who is my creditor, to whom I sold you? Behold, you were sold for your iniquities, and for your wicked deeds I have put your mother away. (2) Because I came, and there was not a man (vir), I called, and there was none that would hear. Septuagint: “Thus says the Lord: Of what kind is your mother’s bill of divorce, by which I put her away? Or to which creditor and collector of mine have I sold you? Behold, you were sold for your sins, and for your iniquities I have put your mother away. (2) For I came, and there was no human (homo), I called, and there was none that would obey.”*

After the calling of the Gentiles [cf. Isa 49:1, 6], and the kings and princesses, nursing fathers and nurses, and the captivity of the previously strong and mighty one, whose prey was divided up by the apostles [cf. Isa 49:23–24]; and after the madness of the demons, who were gluttoned on their own flesh and made drunk on their own blood [cf. Isa 49:26a], when all flesh knew that the Redeemer and Mighty One is the very God of Jacob [cf. Isa 49:26b]; he speaks to the Jewish people on Zion, who had previously said, “The Lord has forsaken me, and the Lord has forgotten me” [Isa 49:14]: “Do you think that Jerusalem your earthly mother has been cast forth by my hardness, and that I am of a rigid mind and have given her a *bill of the divorce*? Do you not rather understand what is true, that she withdrew from me by her own fault? For when I was telling her, ‘Cease from acting unjustly, learn to do good’ [Isa 1:16–17], she refused to listen to me. Instead, she turned her shoulder away from me to depart [cf. Zech 7:11]. This is why I said to her sons, ‘Woe to them, for they have withdrawn from me, they are manifest because they have acted impiously against me’ ” [Hos 7:13]. And he says to her, “Your apostasy shall instruct

you, and your wickedness shall chastise you, and you will know that your forsaking me is an evil for you" [[Jer 2:19](#)]. But perhaps you cannot show a *bill of divorce*, and some *creditor of mine* demands money. Since I have nothing to pay him back with, has he taken you in compensation for the debt? It is not so, but I will show you why I abandoned the mother with her sons. *Your wicked deeds and sins* have sold you to demons, so that having been ensnared by the pleasures of the present age, you abandoned your parent and she abandoned her spouse. This is why I was not able to hold on any longer to your adulterous mother, but I permitted her to go away willingly. For each one is sold to his own sins, so long as we are left to our own choice, and are led by our own will, either to good or evil. Moreover, the Apostle Paul teaches, "But I am carnal, sold under sin" [[Rom 7:14](#)]. For "he who commits sin is a slave of sin" [[John 8:34](#)]. And just as the avaricious and the greedy are slaves of mammon [cf. [Matt 6:24](#)], so every sin is the master of sinners. To them it is said, "Let not sin reign in your mortal body" [[Rom 6:12](#)].

But in order that you may know that it was not I who divorced your mother, but she who withdrew by her own will, after many kindnesses, I assumed a human body, and I spoke not through the prophets but through my presence. *I came, and there was not a man*, or "human." For everyone, by abandoning the image of *man* and of the *human being*, have adopted the images of beasts and serpents. This is why it is said to Herod, on account of his malice, "Go tell that fox" [[Luke 13:32](#)]; and to the Pharisees, "Brood of vipers" [[Matt 23:33](#)]; and to those driven by lust, "They have become horses that are raving for females" [[Jer 5:8](#)]; and of the voluptuous, "Do not cast your pearls before swine" [[Matt 7:6](#)]; and of the arrogant, "Do not give what is holy to dogs" [[Matt 7:6](#)]; and generally concerning all, "The vision of the four-footed beasts that were in the desert" [[Isa 30:6](#)]. And so, the Lord *came*, and he found no "human being." "For when man was in honor, he did not understand; he was compared with the senseless cattle, and has become like them" [[Ps 49:12](#)]. *I called* them, he says, as a rational creature, and I said, "Incline your ear to the words of my mouth" [[Ps 78:1](#)], and "My people did not listen to my voice" [[Ps 81:11](#)]. I shouted, and said, "Let him who thirsts come and drink" [[John 7:37](#)], and in another passage, "Come to me, you who labor and are burdened down" [[Matt 11:28](#)], and *there was none that would hear*. This is why I said to them in the Gospel, "You have neither seen God's form nor heard his voice, because you do not have his words abiding in you" [[John 5:37–38](#)].

27. ([50:2b–3](#)) *Is my hand shortened and become little, that it cannot redeem? Or is there no strength in me to deliver? Behold, at my rebuke I will make the sea a desert, I will turn the rivers into dry land, the fishes shall rot for want of water, and shall die of thirst. (3) I will clothe the heavens with darkness, and will make sackcloth (saccum) their covering.* Septuagint: "Is not my hand able to liberate? Or can it not deliver? Behold, by my threat I will make the sea a desert, and make rivers deserts; and their fish shall be dried up because there is no water, and they shall die of thirst. (3) I will clothe the heaven with darkness, and [will make] its covering as goat's hair (*cilicium*)."

In opposition to those who thought that the Lord was unable to liberate his people from captivity, he gives an account and provides very detailed examples. He says that the one who made the Red Sea passable for his people [cf. [Exod 14:21–22](#)], who dried up the streams of the Jordan [cf. [Josh 3:15–16](#)], and turned the fish into rotteness by drying up the rivers in Egypt [cf.

[Exod 7:20–21](#)], and who for three days caused the darkness in Egypt to be palpable [cf. [Exod 10:21–22](#)], so that the sky seemed as if it were covered with *sackcloth* and *darkness*, assuredly he will be able to deliver his people from danger as well.<sup>661</sup> Or, because he had said above, “I have come, and there was no human, I called, and there was none that would hear” [[Isa 50:2a](#)], we can say that he who is the accomplisher of such great signs, and who causes the sky and the lands and the seas to serve his command, likewise he could have avoided the cross, since he says in the Gospel, “Or do you think that I cannot ask my Father to provide for me presently more than twelve legions of angels?” [[Matt 26:53](#)].

Anagogically, at the *rebuke* of the Lord, *the sea* is made *a desert* when all the bitterness of this age is dried up, and the *rivers* are made desolate, of which the spiritual dragon was speaking in Egypt: “The rivers are mine, and I have made them” [[Ezek 29:9](#)]; and of which in another passage we read, “And what do you have to do with the way of the Assyrians, to drink the waters of the rivers?” [[Jer 2:18](#)]. The *fishes* too *shall rot* when the dragnet is cast into the sea and they are separated from the good fish [cf. [Matt 13:47–49](#)].

And as for what follows, “I will clothe the heaven with darkness, and its covering will be as goat’s hair (*cilicium*),” either we should understand everything that is above us as “heaven,” just as the flying creatures that are in the air are called “heavenly things,” and the adversarial powers are said to be “heavenly” that dart between heaven and earth. Or, at any rate, the *heaven is clothed with darkness* when it is covered with clouds, in accordance with what is written, “He who covers the heaven with clouds and gives rain to the earth” [[Ps 147:8](#)]. And when threatening a drought, God says, “I will make the heaven bronze and the earth iron” [[Deut 28:23](#)]. It is not that the nature of the elements is changed, but that by bronze and iron the extent of the punishments is being shown. The philosophers say that the clouds are raised on high from the earth no more than ten stadia, and that they hide the radiance of the sun. Therefore, the heaven is not wrapped in sackcloth, but when the light of heaven has been blocked, the air that is underneath is obscured by the darkness of the cloud. We can thus interpret the heavens wrapped in darkness and covered with sackcloth to mean that all are under sin, and the saints too stand in need of God’s mercy [cf. [Rom 3:9](#)].

<sup>661</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 37 (318, 20–4).

## [THE FOURTEENTH BOOK]

1. The Lord “who looks upon the earth and makes it tremble, who touches the mountains and they will smoke” [[Ps 104:32](#)], who says in the song of Deuteronomy, “I shall kill and I shall make alive, I shall strike and I shall heal” [[Deut 32:39](#)], makes my earth tremble mightily as well by means of frequent sicknesses. It was said to it, “Earth you are, and unto the earth shall you go” [[Gen 3:19](#)], and often forgetting my human condition, he reminds me to be aware that I am a man, and old, and at any time now I shall be dead. Of this it is written, “Why do earth and ashes boast?” [[Sir 10:9](#)]. This is why the one who had struck me suddenly with an illness healed me with unbelievable speed, to frighten rather than crush, and to reform rather than to flog. And so, knowing that my whole life belongs to him, and that perhaps the reason my sleep<sup>11</sup> is being postponed is so that I may complete the work I have begun on the prophets, I hand myself over completely to this pursuit. And stationed as it were in a watchtower, I survey the storms and shipwrecks of this world, not without groaning and pain. I do not think about the present but the future, nor about my reputation among men and their gossip, but I greatly tremble at the prospect of God’s judgment [cf. [Phil 2:12](#)]. And you, Eustochium, virgin of Christ, who have aided this sick man by your prayers, pray also for the grace of Christ to be upon him now that he has been healed, so that by the same Spirit with which the prophets sang of the future, I may be able to enter into the cloud and the gloom [cf. [Exod 20:21](#)] and know God’s words, which are heard not with ears of flesh but with those of the heart. May I say with the prophet, “The Lord gives me a tongue of instruction, to know when it is fitting for me to speak” [[Isa 50:4](#)]. This testimony commences the fourteenth book on Isaiah, which I now desire to discuss.

2. ([50:4–7](#)) *The Lord has given me a learned tongue, that I should know how to uphold by word him who is weary. He wakens in the morning, in the morning he wakens my ear, that I may hear him as a master. (5) The Lord God has opened my ear; and I do not contradict, I have not gone back. (6) I have given my body to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pluck them. I have not turned away my face from those who rebuked me, and spit upon me. (7) The Lord God is my helper, therefore I am not confounded. Therefore I have set my face as the hardest rock, and I know that I shall not be confounded.* Septuagint: “The Lord gives me the tongue of instruction, to know when it is fitting for me to speak a word. He has appointed for me in the morning, he has given me additionally an ear to hear, (5) and the instruction of the Lord has opened my ears. But I do not disobey, nor contradict. (6) I gave my back to the scourges, and my cheeks to the blows; and I turned not away my face from the shame of spitting. (7) And the Lord became my helper, therefore I was not confounded, but I set my face as the strongest rock, and I shall know that I shall not be confounded.”

1 In the sense of “eath” cf. [2 Macc 12:45](#); [Tertullian, Patient. 9](#).

The Jews separate this section from what comes above it, and they want to apply it to the person of Isaiah, that he is saying that *he* has received words from the Lord as to how he is *to uphold* the people who are *weary* and going astray, and to summon them back to salvation. And from the Holy Spirit he *hears* what to say, in the manner of children who are educated in the *morning* hours. He has not *contradicted* his command, but has responded to the Lord, who asks, “Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?” [[Isa 6:8](#)], with the words, “Here I am, send me” [[Isa 6:8](#)]. And the Jews say that he endured harsh things, because he said, “Hear the word of the Lord, princes of Sodom, give ear to the law of our God, people of Gomorrah” [[Isa 1:10](#)]; so much so that he was exposed not merely to abusive words, but also to the pain of blows. But still, [the Jews say] that the people were not thoroughly terrified by the awareness that God had commanded him, but in accordance with what is said to Ezekiel, “Behold, I have made your face stronger than their faces, and your forehead harder than their foreheads, as I made your face adamant and flint” [[Ezek 3:8–9](#)], they crushed him with all their violence. They say this who try by every means to undermine the prophecies concerning Christ and to distort them into an incorrect understanding by means of a faulty interpretation. As if they can remove the other pieces of evidence regarding Christ, if they show that these things too were actually written about Isaiah! But the evidence is so clear that it pours its own bright light into the eyes of all.

Even this, then, is to be related to the Lord’s person, with whom the previous book ended. For he was *learned* in accordance with the dispensation of the body he assumed; and he received a “tongue of instruction, to know when” he ought “to speak,” when to be silent. After all, the one who was silent during the passion [cf. [Matt 26:63](#); [Mark 15:5](#); [John 19:9](#)], now “speaks” in the whole world through the apostles and apostolic men. And great knowledge is required to give food rations to fellow servants at the right time [cf. [Luke 12:42](#)], and to take into account who the audience is. And this is why the Apostle Paul speaks to those who did not trust in the prophets with testimonies from their own authors: “Just as some of your prophets have said, ‘And we are his offspring’ ” [[Acts 17:28](#)], meaning Aratus. And again he cites from the comic poet, “Bad company corrupts good morals” [[1 Cor 15:33](#)], and the hexameter line from Epimenides, “Cretans are always liars, wicked beasts, lazy gluttons” [[Titus 1:12](#)]. One should know that these lines flow well in their feet in Greek, even if they do not preserve the regularity of the meter and its measure in translation. Now he did this because he had received a “tongue of instruction to know when he ought to speak a word.” To this “an ear” is added through the grace that he did not have by nature. Consequently, we understand that they cannot be understood as bodily ears, but those of the mind. The Lord spoke of these even in the Gospel: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” [[Matt 11:15](#)]. This “instruction” and learning “opened” his “ears,” so that he could continuously transmit the knowledge of the Father to us. He did not *contradict* him, but became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross [cf. [Phil 2:8](#)], in such a way that he “gave” his *body*, or “back to scourges”; and his chest, which contained God, they cut to pieces with a whip; and his “cheeks” he did not turn away from the “blows.”<sup>22</sup> There is no doubt that he endured this at the hands of the servant of the high priest [cf. [John 18:22](#)], so that the Jewish people enviously mocked him [cf. [Matt 27:18](#)]. When struck and spit upon, he was not ashamed, and he was led as a lamb to the sacrifice, and as a sheep before the shearer,

2 Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 37 (318, 31–4).



he did not open his mouth [cf. [Isa 53:7](#)]. But we learn more fully in the gospel that the Son heard from the Father what he was to say, in accordance with the mystery of the body he had taken on, in which he says, “And the Father who sent me has given me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak” [[John 12:49](#)]. And again, “As I hear, so I judge” [[John 5:30](#)].

3. ([50:8–9](#)) *He is near who justifies me; who contradicts me? Let us stand together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. (9) Behold, the Lord God is my helper; who is he that condemns me? Behold, they shall all be destroyed as a garment, the moth shall devour them.* Septuagint: “For he who justifies me is near; who is he that is judged with me? Let him stand up against me at the same time. And who is he that goes to court against me? Let him draw near to me. (9) Behold, the Lord is my helper; who will hurt me? Behold, you shall all grow old as a garment, and as a moth, it shall devour you.”

He is saying, If anyone thinks that I was justly condemned to the cross and committed some sin, “Let him stand up against me.” “Who is he that is judged with me,” so that he is overcome not by the power of my majesty but by argument? But someone “is judged with” the Lord, not by the judgment of the one who reigns, but by comparison of virtues, just as the apostles too “judge” the twelve tribes of Israel [cf. [Matt 19:28](#)], and the Ninevites as well as the queen of Sheba “judge” the Jewish people [cf. [Matt 12:41–42](#)]. It is in accordance with this sense that is said to Jerusalem, “Sodom has been justified because of you” [[Ezek 16:52](#); cf. [16:48](#)]. Since therefore no one can be justified in the presence of the Lord, “all shall grow old as a garment.” “But what is *growing old* is near to destruction” [[Heb 8:13](#)].<sup>33</sup>

He says, “And as a moth, it shall devour” them, referring to their awareness of sins and their jealousy over the salvation of the Gentiles. He also speaks about this at the end of this book: “Their worm shall not die” [[Isa 66:24](#)]; and in Micah it is spoken against corrupt princes, “I shall take away their goods as a devouring moth, and as one who walks upon a ruler in a day of observation” [[Mic 7:3–4](#)]. Also in Proverbs, it says, “An understanding heart is a moth to one’s own bones” [[Prov 14:30](#)]. In the present passage, Symmachus translated “moth” as “rust,” Aquila as “worm.”

4. ([50:10](#)) *Who is there among you who fears the Lord, who hears the voice of his servant (servi), who has walked in darkness, and has no light? Let him hope in the name of the Lord, and lean upon his God.* Septuagint: “Who is there among you who fears the Lord? Let him hearken to the voice of his servant (*puerī*). Those who walk in darkness, and they have no light. You trust in the name of the Lord, and you lean upon God.”

You scourged me, you spit in my face; nevertheless I summon you, my persecutors, to repentance. For I do not will the death of the sinful people, but only that they turn back and live [cf. [Ezek 18:23](#)];<sup>44</sup> and I say, *Who is there among you that fears the Lord and hears the voice of his servant*, or “boy,” that is, of his Son? One of these refers to the flesh he assumed, the other to his nature. And indeed we should not think that it is a small thing to *fear the Lord*, according to what is said in Proverbs, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” [[Prov 9:10](#)]. For “perfect love casts out fear, since fear has punishment; but he who fears is not perfected in love” [[1 John 4:18](#)]. But here fear is recorded for “timidity,” and εὐλαβία, of which we also

3 Cf. *ibid.* (320, 6.11–2).

4 Cf. *ibid.* (320, 19–0).

read elsewhere: “Blessed is the one who has feared everything for the sake of *ευλαβιαν*” [[Prov 28:14](#)], that is, for the sake of timidity. It refers to those whom they commonly call “devoutly fearful” in the religion of God [cf. Vulg. [Luke 2:25](#); [Acts 8:2](#)]. For “the Lord protects their journey and guards the way of those who devoutly fear him” [[Prov 28:14](#)]. Of this fear it is written, “The fear of the Lord surpasses everything” [[Sir 25:11](#)]; and elsewhere, “Those who fear him have no want” [[Ps 34:9](#)]. Ultimately one reaches a fear of the Lord of this kind after many stages of virtues. For the divine word speaks under the persona of a teacher and father who is educating his student and son: “For if you shall call upon wisdom, and utter your voice for understanding, and if you shall seek it as money, and search diligently for it as for treasures, then you shall understand the fear of the Lord, and you will find the knowledge of God” [[Prov 2:3–5](#)]. This is the fear that preserves the souls of the saints unscathed as well as pure and chaste, of which it is said, “The fear of the Lord is holy, enduring forever and ever” [[Ps 19:9](#)]. The divine communication exhorts us unto this fear: “Fear the Lord and give him glory” [[Rev 14:7](#)]. Let the one who fears the Lord in this way, therefore, *hear the voice of his servant*, or “boy,” *who has walked in darkness, and had no light*, who had no “beauty” and no “glory” [cf. [Isa 53:2](#)]; but in the likeness of sinful flesh [cf. [Rom 8:3](#)] he took up the form of a servant [cf. [Phil 2:7](#)], in order to overcome sin in the flesh [cf. [Rom 8:3](#)]. Concerning this, it is said that he should *hope in the name of the Lord, and lean upon his God*, so that by means of the divine majesty, he may strengthen and uphold whatever pertains to human frailty. This has been said in accordance with the Hebrew.

On the other hand, according to the Septuagint, this is being said about sinners, who have been unwilling to obey the voice of his Son, and who “walk in the darkness” of error, and on that account they “have no light.” For wisdom was unable to enter into a malicious soul [cf. [Wis 1:4](#)]. They “have neither known nor understood” [[Ps 82:5](#)], and for that reason they “walk in darkness.” For they have not done the works and commands of the Lord, they have not “sown for themselves in justice, nor have they gathered in the vintage of life” [[Hos 10:12](#)], so that they would kindle the light of knowledge for themselves [cf. [Isa 50:11](#)]. For “he who desires wisdom keeps the commandments, and the Lord gives it to him” [[Sir 1:26](#)]. This is why it is said to God, “Your precepts are a light” [[Isa 26:9](#)], and elsewhere, “The commandment of the Lord is clear, illuminating the eyes” [[Ps 19:8](#)]. And the ungodly are commanded to “trust in the Lord,” and those who are falling into sin should “lean upon” him and be sustained by his help.

5. ([50:11](#)) *Behold, all you who kindle a fire, encompassed with flames, walk in the light of your fire, and in the flames which you have kindled; this has been done to you by my hand, you shall sleep in sorrows.* Septuagint: “Behold, you are all kindling a fire and greatly strengthening the flame; walk in the light of your fire, and in the flame that you have kindled; these things have happened to you for my sake; you shall sleep in grief.”

The exhortation brings no benefit, and there is no hope of salvation after wicked deeds. “All have turned aside, together they have become useless” [[Ps 14:3](#)]; “all are kindling a fire” for themselves, and “greatly strengthening the flame.” For within themselves they have the wood, hay, and stubble [cf. [1 Cor 3:12](#)], the thorns, thistles, and weeds, which are handed over to an eternal burning. And this is why it is written in the Proverbs, “With much wood fire increases” [[Prov 26:20](#)]. But if a small fire consumes a large amount of material [cf. [Jas 3:5](#)], how much

devastation shall a large flame wreak? In the Epistle that is received to the Hebrews it is said of land that brings forth thorns and thistles that it is rejected and near to cursing, and its end is for burning [cf. [Heb 6:8](#)]. Therefore, those who are *encompassed* and surrounded *with flames* and who have “strengthened” the fire in themselves are being summoned to salvation. It is said to them, *Walk in the light of your fire, and in the flames that you have kindled*, so that through their punishments and penalties they may learn the power of God and return to salvation. Now he is signifying the devastation of the Jewish people, for they were handed over to the Romans and down to the present they are enduring the yoke of captivity.

All “these things” have been done to you” *by the hand* of Christ, and they *shall sleep in* “grief” and *sorrows*. For neither by his kindnesses nor by his punishments were they willing to receive God’s Son. This is why it is said to them, “Go into the eternal fire that God has prepared for the devil and his angels” [[Matt 25:41](#)]. This is also what the Apostle says, “For wrath has come upon them in the end” [[1 Thess 2:16](#)]. In this section we learn that each one kindles a fire for himself in view of the nature of his sin. And just as with respect to those who stay in the same place and, so to speak, in the same bed, some are healthy, others burn with the heat of a fever, and they feel different levels of suffering based on the diversity of fluids and phlegm, so too the fire that is kindled by sinners has its material in the sins and iniquity. It is written of the latter, “Iniquity shall burn like a fire, and shall be devoured by fire as dry grass” [[Isa 9:18](#)].

6. ([51:1–3](#)) *Hear me, you who pursue what is just and are seeking the Lord. Attend to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the cavern of the pit from which you were dug out. (2) Attend to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you, for I called him alone, and blessed him, and multiplied him. (3) The Lord therefore will comfort even Zion, he will comfort all its ruins, and he will make her desert as a place of delights, and her wilderness as the garden of the Lord. Joy and gladness shall be found in her, thanksgiving (gratiarum actio), and the voice of praise.* Septuagint: “Hear me, you who pursue what is just and are seeking the Lord. Attend to the solid rock that you have hewn, and to the hole of the pit that you have dug. (2) Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you, for he was alone, and I called him, and blessed him, and loved him, and multiplied him. (3) And now I will comfort you, O Zion, and I have comforted all her desert places as a paradise, and her western places as the paradise of the Lord; they shall find in her gladness and exultation, thanksgiving (*confessionem*) and the voice of praise.”

To those sleeping in perpetual sorrow and grief, who have kindled for themselves a fire and have caused the flames to be very intense [cf. [Isa 50:11](#)], *you who pursue justice and seek the Lord*—he means, however, the chorus of apostles and of those who believe through the apostles<sup>55</sup>—look to *the rock*, that is, *Abraham your father*, from whom *you were hewn, and to the cavern of the pit from which you were dug out*, that is, *to Sarah who bore you*. And consider this, that when he was ninety-nine years old and had a barren wife [cf. [Gen 17:1](#)], I *multiplied* his sons as the stars of heaven, so that the multitude surpassed number. If then from one man so many thousands of people were born, why is it a grand thing for me to restore the *ruins of Zion*, and to turn “her desert places” into “a paradise” of pleasure, and a garden of the Lord, which God planted in Eden toward the east [cf. [Gen 2:8](#)], so that *joy and gladness*, “thanksgiving

5 Cf. *ibid.* (321, 12–9).

(*confessio*) and the voice of praise” *might be found in her* on account of the various kinds of trees?

The Jews apply this to the time of Zerubbabel, because after the Babylonian devastation Zion was restored, and the temple and the ancient religion were set up again. But just as the things that are said above transcend the insignificance of that time period, and they are known not to have been fulfilled in the earthly Jerusalem, for instance when it is said to Zion, “They shall bring your sons in their arms, and carry your daughters upon their shoulders, and kings shall be your nursing fathers, and queens your nurses” [[Isa 49:22–23](#)]; and, “Behold, these shall come from afar, and these from the north and from the sea, and these from the south country” [[Isa 49:12](#)], when Zion will say, “The place is too narrow for me, make me room to dwell in” [[Isa 49:20](#)]; so, too, here the Lord is speaking to those who *pursue what is just* in accordance with what is said elsewhere, “Seek peace and *pursue it*” [[Ps 34:14](#)], and again, “*Pursue hospitality*” [[Rom 12:13](#)]. And they are *seeking the Lord*, so that they interpret the present on the basis of the former things, and since much more difficult things have already been accomplished, they do not doubt these things that are promised for the future.

On the other hand, according to the Septuagint the pursuers of justice are being told to look to the very “solid rock” that they have “hewn,” and to the “hole of the pit” that they have “dug” (*foderunt*), that is, to the Lord and Savior of whom the Apostle speaks, “But the rock was Christ” [[1 Cor 10:4](#)]; and elsewhere it is written, “He set my feet upon the rock” [[Ps 40:2](#)], and again, “He set me high upon a rock” [[Ps 27:5](#)]. For they “dug” through (*perfoderunt*) his side with a spear from which blood and water came forth [cf. [John 19:34](#)], and they “dug” (*foderunt*) into his hands and feet, since the Lord and Savior himself says, “They have pierced (*foderunt*) my hands and my feet, they have numbered all my bones” [[Ps 22:16–17](#)].<sup>66</sup> We can speak of the Savior’s tomb in which he was laid as a “rock that was hewn.” Moreover, when he rose from the dead he begot countless sons and was called “Abraham,” that is, “father of many nations” [cf. [Gen 17:5](#)], just as “Sarah,” who was previously barren, is interpreted as the church, which is called by another name, “Zion,” which the Lord has “comforted”; and he has made “her desert places as a paradise.” “For the sons of the deserted one are more than of her who has a husband” [[Isa 54:1](#); [Gal 4:27](#)].<sup>77</sup>

Now as for what is said, “And I will turn her western places into a paradise of the Lord,” or a *garden of God*, this indicates that a sudden light has risen for those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death [cf. [Isa 9:2](#)]. “Paradise,” which we translated in this passage as *delights*, is recorded in the Hebrew as “Eden.” It is written about it at the beginning of Genesis [cf. [Gen 2:8](#)]. And one should take note of this, that in “Zion,” which is compared to the paradise of God, there ought to be nothing else but *joy and gladness*, “thanksgiving (*confessionem*) and the voice of praise.” Hence the saints by their continuous praise of God rehearse even on earth what they will be doing in heaven with the angels of God.

7. ([51:4–5](#)) *Attend to me, O my people, and hear me, O my tribe, for a law shall go forth from me, and my judgment shall rest to be a light of the people. (5) My just one is near, my savior has gone forth, and my arms shall judge the people. The islands shall await me, and shall*

6 Cf. *ibid.* (321, 20–8).

7 Cf. *ibid.* (322, 5–2).

*sustain my arm.* Septuagint: “Hear me, hear me, my people, and you kings, attend to me; for a law shall go forth from me, and my judgment [shall be] for a light of the nations. (5) My justice speedily draws near, and my salvation shall go forth, and the Gentiles shall hope in my arm. The islands shall wait for me, and in my arm shall they hope.”

In the Hebrew he says one time, *Attend*; in the Septuagint he speaks it a second time: “Hear me, hear me.” Thus he shows that we should hear both with the bodily ears and with the thought of the soul. And the multitude of the nations, which is the people of God, is summoned to hear carefully what is said. Zechariah says of this, “Many nations shall flee to the Lord for refuge, and they shall be for a people to him” [[Zech 2:11](#)]. Or, as some think it means, the remnant of those who believe out of Israel are called “people,” and those who have believed from the multitude of Gentiles are the *tribe* or the “nations.” For Moses says in the song of Deuteronomy, “Rejoice, O nations, with his people” [[Deut 32:43](#)]. The word that we interpreted as *tribe*, Theodotion translated “race,” Symmachus “nation,” the Septuagint “kings.” For we are a *tribe*, a nation, and the Lord’s royal priestly race [cf. [1 Pet 2:9](#)]. And Abraham was a man of this sort, since he was called a “king” [cf. [Gen 23:6](#)]; and the rest of saints are like this, of whom it is written, “Do not touch my christs” [[Ps 105:15](#)].

What is it that one is commanded to hear? He says, *That a law shall go forth from me, and my judgment [shall be] for a light of the people, or “nations.”* Here he is pointing to the spiritual law of the gospel, which will go forth from Zion [cf. [Isa 2:3](#)], not the law of Moses, which was given long ago on Sinai. And his *judgment* will proceed “for a light of nations” through which light it has been established and decreed that all nations must be saved. And moreover, lest perhaps we should think that what he has promised will come about after a long time, he adds, *My just one, or “justice,” is near.* For Christ has become for us, from the Father, wisdom, redemption, sanctity, and justice [cf. [1 Cor 1:30](#)], and all the things by the names of which his virtue is identified. And it is nicely said that “justice” will *go forth*. Accordingly, it is not a single nation but the whole world that is being saved. But that the Son of God, who has been sent from the Father, is called *savior*, or “salvation,” which in Hebrew is expressed as *Jesus*, Simeon says, while holding the boy in his arms, “Now you dismiss your servant, O Lord, because my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all peoples, a light for revelation of the nations [[Luke 2:29–32](#)].”<sup>88</sup>

As for what follows, *And my arms shall judge the people,* or according to the Septuagint, “And the Gentiles shall hope in my arm,” either this means that everyone is judged by his power, or that in Christ, who is the arm and strength of God [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)], all nations will believe. And in another passage it is said, “Your arm is with power; let your hand be strengthened, let your right hand be exalted” [[Ps 89:13](#)]; and again, “Sing to the Lord a new song; his right hand will save for him and his holy arm” [[Ps 98:1](#)]. For the right hand and holy arm of the Lord is the very one who first saved the lost for himself, so that none would perish of those whom the Father had given him [cf. [John 17:12](#)]. But we have repeatedly explained that the *islands* are either the souls of the saints, which have been strengthened with a firm faith in God in the midst of the persecutions of this world, or they refer to the multitude of churches out of the nations. And just as we can understand the “arm” of the Lord as the Savior, so his *arms* that *judge the people*

8 Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 38 (323, 12–5).

are all the saints in whom God will judge the world [cf. [1 Cor 6:2](#)].

8. ([51:6](#)) *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and see under the earth beneath, for the heavens shall vanish like smoke, and the earth shall be worn away like a garment, and its inhabitants shall perish in like manner. But my salvation shall be forever, and my justice shall not fail.* Septuagint: “Lift up your eyes to heaven, and look on the earth beneath, for the heaven was made solid like smoke, and the earth shall grow old like a garment, and its inhabitants shall die in like manner. But my salvation will be everlasting, and my justice shall not fail.”

This is what the Lord says in the Gospel: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” [[Matt 24:35](#)]; and David sings in the Psalm: “You have founded the earth from the beginning, O Lord, and the heavens are the works of your hands; they shall perish, but you remain, and they shall all grow old like a garment, and you shall wrap them up like a garment, and they will be changed” [[Ps 102:25–26](#)]. From this it is shown that the perishing of the heavens does not mean their annihilation but their change for the better. Of this it is said, “There will be a new heaven and a new earth, which I will cause to remain in my sight” [[Isa 66:22](#)]. For if it is written about the saints, “We shall indeed all sleep, but we shall not all be changed” [[1 Cor 15:51](#)].<sup>9</sup> Moreover in the headings of four Psalms, it reads, “For those who will be changed” [[Pss 45:1](#); [60:1](#); [69:1](#); [80:1](#)]. How much more should this be believed concerning the heaven, the sun, and the stars, when the moon shall receive the sun’s light and the sun will grow seven times more red in its brilliance [cf. [Isa 30:26](#)]?<sup>10</sup> This is also why all creation groans and suffers birth pains, awaiting the revelation of the sons of God [cf. [Rom 8:19, 22](#)], so that it may be changed for the better. And not only shall the souls of men, which are immortal, be changed into a glorified substance, but also their bodies. “For it is necessary for this corruptible to put on incorruption, and this mortal to put on immortality” [[1 Cor 15:53](#)]. But when the heaven and earth “grow old,” logically also the things that are contained within the circuit of heaven, and the men who are the *inhabitants* of the earth, shall die *in like manner*, not by their annihilation, but by the removal of their ancient worthlessness, and by their renewal in the future glory, when the just shall shine like the sun [cf. [Matt 13:43](#)], and when the former old things pass away, all things will become new [cf. [2 Cor 5:17](#)].

Some understand “perishing” and “growing old” to mean abolition and death, in accordance with what we read in the Catholic Epistle: “By the same word the heavens and the earth that now exist have been reserved for fire” [[2 Pet 3:7](#)]; and again, “The elements will be dissolved with burning” [[2 Pet 3:10](#)]. These things, to be sure, will perish with fire, both the opinion of the

9 Jerome’ reading here of [1 Cor 15:51](#) witnesses to an important textual variant. Cf. B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 3rd edition (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1971), [569](#). In spite of this reading, Jerome clearly taught that those alive on the last day will not die. For a discussion, see J. P. O’onnell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, Dissertationes ad Lauream 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 14–7.

<sup>10</sup> O’onnell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, 17, brings out the significance of Jerome’ term “ow much more” in his argument here: “t refers to the fact that Scripture describes the state of the saints at the end of the world as sleeping while it speaks of the heavens as undergoing changes in brightness, thus making more credible the transformation of the heavens and earth.”



philosophers of the world and everything that we see. And this is why the Apostle says, “The form of this world is passing away” [[1 Cor 7:31](#)], to us who “contemplate not the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen; for what is seen is temporal, but what is not seen is eternal” [[2 Cor 4:18](#)]. The Apostle John also writes something like this: “The world and its desire are passing away” [[1 John 2:17](#)]; and in the Hebrew it is said, *The heavens shall vanish like smoke*, or according to Aquila and Symmachus, “shall be diminished to nothing and worn away and disappear like salt.” The former said: *ηλίσθησαν*, the latter *αλμησουσιν*, which clearly is derived etymologically from the diminishment and failure of salt. I wonder why the Septuagint wanted to express this as, “The heaven was made solid like smoke.” For if solidity is understood as strength, how can what is solid be compared with smoke? Unless perhaps we can say this, that the entire solidity of the heavens and strength and robustness is being equated to the most unsubstantial wind and smoke that is dispersed into the breezes, in accordance with Ecclesiastes: “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” [[Eccl 1:2](#)]. Moreover, one should say this, that if the heaven and earth perish and “grow old,” how is it coherent that their inhabitants die and vanish “in like manner,” when we know that souls are everlasting and bodies will be resurrected? Therefore, it is clear that the heavens and earth do not perish and are not reduced to nothing, but they are changed for the better.

9. ([51:7–8](#)) *Hear me, you who know the just, [my] people, my law [is] in their heart. Do not fear the reproach of men, and do not be afraid of their blasphemies. (8) For the worm shall so eat them up as a garment, and the moth shall so devour them as wool. But my salvation shall be everlasting, and my justice is for the generation of generations.* Septuagint: “Hear me, you who know judgment, the people of whom my law [is] in their heart. Do not fear the reproach of men, and do not be overcome by their contempt. (8) For as a garment they shall be consumed by time, and as wool shall be eaten by a moth. But my justice shall be forever, and my salvation for generations of generations.”

He who had said above, “A law shall go forth from me, and my judgment for a light of the nations” [[Isa 51:4](#)], now speaks to these same people, who “know his judgment” and have his “law in their hearts,” so that they do everything with “judgment” and have the “law” that the Lord promises through Jeremiah, saying, “I will make a new covenant, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, but I will make a covenant by putting my laws into their minds, and I shall write them on their hearts, and I shall be their God, and they shall be my people” [[Jer 31:31–33](#)]. He says they are not living according to the letter, but according to the Spirit, by renewing the natural law in their hearts, of which the Apostle also writes, “For when the Gentiles, who have no law, do by nature what the law prescribes, these having no law are a law unto themselves. They show the work of the law written in their hearts” [[Rom 2:14–15](#)]. The Psalm gives indication of this law: “The mouth of the just shall meditate on wisdom, and his tongue shall speak judgment. The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps shall not stumble” [[Ps 37:30–31](#)].

And because the prophetic Spirit knew that believers would face many persecutions, he exhorts them to fortitude, or rather, to “contempt” for those who will persecute them. The Lord also spoke about this in the Gospel: “Do not fear those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who can destroy soul and body in hell” [[Matt 10:28](#)]; and in

another passage: “Rejoice when they shall falsely speak all evil against you” [[Matt 5:11](#)]. For just as *a garment* is “consumed” by *a worm* or “by time,” and “as wool is devoured by a moth,” so shall *the reproach of persecutors* pass away with the persecutors. And this is why the apostles boasted that they had been considered worthy to suffer mistreatment for the sake of the Lord [[Acts 5:41](#)]. But they were boasting because the *salvation* and *justice* of the Lord, which had promised them victory and rewards, that is, the Lord and Savior [cf. [1 Cor 1:30](#)], would continue “forever,” or *unto* both the *generation* of the former people and of the later one, who received the advent of him of whom it is also said above, “My just one is near, my Savior has gone forth” [[Isa 51:5](#)].

10. ([51:9–11](#)) *Arise (consurge), arise, put on strength, O arm of the Lord, arise as in the days of old, in the generations of the ages. Did you not strike the proud one, and wound the dragon? (10) Did you not dry up the sea, the water of the mighty abyss, you who made the depth of the sea a way that those set free might pass through? (11) And now those who have been redeemed by the Lord shall return, and shall come into Zion singing praises, and everlasting gladness [shall be] upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, pain and groaning shall flee away.* Septuagint: “Arise (*exsurge*), arise, O Jerusalem, and put on the strength of your arm, arise, as at the beginning of the day, as the everlasting generation. (10) Are you not the one who demolished the width and destroyed the dragon? Are you not the one who made the sea a desert, the many waters of the abyss, who made the depth of the sea a way of passage for those who had been set free and redeemed? (11) For they shall be led back by the Lord, and they shall come into Zion with gladness and eternal exultation. For praise and gladness shall grasp them on their head; pain, grief, and groaning have fled away.”

The name “Jerusalem,” which was added here from the Septuagint, is not found in the Hebrew, and none of the three translators recorded it.<sup>111</sup> This is why it should be marked in front with an obelus, and thus a subsequent section should be linked with the meaning of the one that preceded it. The Lord had given an exhortation to those who believe in him, by saying, “Do not fear the reproach of men, and do not be afraid of their blasphemies” [[Isa 51:7](#)]. Moreover, he had promised them his salvation and everlasting justice as a help, [justice] that is none other than Christ [cf. [1 Cor 1:30](#)], the *arm of the Lord*, of which he had said above, “And in my arm the nations shall hope” [[Isa 51:5](#)]. This is why the people speak to the *arm of the Lord* and pray for his advent, and implore the promised help, saying, *Arise, arise, put on strength, O arm of the Lord, arise, as in the days of old*, and exert all your *strength*, to protect us too, by your *strength*, you who have “set free” your saints from dangers through many *ages*. For you are the one who *struck the proud one and wounded the dragon*, pharaoh the king of Egypt, who is called a great *dragon* also in Ezekiel [cf. [Ezek 29:3](#)]. You have *dried up the Red Sea*, so that your people found a way through the very *mighty “waters”* and the *depth of the sea*, and they “fled away” from the pursuing Egyptians. You therefore who have done these things, *now “lead back”* as well those who have been “redeemed” and *set free* by your blood, *into Zion* and into the heavenly “Jerusalem,” or into the church that you have prepared by your own blood [cf. [Acts 20:28](#)]. When they are in it, they will rejoice with *everlasting gladness* and shall say, “Lord, you have crowned us with a shield of your good will” [[Ps 5:12](#)]. For they will have *joy and gladness*, when

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 39 (323, 29–24, 11).

*pain and groaning flee away.* This is according to the Hebrew.

According to the Septuagint, on the other hand, “Jerusalem,” that is, the sinful soul, is being summoned to “put on the strength of its own arm,” and to take up its former works [cf. [Rev 2:5](#)], as it had been before it fell, when it lived in the “day” and in the light. For you are the one, he says, who have risen above the wide and spacious way which leads to death [cf. [Matt 7:13](#)], and have “destroyed the dragon,” the coiled serpent [cf. [Isa 27:1](#)] of which one also reads in the Psalm, “You have crushed the heads of dragons in the waters” [[Ps 74:13](#)]. Remember your former “strength,” that you have tread upon the “sea” of this world, and “made it a desert,” and you have found a “way” in the midst of the waves. This is also why the Apostle Peter crossed the sea of this world to the Lord, and he who was walking by faith began to sink through unbelief, had he not been upheld by the Lord’s right hand [cf. [Matt 14:29–31](#)]. Therefore, just as the former victory was granted with the assistance of the Lord, so too [is it granted] to those who return after repentance, and to those who hear, “Shall not he who falls rise again? says the Lord” [[Jer 8:4](#)]; and, “Convert to me, converting sons, and I shall heal your afflictions” [[Jer 3:22](#)]. He himself will reach out his hand and “lead them back to Zion,” the watchtower and summit of the virtues, “with joy and eternal gladness,” and he will put “praise and gladness on their head”—for “the eyes of the wise are in his head” [[Eccl 2:14](#)—and they shall have this crown, and will be covered with that diadem, that they may always rejoice and praise God, because joys will succeed their “pain, grief, and groaning.”

11. ([51:12–16](#)) *I, I myself will comfort you. Who are you, that you should be afraid of a mortal man, and of a son of man, who shall wither away like grass? (13) And you have forgotten the Lord your maker, who stretched out the heaven, and founded the earth, and you have been afraid continually all the day in the presence of the fury of him who was afflicting you and had prepared to destroy [you]. Where now is the fury of the oppressor? (14) The one who is going along in order to open shall quickly come, and he shall not kill unto destruction, neither shall his bread fail. (15) But I am the Lord your God, who troubles the sea, and its waves swell; the Lord of hosts is my name. (16) I have put my words in your mouth, and have protected you in the shadow of my hand, that you might plant the heavens, and found the earth, and might say to Zion, “You are my people.”* Septuagint: “I am, I am he who comforts you. Know who you have been, and you were afraid of a mortal man and of a son of man, who have been withered like grass. (13) And you have forgotten God your maker, who made the heaven and founded the earth; and you were always afraid all the days of the presence of the fury of him that afflicted you, as he considered taking you away. And now, where is the fury of him that afflicted you? (14) For since you have been saved, he shall not stand nor remain, (15) and he will not kill unto corruption, and his bread shall not fail, for I am your God, who troubles the sea, and causes its waves to roar, the Lord Sabaoth is my name. (16) I will put my words into your mouth, and I will protect you in the shadow of my hand, with which I fixed the sky, and founded the earth. And he shall say to Zion, ‘You are my people.’ ”

The believing people had prayed for the arm of the Lord to arise and offer his help to them [cf. [Isa 51:9](#)], [the arm] who is himself the power of God and the wisdom of God [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)]. And when he was fighting for the saints, they possessed all things, joy and gladness, since pain and groaning had been put to flight [cf. [Isa 51:11](#)]. And so, either the arm of the Lord, or the

Lord himself responded, “I am, I am” the very one who *will comfort you*, and not through the prophets, but *I myself*, the “God of mercies and the Father of all comfort” [[2 Cor 1:3](#)]. And I am surprised at how you have become afraid of the fury of the persecutors and do not know that they are mortal, who suddenly *wither away like grass* and perish. For I had said above, “Do not fear the reproach of men, and do not be afraid of their blasphemies” [[Isa 51:7](#)].

And certainly at that time when you were afraid of them, *you have forgotten the Lord your maker*. For if the remembrance of me had always been alive in your heart, you would never have been afraid of men, who are to be dissolved into dust. And who is it that you have forgotten? God, who suspended the heavens by his incredible power *and founded the earth* into a stable mass. *And you have been afraid* of your adversaries, not for a short time, which could be granted to you to some degree, but *continually* and *all day*. Accordingly, although you had the light of faith, the darkness of fear took possession of you, and the fear of him who thought that you would perish. Where then is the pride of the persecutors now? Where is the secular authority by which they were raging against you with their rabid mouths? My Son, *who is going along* and trampling your adversaries *shall come quickly in order to open* for you a way of victory, or to unbolt the underworld. He does *not kill unto destruction*, but wants to save those who have converted.

Finally, *his bread*, which means his teaching, since the gospel proves this [cf. [Matt 16:12](#)], shall never *fail*, but will always be available to those who want to eat it. And at the same time, he makes an apostrophe<sup>112</sup> to the Son, whom he promises *will come quickly* and whose *bread* he says is perpetual, because, in accordance with the dispensation of his assumed flesh, he himself is the *Lord his God, who causes the sea to be troubled, and its waves to swell*, so that the arrogance of the persecutors is bloated out against their own servants, which dies down again by the help of *the Lord*. And he says that he has *put his words in his mouth*—for whatever the Son speaks are the Father’s words—and he shall *protect him in the shadow of his hand*, and the reason he is protected is to *plant the new heavens, and found the new earth, and say to Zion*, that is, to the church, *You are my people*. Therefore Zion is none other than the people of God.

In that passage where we have said, *The one who is going along in order to open shall quickly come, and he shall not kill unto destruction*, Symmachus translated as follows: “Hell (*infernus*) shall quickly be opened, and he,” understand Christ, “shall not die in corruption.” In the fifteenth Psalm, Christ says, “You will not leave my soul in hell (*inferno*) nor will you allow your holy one to see corruption” [[Ps 16:10](#)]. Also in that passage where we translated according to the Hebrew and Aquila, *I have put my words in your mouth, and have protected you in the shadow of my hand, that you might plant the heavens, and found the earth, and might say to Zion, “You are my people,”* he (Symmachus) has translated as follows: “I will put my words into your mouth, and I will protect you in the shadow of my hand, with which I planted the sky, and founded the earth, and that I might say to Zion, ‘You are my people.’ ”

According to the Septuagint, every believing soul is being addressed, because though created in the image and likeness of God [cf. [Gen 1:26–27](#)],<sup>113</sup> it has ignored its own dignity, but

<sup>112</sup> Cf. n. at [1.50](#).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 39 (324, 35–6).

has “been afraid of man and of son of man,” who can kill only the body [cf. [Matt 10:28](#)]; and it has not known that it is immortal, and it has not said with the prophet, “The Lord is my illumination and my Savior, of whom shall I be afraid? The Lord is the protector of my life, whom shall I fear?” [[Ps 27:1](#)]. And again, “The Lord is my aide, I shall not be afraid of what man may do to me, the Lord is my helper, and I will despise my enemies” [[Ps 118:6–7](#)]. But what *man* refers to is shown in another brief verse: “I shall hope in the Lord, I will not be afraid of what flesh may do to me” [[Ps 56:4](#)]. Hence now, as well, it is said, “You were afraid of a mortal man and of a son of man, who have been withered like grass”—for “all flesh is grass, and all its glory is as the flower of grass” [[Isa 40:6](#)—and having been terrified by the authority of the judge, “you have forgotten” that he was your protector, who “made heaven and earth” and all the elements that you see; or those *heavens* that bear the image of the superheavenly [cf. [1 Cor 15:49](#)] and that *earth* that multiplies the Lord’s seed. But the words expressed above, “And he will not kill unto corruption, and his bread shall not fail,” have been added from the Hebrew out of the version of Theodotion.

He “troubles the sea, and causes its waves to roar,” to whom it is also sung in the Psalms, “You rule the power of the sea and you calm the movement of its waves” [[Ps 89:9](#)]. And in Jeremiah, as well, it is written, “Will you not be afraid of me? says the Lord, and will you not fear before me, who have set the sand for a boundary to the sea, as a perpetual ordinance, which they shall not pass?” [[Jer 5:22](#)]. And the seas are troubled when the Lord’s dragnet has drawn out a multitude of fish. And the “Lord put” his “words into the mouth” of the believer, and “protected” him “in the shadow of his hand.” He also says in the Gospel, “But when they shall hand you over, take no thought how or what to speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak; for it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” [[Matt 10:19–20](#)].<sup>114</sup> And in another passage he says to the just, “Open your mouth and I shall fill it” [[Ps 81:10](#)]. And again, “Open your mouth with the word of God” [[Prov 31:8](#)]; “for the Lord shall give the word with much power to those who preach good news” [[Ps 68:11](#)]. This is why God speaks to Jeremiah’s inner man, after he touched his mouth, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth” [[Jer 1:9](#)], who was able to sing with the Psalmist, “He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn to our God” [[Ps 40:3](#)].

But who has accomplished all these things, if not the Lord and Savior, who made heaven and earth, and “says to Zion, ‘You are my people’ ”? This fits strictly with the church that has been gathered from the nations. And in Hosea he promises believers, “I shall call not my people, my people, and he himself will say to me, ‘You are my God’ ” [[Hos 2:23](#)].

12. ([51:17–19](#)) *Be lifted up, be lifted up, arise, O Jerusalem, you who drank at the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath; you have drunk even to the bottom of the cup of dead sleep, and you have drunk even to the dregs.* (18) *There is no one who upholds her among all the sons whom she has brought forth, and there is no one who takes her by the hand among all the sons whom she has brought up.* (19) *There are two things that have happened to you; who shall be sorry for you? Devastation, grief, famine, and sword; who shall comfort you?* Septuagint: “Arise, arise, be lifted up, O Jerusalem, you who drank at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury. For you have drunk out and drained the cup (*calicem*) of ruin, the cup (*condy*) of wrath, (18) and

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (326, 5–0).

there was no one to comfort you of all the sons whom you brought forth; and there was no one to take hold of your hand, not even of all your sons whom you have raised. (19) These two things are against you; who shall be sorry with you? Ruin, grief, famine, and sword; who shall comfort you?"

I have shown that Jerusalem and Zion are often *διωυυμον* (named together), of which Zion, which means "watchtower," because it is located on a mountain, is called the citadel, but the remaining portion of the city is called Jerusalem, which was previously called Jebus [cf. [Josh 18:28](#); [Judg 19:10](#)] and Salem [cf. [Gen 14:18](#); [Ps 76:2](#)]. The prophet exhorts Jerusalem now to *arise*, she who had previously fallen by means of her denial, when she said at the Lord's passion, "Crucify him, crucify him, we have no king but Caesar" [[John 19:15](#)]; and to repent, and perceive by means of the evils of captivity why she offended her Creator.<sup>115</sup> To treat a squeamish stomach, physicians are accustomed to give a very bitter antidote, which has taken its name from the taste. The purpose is to make it vomit out the harmful fluids and be able to pass cooked and digested food to the intestines, which the great amount of phlegm was not allowing it to digest. Therefore, *Jerusalem* too, who drinks from *the cup* (calice) of *the Lord's fury*, and "from his cup (*condy*)," which Symmachus translated as "mixing bowl," and which, according to the Book of Genesis, Joseph commanded to be hidden in his brother Benjamin's sack [cf. [Gen 44:2](#)], is commanded to rise up from her drunkenness. For she has *drunk* it and "drained" it and drunk it dry, *even to the dregs*, which three [of the translators] expressed with one word, *εξεστραγγισαν*.

This is the *cup* of which we also read in the Psalms, "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup of undiluted wine, full of mixture, and he has poured it out from this to that, but its dregs are not emptied; all the sinners of the earth shall drink" [[Ps 75:8](#)].<sup>116</sup> God also speaks to Jeremiah about it: "Take the cup of this undiluted wine from my hand, and you shall cause all the nations to drink to which I shall send you. And they shall drink, and vomit, and be mad, because of the sword that I shall send among them" [[Jer 25:15–16](#)]. And when he says that he caused other nations, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judea to drink it, he adds, "Thus says the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel: Drink and be drunk and vomit, and fall because of the sword which I send among you" [[Jer 25:27](#)]. One should note that this "cup of fury" of the Lord is his sword that is sent among sinners.

Here a question arises: How is it that in Jeremiah, it is said that Jerusalem is unable to rise after her drink, drunkenness, vomiting, and ruin, and now Isaiah says to her, *Be lifted up, be lifted up, arise, O Jerusalem*. This is solved as follows: as long as someone is drinking the cup and becoming drunk and mad and is vomiting and falling [cf. [Jer 25:27](#)], he cannot arise, for he has not yet drunk dry the cup of the Lord, and has not reached the *dregs*, so as to have drunk it down to the *bottom*. But now he is speaking to Jerusalem about times past: "You who *drank* at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury," and not, "You who *are drinking*." And at the same time, one should consider that from then on there was no prophet, no apostle in Judea, who comforted her and *took her by the hand* and lifted up the one lying there. From this it is clear that these things are being said after the final captivity; in any case, history relates that she had

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 40 (327, 7–).

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (327, 9–1).



Ezekiel and other prophets in Babylon and after Babylon.

Then he says, *There are two things that have happened to you*, or “These two things are against you”; *who shall be sorry for you?* But instead of *two things*, he introduces four: *Devastation, grief, famine, and sword*. This is similar to what is sung in the Psalter: “God has spoken once, I have heard these two things, that power is of God; and mercy is yours, O Lord; for you will recompense every one according to his works” [[Ps 62:11–12](#)]. For there too, God speaks once, because he is omnipotent, and the prophet hears two things, because his omnipotence prevails in two respects: to the repentant it offers mercy, and to those who continue in sin it recompenses the punishments which are earned. In accordance with this, also in this passage *two things have happened to Jerusalem*, each of which has two aspects: for *grief* follows “ruin” or *devastation*; destruction follows *famine* and *sword*.

We can also understand these things anagogically of the sinful soul that, being unwilling to drink the cup of the Lord’s fury, says in the Psalm, “Lord, do not rebuke me in your fury, and do not chastise me in your wrath” [[Ps 6:1](#)]. But if it drinks, it is good for it to feel its own punishments, and to hear the Lord saying, “When the wrath of my fury passes, I will heal again” [[Isa 7:4](#)]. And elsewhere, “Shall not he who falls rise again? says the Lord” [[Jer 8:4](#)].

13. ([51:20](#)) *Your sons have been cast forth, they have slept at the head of all the ways, as a snared gazelle, full of the indignation of the Lord, of the rebuke of your God*. Septuagint: “Your sons are in need and sleeping at the head of all the ways, as a half-boiled beet, full of the fury of the Lord and fainting by the Lord God.”

Instead of “half-boiled beet,” the other translators rendered it “a captured and snared gazelle.” In Hebrew the word is *tho*. This is a kind of beast found in the desert that is recorded among the clean animals in Leviticus and Deuteronomy [cf. [Deut 14:5](#)].<sup>17</sup> The Septuagint supposed that the word was *thoreth*, from the Syriac language, which means “beet.” From this name let us pass over to the meaning.

*Your sons have slept* in the crossroads and streets, *as a gazelle* ensnared by hunters’ traps, and laying their naked limbs on the bare ground, by their own wretchedness they have declared *the indignation of the Lord* and *the rebuke of their own God*. On the other hand, according to the Septuagint, those who were unwilling to have spiritual riches in all speech, knowledge, and good works [cf. [1 Cor 1:5](#)], but who were the poor who do not endure threatening [cf. [Prov 13:8](#)], shall not live in the houses that are built by the virtues, but at the beginnings “of the ways” and exit roads, touching everything and leaving everything.

They are rightly said to sleep with that sleep of which it is written, “They have slept their sleep and found nothing” [[Ps 76:5](#)]. The Assyrian king put them to sleep with this sleep, and they are compared to a “half-boiled beet,” which is a very common and very fragile kind of vegetable. I think that it is of these vegetables that it is said in the Psalms, “Do not be jealous of evildoers, nor envious of those who do iniquity, for they shall soon be withered as the grass, and shall soon drop as the vegetables of herbs” [[Ps 37:1–2](#)]; for it is a food for the sick. He who is unbelieving at some time is called a raw beet; but he who is contented with the simple faith, without rational explanation of the truth of the teachings, and who does works of justice, can be called a boiled beet. On the other hand, he who wavers in the middle between vices and

<sup>17</sup> It is not found in Leviticus.

virtues and approaches the service to God with a divided heart [cf. [Sir 1:28](#)], he is most justly called a “half-boiled beet,” to whom God also says in the Apocalypse of John, “Would that you were either hot or cold! But now that you are lukewarm, I shall vomit you out” [[Rev 3:15–16](#)]. Those who are lukewarm and asleep are “full of the fury of the Lord and” dissolute, or “fainting by the Lord God.” It is not that the Lord is the cause of their dissoluteness, since he “did not make death nor does he take delight in the destruction of the living” [[Wis 1:13](#)], but that those who sinned under the law are judged by the law [cf. [Rom 2:12](#)], which works the wrath of God for those who are transgressors of it [cf. [Rom 4:15](#)].

14. ([51:21–23](#)) *Therefore hear this, you poor little one, and you who are drunk, but not with wine. (22) Thus says your Sovereign, the Lord and your God, who fought for his people: Behold, I have taken out of your hand the cup (calicem) of dead sleep, the bottom of the cup (calicis) of my indignation; you shall not drink it again any more. (23) And I will put it in the hand of those who have humiliated you, and have said to your soul, “Bow down, that we may pass over,” and to those who passed by you and laid your body (corpus) as the ground and as a way. Septuagint: “Therefore hear, you humiliated one, and you who are drunk, but not with wine. (22) Thus says the Lord God who judges his people: Behold, I have taken out of your hand the cup (calicem) of ruin, the cup (condy) of my fury; and you shall not drink it again any more, (23) and I will put it into the hands of those who wickedly oppressed and humiliated you, who said to your soul, ‘Bow down, that we may pass over;’ and to those who passed by without, you have leveled your middle part (media) to the ground.”*

O Jerusalem, to whom I said, “Be lifted up, be lifted up, arise” and do penance, because “you have drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury and you have drunk it dry even to the dregs” [[Isa 51:17](#)]; and your sons, who have been scattered throughout the whole world and have been led captive, and lay in the streets and at the heads of the ways [cf. [Isa 51:20](#)]; know that *you* are a *poor little one* and “a humiliated one” *and are drunk, but not with wine* but with the fury of the Lord. Therefore, if you repent, are lifted up and arise, you may know that *the cup* (calicem) *of dead sleep* and “of ruin,” or according to Symmachus and Theodotion, “of tearing and commotion” had to be *taken out of your hand*, and that *you shall not drink any more* from the “cup (condy),” which in this passage too Symmachus translated as “mixing bowl.” Moreover, it is to be handed over to your adversaries, who *have said to your soul, “Bow down, that we may pass over.”* And when they said this, you bowed down by your own will, and “to those passing by without” *you laid your body* (corpus), or “your back,” *as the ground*, or according to the Septuagint, “your middle part (*media*) and your neck.” Let this be said in accordance with the history, that Jerusalem, if she shall be willing to be lifted up and to arise, she will not drink the cup of the “fury” of the Lord, nor suffer any longer the things that she previously endured.

On the other hand, that we may come to the spiritual understanding, in accordance with the Septuagint, it is said to the soul “humiliated” by the vices and “drunk” with disturbances, that it should know that it has the “Lord” as its judge, and that it will render an account for everything. But if it shall convert to better things, “the cup (*calicem*) of ruin” must be “taken out of its hands.” Moreover, the mixing bowl “of the fury” of the Lord, which was containing the punishments [cf. [Rev 15:7](#); [16:1–17](#)], of which Ezekiel also speaks to Jerusalem, “You shall drink the deep and wide cup of your sister Samaria, so that you become drunk” [[Ezek 23:32](#)], must be

delivered “into the hands of those who had humiliated” her. Doubtless he means the adversarial powers, “who said to” that one’s “soul, ‘Bow down, that we may pass over.’ ” Here one should equally take note that they did not bow it down by force, so that what had formerly been raised erect was made to stoop toward the earth, but they abandoned it to its own choice. But that soul, by its own will, laid down its “neck,” or back, or entire *body*, not within but “without,” to those who trampled upon it. We also read something like this in the Gospel, that Satan had stooped over a woman for eighteen years, whom the Lord straightened out to her former condition [cf. [Luke 13:16](#)].<sup>118</sup> Consequently she was able to say, “I have lifted my eyes to the mountains, from where my help will come” [[Ps 121:1](#)], and “I have lifted my eyes to you who dwell in heaven” [[Ps 123:1](#)].

15. ([52:1](#)) *Arise, arise, put on your strength, O Zion; put on the garments of your glory, O Jerusalem, the city of the Holy One, for the uncircumcised and unclean shall no more continue to pass through you.* Septuagint: “Arise, arise, O Zion; put on your strength, O Zion; and put on your glory, O Jerusalem, the holy city; the uncircumcised and unclean shall no more continue to pass through you.” Again, in this passage too, the name Zion, as above, has been added by the Septuagint, and therefore it was slain with a dagger.

Therefore, to the one to whom he had said above, “Be lifted up, be lifted up, arise, O Jerusalem” [[Isa 51:17](#)], he now says to the same one, *Arise, arise, put on your strength, O Zion.* But what Zion is, the following line shows: *Put on the garments of your glory, O Jerusalem.* We have said this to prove that Jerusalem and Zion are one city. And that city is being instructed to lay aside its garments of mourning and put on those that it had before it drank at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury [cf. [Isa 51:17](#)]. And it is called the *city* of the sanctuary, for this is what *codes* means, because of the temple that was established in it; or *of the Holy One*, on account of the knowledge of God; or “holy,” because it alone in the entire world had received the law. This is also why after the resurrection of the Savior, bodies of the dead appeared in the “holy” city [cf. [Matt 27:52–53](#)], which assuredly could not have been holy, due to the blasphemy and the hands that were laid on the Lord.

And if it should rise after its fall and put on its strength and glory, it is promised that *the uncircumcised and unclean shall no more pass through* it. This means what the Apostle Paul also says: “What participation has justice with iniquity? What fellowship has light with darkness? What concord has Christ with Belial? What part has the faithful with the infidel? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?” [[2 Cor 6:14–15](#)]. All of this, to be sure, as we have begun to explain, applies also to the state of the soul, that if it shall receive its former strength through repentance, it is called a dwelling place *of the Holy One*, and it becomes a temple of God, and an *uncircumcised* and *unclean λογισμος* (thought) does not *pass through* it. It is said of this, “From my secret things cleanse me, O Lord, and from alien things spare your servant; if they shall have no dominion over me, then shall I be without spot and I shall be cleansed from the greatest sin” [[Ps 19:12–13](#)].

But it is not as the Jews dream, that everything that is promised to Zion and Jerusalem is being said to its stones, ashes and embers, that it will be restored to its pristine condition. On the contrary, it is being said to the people of Jerusalem who killed the prophets and stoned

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 40 (328, 22–6).

those who had been sent to them [cf. [Matt 23:37](#)], and who ultimately laid hands even upon the Son of God. Having fallen at the passion of Christ, it was raised up at his resurrection, when many thousands of Jews became believers [cf. [Acts 2:41](#); [4:4](#)] and a remnant was saved [cf. [Rom 11:5](#)]. And we can say the same things about the church, which is the “vision of peace” and the “watchtower.” If it falls into heresy, it is commanded to go out and take up the adornments of its former faith. And if it is raised up, the rewards of sanctity and continence are promised to it, so that *the uncircumcised and unclean do not pass through it*.

This can be applied not to the cutting of the foreskin of the flesh [cf. [Phil 3:2](#)], but to the uncleanness or cleanness of works, so that we may call uncircumcised and unclean those who serve bodily pleasure and lust. After all, to those who have been circumcised in the flesh, not in the spirit, Jeremiah says, “All the nations are uncircumcised in the flesh, but the sons of Israel are uncircumcised in their hearts” [[Jer 9:26](#)]. And the blessed Apostle, when discussing virginity, continence and marriage, declared publicly, “Was someone called after having been circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was someone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised” [[1 Cor 7:18](#)]. To me, he seems to be saying with different words, Let him not get married who had no wife when he was called and then became a believer; or, on the other hand, let him not divorce who had a wife when he became a believer in Christ.

He preserves this meaning not only in respect to circumcision and uncircumcision, but in respect to freedom and servitude. Accordingly, he calls virgins and those who are continent “free”; those who should pay what is owed to their wife “slaves” [cf. [1 Cor 7:3–4](#)]. For it is not in our power to add foreskin after circumcision in the manner in which those who are said in the Book of Maccabees to have made foreskins for themselves [cf. [1 Macc 1:15](#)], because it is said about growing sons and not about the fathers. Or, the one who is called while free, is rather a slave of Christ [cf. [1 Cor 7:22](#)], since in the baptism of Christ there is no difference between Jew and pagan, Greek and barbarian, man and woman, free and slave [cf. [Gal 4:28](#); [Col 3:11](#)].

16. ([52:2–3](#)) *Shake [yourself] from the dust, arise, sit [up], O Jerusalem, loose the bands of your neck, captive daughter of Zion. (3) For thus says the Lord: You have been sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without silver.* Septuagint: “Shake off the dust and arise, sit [up], Jerusalem, loose the band of your neck, captive daughter of Zion. (3) For thus says the Lord: You have been sold for nothing and you shall be redeemed without money.”

The second clause, which says, *Loose the bands of your neck, captive daughter of Zion*, shows that the prophet’s words are not directed to *Jerusalem*, that is, to the ruins of its stones and its ashes and embers, but to the people who dwell in it. They are called *daughter* because of the effeminacy of their mind.<sup>119</sup> For the Jewish people are truly captive, who carry the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar until the present day, and are bound fast with the cords of their own sins [cf. [Prov 5:22](#)] and blasphemies. They *have been sold for nothing*, and have done nothing worthy, on account of which they could be *redeemed*. And above it is said to them, “Behold you have been sold for your sins, and for your iniquities I put your mother away” [[Isa 50:1](#)]. And he gives the reasons why they had to be sold, why they had to be rejected. “Because I came,” he says, “and there was no man, I called, and there was none that would hear” [[Isa 50:2](#)]. From this it is clear that the reason they were handed over [cf. [Rom 1:24](#)] to error and demons was because

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (329, 1–2).

they did not listen to the one who was calling out, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened down” [[Matt 11:28](#)]. But those who were willing to believe *shall be redeemed*, not with *silver* and “money,” but with the precious blood of Christ [cf. [1 Pet 1:18–19](#)], so that they may hear through the apostles, “Grace to you and peace” [[Eph 1:2](#)]. For we have been reconciled to God not owing to our merits, but on account of the grace and faith of Christ [cf. [2 Cor 5:18–20](#)].

Also, the soul that was polluted with the filth of vices and had lost the radiance of its former manner of life is being told, with the apostles, to “shake off the dust” that was cleaving to its feet [cf. [Matt 10:14](#)]. For it could happen that a prostrate soul that had submitted its neck to those passing by without, and had joined its middle parts to the earth [cf. [Isa 51:23](#)] and had said, “My soul has been humbled down to the dust, my belly has cleaved to the earth” [[Ps 44:25](#)], was not receiving the image of the earthly [cf. [1 Cor 15:49](#)]. The Apostle summons us away from this image when he says, “Just as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us also bear the image of the heavenly” [[1 Cor 15:49](#)]. For this reason “those who are in the flesh cannot please God” [[Rom 8:8](#)], not that the flesh, whose Creator is God, is damned by nature, and in which very many have pleased God and reign with Christ; but that the works of the flesh should be repudiated, of which the same Apostle says, “But I am fleshly, sold under sin” [[Rom 7:14](#)]. After all, he says to men of this sort, “But where there is jealousy and envy among you, are you not fleshly and walking according to man?” [[1 Cor 3:3](#)]. And, on the other hand, he says to saints, “But you are not in the flesh, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you” [[Rom 8:9](#)].

Therefore the *dust* is *shaken off*, of which it is written, “Shall the *dust* give praise to you, or will it announce your truth?” [[Ps 30:9](#)], in order that the *bands* of our *neck* may be *loosed* and we do not hear, “Your *neck* is an iron sinew” [[Isa 48:4](#)]; but instead may we earn the right to hear with the bride, “How beautiful are your cheeks, as a turtledove’s, your *neck* as chains” [[Song 1:9](#)]; and again, “I put bracelets on your hands and a chain about your *neck*” [[Ezek 16:11](#)]. Consequently those who have been liberated from a heavy burden and receive their former adornment cease being captives. They have been redeemed by him who came to preach remission to the captives [cf. [Isa 61:1](#)], and of whom it is written, “He shall build my city and lead back the captivity of my people, not with a price or with presents” [[Isa 45:13](#)]. And the Apostle Peter agrees with this meaning: “Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible silver or gold from your vain manner of life handed down from the fathers, but with the blood of the spotless lamb” [[1 Pet 1:18–19](#)], and so on.

17. ([52:4–6](#)) *For thus says the Lord God: My people went down into Egypt at the beginning in order to be colonists there, and the Assyrian maliciously accused them without any cause. (5) And now what have I here? says the Lord. For my people have been taken away for nothing. They that rule over them treat them unjustly, says the Lord, and my name is continually blasphemed all the day long. (6) Therefore, my people shall know my name in that day, for I myself who spoke, behold, I am here.* Septuagint: “Thus says the Lord: My people went down before to Egypt to sojourn there, and they were carried away forcibly to the Assyrians. (5) And now why will they be here? Thus says the Lord: Because my people were taken away, wonder and howl for nothing. Thus says the Lord: On account of you my name is always blasphemed among the Gentiles. (6) Therefore shall my people know my name, therefore in that day, for I

am he who spoke; I am here.”

He is rebuking the Jewish people and predicting things to come, that they who by their own will *went down* in Jacob to the Egyptians [cf. [Gen 46:5](#), [6](#), [28](#)], and in the time of distress and famine “sojourned” in the land of Goshen (*Gessen*) [cf. [Gen 47:27](#)], later on endured malicious accusations from the Assyrians, whom they had injured in no respect.<sup>220</sup> Moreover, they were transferred into captivity to Babylon. This is why he adds, *And now what have I here? says the Lord*. And the meaning is, I have no remnant for the sake of which I should remain in this country from which *my people were taken away for nothing*, sold for their sins [cf. [Isa 50:1](#)],<sup>221</sup> and caught with a net like a gazelle [cf. [Isa 50:2](#)], either by the strength of the Romans or by the snares of the devil, by which they are held fast in bondage up to now.<sup>222</sup> *They that rule over them* and their teachers have *treated them unjustly* to expose these things. According to Symmachus and Theodotion, they will “howl”; according to Aquila, they will “weep,” since they shall be handed over to torments. For they are the very ones who incited the people against the Savior to cry out with one voice, “Crucify him, crucify him” [[John 19:15](#)]. He had already previously said of them, “The Lord himself shall come with the elders of the people, and with their rulers, but why have you set my vineyard on fire, and why is the spoil of the poor in your houses?” [[Isa 3:14](#)]. For this reason, according to the Septuagint, he says to them, “On account of you, my name is always blasphemed among the Gentiles.” One should also know that “among the Gentiles” is not found in the Hebrew, but simply, *My name is continually blasphemed*. Thus one needs to supply “in your synagogues,” which blaspheme the Savior day and night; and under the name of Nazarenes, as I have repeatedly said, three times a day they heap up maledictions against the Christians.<sup>223</sup> And so, since they blaspheme and curse the Lord, his *people*, that is, the Christian people, of whom it has already repeatedly been said, *shall know* the *name* of him who will come in the name of the Father. And “therefore” they “will know,” because the very one who previously spoke through the prophets will instruct the peoples in person.

According to the Septuagint, God says to Israel that he “went down to Egypt” willingly, since Moses says in Deuteronomy, “With seventy souls your fathers went down into Egypt” [[Deut 10:22](#)], and they “were carried away forcibly” as captives by “the Assyrians.” This is why it is said to them, “And now why are you here?”<sup>224</sup> That is, What are you doing in the land of Judea, you who after killing the prophets laid hands on the Son of God? Or at any rate, God is speaking to the angelic powers and angels who preside over the temple, “What are you doing here, why do you not leave the blaspheming people?” Even Josephus reports this, that when the gates of the temple were suddenly opened and unbolted of their own accord, which a large number of men were hardly able to close, a voice came forth from the sanctuary of the temple of those who were saying, “Let us move on from this location.”<sup>225</sup> In this one should consider the

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (329, 23–5).

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (329, 30–5).

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (330, 1–).

<sup>223</sup> Cf. bk. 2, n. 51; *Eus Is 2*, 40 (330, 11–3).

<sup>224</sup> The lemma reads, “nd now why will they (the people) be here?”

<sup>225</sup> Cf. [Josephus, Ant 6.5.3.293–99](#).



appropriateness of the words, that they did not say “let us withdraw” but “let us move on” to the people of the Gentiles. And this is why “the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom in two parts” [[Matt 27:51](#)], so that all the ceremonies of the Jews would lie exposed, and at that time was fulfilled what is said in this same prophet, “Out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and he will judge between many nations all the way into the distance” [[Isa 2:3–4](#)]. For “their sound has gone forth into all the earth, and their words into the ends of the world” [[Ps 19:4](#)]. Moreover, in every place incense and a pure sacrifice is being offered to God [cf. [Mal 1:11](#)], when the prophetic words are carried out: “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn back to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before him, for the kingdom is the Lord’s, and he shall be lord of the nations” [[Ps 22:27–28](#)]. This is why it is said to the rulers of the Jews, “Wonder and howl,” for you are the cause of the people’s ruin.

Furthermore, according to anagogy, we can say that God’s people “go down” to the “Egypt” of this world by their own will, when they are lovers of pleasures rather than of God [cf. [2 Tim 3:4](#)], and do not listen to this prophecy: “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help” [[Isa 31:1](#)]. Those who have been won over by the vices and have dwelled in the place of waters and rivers [cf. [Ezek 32:2](#)], who do not have the dryness of chastity, will then be handed over “forcibly to the Assyrians,” who will lord it over them, who later on rebuke and convict them in their sin. For they are the enemies and avengers about whom he says to Israel, “And now what do you have to do with the way of Egypt, that you drink the water of Geon? And what do you have to do with the way of the Assyrians, that you drink the water of rivers?” [[Jer 2:18](#)]. To those therefore who “go down to Egypt” and have fallen from the heights of Jerusalem to the lower lying places, and who have been wounded by robbers while going to Jericho [cf. [Luke 10:30](#)], another Egypt, it is said, “And now what is there for you here?” Why do you pretend that you are in the land and in the church of God, you who have “gone down to Egypt” with all your zeal and longing; and the Assyrians possess you and you have been taken captive. And should you “wail” and mourn, because “on account of” your vices and sins, “the name” of God “is blasphemed among the Gentiles”? Moreover, in Ezekiel it is said to them, “You have profaned my name among the Gentiles” [[Ezek 36:22](#)]. And just as the Lord says to his disciples in the Gospel, “Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” [[Matt 5:16](#)], so on the other hand, when we do evil works, on account of us “the name” of God “is blasphemed among the Gentiles.” For this reason the one who has the knowledge of God’s name, and is not unaware that he has been created in his image and likeness, will live in the light and will be in the day, over which Abraham rejoiced that he had seen it [cf. [John 8:56](#)]; or of which the saint also says, “This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it” [[Ps 118:24](#)]. For those who have lit for themselves the light of knowledge [cf. [Hos 10:12](#)], and have the everlasting light that is promised to those who believe, “The Lord shall be your eternal light” [[Isa 60:19](#)], walk becomingly in the day [cf. [Rom 13:13](#)]. They are sons of light and of the day [cf. [1 Thess 5:5](#)], and they know him, who says to Moses, “Go, tell the sons of Israel, He who is has sent me” [[Exod 3:14](#)]. Moreover, they shall know that the one whom they had previously known in the saints likewise “is here” himself.

18. ([52:7–8](#)) *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who announces and*

*preaches peace, who announces good, who preaches salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God has reigned!"* (8) [It is] the voice of your watchmen, they have lifted up their voice, they shall praise together, for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall convert Zion. Septuagint: "As an hour upon the mountains, as feet preaching the hearing of peace, preaching good things, for I will publish my salvation, saying to Zion, 'Your God has reigned.' (8) The voice of those who guard you is exalted, and with the voice together they shall rejoice, for eyes shall look to eyes, when the Lord shall have mercy upon Zion."

The prophet coherently testifies now about him who had said above, "I myself who spoke, behold I am here" [Isa 52:6], that he himself preached the gospel *upon the mountains*, that is, upon the apostles, of whom it is written, "Draw near to the eternal mountains" [Mic 2:9], and whose teaching is the illumination of God. This is why it is said to him in the Psalms, "You wonderfully illumine from the eternal mountains" [Ps 76:4].

He has *announced and preached peace* to those who were far off [cf. Eph 2:17], that is, to the Gentiles, and near, that is, to the Jews,<sup>226</sup> reconciling the world to God [cf. 2 Cor 5:19]. In the Psalm, it is sung of him under the name of Solomon, "In his days shall justice spring up, and an abundance of peace, until the moon is removed" [Ps 72:7]. And in this same prophet it is said concerning the child who was born, and concerning the son who was given to us, whose government is on his shoulder, and he is called angel of the great counsel [cf. Isa 9:6], after the rest, "And there will be no end of his *peace*" [Isa 9:7]. "For he is our *peace*" [Eph 2:14], who has made *peace* with all things in heaven and on earth through the blood of his cross [cf. Col 1:20]. He who said to the apostles, "My *peace* I give to you, my *peace* I leave you" [John 14:27], and announced "good things" to us, not things that the philosophers call "indifferent," but that are truly "good things," which the Father gives to those who ask him [cf. Matt 7:11], namely all the graces of the Holy Spirit. After all, another evangelist writes in the same passage, "How much more shall your Father who is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" [Luke 11:13]. These are the "good things" that the Lord promises to those who believe. "Hear me and you shall eat good things, and your soul will take delight in good things" [Isa 55:2]. He has announced not only "good things," but also *salvation* to all, which he himself offered, *who says to Zion*, that is, to the church, *Your God has reigned*. And this is why the Apostle says to the saints, "Do not let sin *reign* in your mortal body, to obey its desires" [Rom 6:12], and when writing about sinners, he says, "Death *reigned* from Adam until Moses" [Rom 5:14].

And as for what follows, *The voice of your watchmen*, or "of your guards," this refers to the apostles, of whom God speaks to the church in another passage as well, "I have set *guards* upon your walls, who will never be silent, remembering the Lord" [Isa 62:6]. They shall *lift up their voice*, as they discuss lofty matters. This is why it is said to them, "Ascend upon the high mountain, you who bring glad tidings to Zion, lift up your voice in strength, you who bring glad tidings to Jerusalem" [Isa 40:9]. *They shall praise* God with the same voice, and "they shall look" with "eyes to eyes," which the Apostle says with different words, "face to face" [1 Cor 13:12], when the saint sings, "My eyes are always to the Lord" [Ps 25:15]; and, "To you I have lifted up my eyes, you who dwell in heaven" [Ps 123:1]; and the Lord will answer him, "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the just, and his ears toward their prayer" [Ps 34:15].

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 41 (331, 7–0).

What the Septuagint translated as “As an ωρα,” that is an “hour,” “upon the mountains, as feet preaching glad tidings of peace,” and the rest, Paul, following the sense of the Hebrew truth, records in the Epistle to the Romans, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good things, of those who preach peace” [Rom 10:15]. He wanted this to be understood of the apostles, whose feet their Lord washed [cf. John 13:5], so that they were clean and beautiful for preaching, and they rushed around the entire world [cf. Zech 1:10]; and in a short time they filled the world with the teaching of Christ [cf. Isa 10:23].<sup>227</sup> Now ωρα, that is “an hour,” according to the Septuagint and to the ambiguity of the Greek language, means either “time” or “beauty.” If “time,” it will be applied to this: “At the opportune *time* I heard you, and in the day of salvation I was your helper” [Isa 49:8]. And this is why the Apostle adds, “Behold, now is the acceptable *time*, behold, now is the day of salvation” [2 Cor 6:2]. For he poured out his blood at the opportune time, when “all have turned aside, together they had become useless, there was none who did good, there was not even one” [Ps 14:3]. Thus he tasted death for all [cf. Heb 2:9], because all had sinned and were lacking the glory of God [cf. Rom 3:23]. But if ωρα means “beauty,” we should relate it to what is said in the Psalm, “Beautiful in form beyond the sons of men” [Ps 45:2]—for what is more beautiful than that the form of a slave should become the form of God [cf. Phil 2:6–7] and should have sat down and reigned with Christ in the heavenlies [cf. Eph 2:6]? In the breadth of the Greek language, care and solicitude can be called ωρα, in accordance with what the saint says: “You will abundantly provide me with your power in my soul” [Ps 138:3]. For “you will abundantly provide me,” the Greek says πολυωρησεις me, that is, “You will regard me as worthy of much care and solicitude.” And elsewhere, “According to your height επολυωρησαν [you have greatly exalted] the sons of men” [Ps 12:8]. In Greek this is said with different words: πολλης ωρας, τουτ’ εστι φροντιδος ηχιωσας [you have regarded me as worthy of many an hour, that is, of much solicitude]. But these things are superfluous, and the beautiful feet ought to be interpreted of Christ, or of the apostles, which all translators apart from the Septuagint translated similarly, since Paul proves their interpretation.

19. (52:9–10) *Rejoice, and give praise together, O you deserts of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem.* (10) *The Lord has prepared his holy arm in the eyes of all the Gentiles, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.* Septuagint: “Let them break forth in joy together, O deserts of Jerusalem, because the Lord has had mercy upon her, and has delivered Jerusalem. (10) The Lord has revealed his holy arm in the sight of all the Gentiles, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”

When the Jewish people were led into captivity and the city was burned, an inhabitant of Jerusalem was either rare or nonexistent. But after the one who spoke first in the prophets [cf. Isa 52:6] and was in the beginning with God [cf. John 1:2], God the Word, dwelled among us and became flesh [cf. John 1:1, 14], the *deserts of Jerusalem* were refreshed, and he came, of whom it is written, “He shall build my city and lead back the captivity of my people” [Isa 45:13]. Thus Jeremiah does not lament for her: “How does the city that was filled with people sit solitary! She has become as a widow, she who was magnified among the nations” [Lam 1:1]. Instead she hears David singing, “When the *Lord* converted the captivity of Zion, we became as *comforted*

<sup>227</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (331, 4–).

ones" [[Ps 126:1](#)], and a little later, "We were made to *rejoice*" [[Ps 126:3](#)].

And that we may know that these things are not being said about the Jewish people, but about all who will come to believe in the Lord through the apostles, he records and says, He who *has comforted* her, or "has had mercy upon her," and he who "has delivered" or *redeemed* her, has himself *prepared* or "revealed his holy arm in the sight of all the Gentiles, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." From this it is clear that the arm of the Lord is being revealed to all nations, and all the ends of the earth are seeing his salvation, when the spiritual Jerusalem, that is, the church, which had been forsaken by the Jews, is built by the apostles. This is understood in two ways. For either the Father reveals his arm to all nations, or the Son reveals his strength, of whom it is written, "For power was coming forth from him and he was healing all" [[Luke 6:19](#)]; and again, "I perceived that power had gone forth from me" [[Luke 8:46](#)] that healed the woman with the hemorrhage.

Now there are many testimonies to the effect that the Son of God is called the Father's right hand and arm. We shall cite a few of them: "His right hand and his holy arm shall effect salvation for him" [[Ps 98:1](#)], and elsewhere: "In my arm shall the nations hope" [[Isa 51:5](#)]. Jacob also speaks of this: "He will be the expectation of the nations" [[Gen 49:10](#)], and the eighty-eighth Psalm: "your arm with power" [[Ps 89:13](#)]. By this arm, the Lord led the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt. He spoke of it to the prince of the apostles: "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona, because flesh and blood has not revealed it to you, but my Father who is in heaven" [[Matt 16:17](#)]; and the Apostle Paul says of himself, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal his Son in me" [[Gal 1:15-16](#)].

But that he has united *all the ends of the earth* with *all the nations*, who will see the *salvation of God*, the following passage shows that is spoken in another location: "Be converted to me from the ends of the earth and you shall be saved" [[Isa 45:22](#)]; and through Jeremiah: "The nations shall come to you from the ends of the earth" [[Jer 16:19](#)]; and again: "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before him, for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he shall be lord of the nations" [[Ps 22:27-28](#)]. Hence he is predicting not merely that the variety of the individual nations will become believers in Christ, but also all regions of the world. This accords with the fact that he himself says, "But when this gospel has been preached in the whole world, then the end will come" [[Matt 24:14](#)]. Some think that the summits and *ends of the earth* mean those who take up a position not in the middle of the earth, but at its far ends, like wheels; they desert the lowly places and hasten to the heights.

20. ([52:11-12](#)) *Depart, depart, go out from there, touch not the polluted thing, go out of the midst of her, be clean, you who bring the vessels of the Lord. (12) For you shall not go out in a tumult, neither shall you make haste by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will gather you together.* Septuagint: "Depart, depart, go forth from there, and touch not the unclean thing; go out from the midst of her; be separated, you who carry the vessels of the Lord. (12) For you shall not go out with tumult, neither shall you go by flight; but the Lord shall go before you; and the God of Israel who gathers you together."

The Jews attempt to explain even this in the following manner. *Go out* from Babylon and forsake their idols. *Go out of the midst of her*, and *bring* back to the temple *the vessels* that

Nebuchadnezzar had taken when he captured Jerusalem, when Cyrus released the captives under Zerubbabel and Ezra [cf. [Ezra 1:7–8](#)]. “Go forth” thus from Babylon, not as you fled before from Egypt “with a tumult” and fear, but with peace and by the will of the king of the Persians and Medes, unto whom the will of the Lord appeared, who protected and *gathered you together*. Others interpret what we have said about Babylon of the Roman Empire, because all these things are fulfilled at the advent of Christ who would come to liberate them. On the other hand, since we hear above, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that announces and preaches peace” [[Isa 52:7](#)], and “The Lord has revealed his arm in the sight of all the Gentiles, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” [[Isa 52:10](#)], we interpret this not of the Jews, but of the chorus of apostles and all the saints. They are commanded to *depart* from Jerusalem and preach the gospel in the whole world, since the Lord and Savior says, “Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” [[Matt 28:19](#)].<sup>228</sup> They are not to remain with the blaspheming Jews whom the Roman army is preparing to kill, but let them forsake the *polluted* ones and “be separated” and *be clean* of those “who carry the vessels of the Lord”; for they are the temple of the Holy Spirit [cf. [1 Cor 6:19](#)], and in a large house, there are vessels of gold and silver [cf. [2 Tim 2:20](#)]. The Apostle Paul was a man of this sort, who is called a vessel of election [cf. [Acts 9:15](#)]; for he had prepared himself as a precious vessel that was suitable for God’s ministry [cf. [2 Tim 2:21](#)]. Or at any rate this should be said, that the vessel of the Lord is the spiritual armor of which the Apostle Paul also speaks: “Put on the armor of God” [[Eph 6:11](#)]. And he goes into detail, listing the breastplate of justice, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is interpreted as the word of God [cf. [Eph 6:14–17](#)]. To these he adds the belt of truth and the feet shod in preparation for the gospel of peace [cf. [Eph 6:15](#)]. Moreover, in another passage, he says, “Therefore, laying aside the works of darkness, let us put on the weapons of light” [[Rom 13:12](#)].

Then follows, *You shall not go out in a tumult, neither shall you make haste by flight*. For they *departed* from Jerusalem not as the conquered, but as conquerors. Consequently, those who had subjugated many thousands of Jews to the faith of Christ by preaching the gospel daily in the temple likewise subjugated the world to his gospel. For they had the *Lord* leading the way, who *gathered* them *together*, the *God of Israel*, that is, out of the entire world he made one flock [cf. [John 10:16](#)]. Thus what the Lord said to the Father in the Gospel was fulfilled: “Grant that just as you and I are one, so too they may be one in us” [[John 17:21](#)]. Accordingly, with the same mind and thought, having abandoned the vices that are among them that are opposing and contrary, they have grasped hold of the one and only virtue. For vices and disturbances do not follow each other in turn, which is said of the virtues, for which there is neither υπερβολαι [excess] nor ελλιπεις [defect], that is neither more nor less, but all things are in moderation. On the other hand, with the vices everything is in opposition, such as terror over against audacity, superstition over against impiety, luxury over against parsimony.

21. ([52:13–15](#)) *Behold my servant (servus) shall understand, he shall be exalted, and lifted up, and shall be exceeding high. (14) As many have been astonished over you, so shall his appearance (aspectus) be inglorious among men, and his form among the sons of men. (15) He*

<sup>228</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (332, 27–8).

*shall sprinkle many nations; kings shall shut their mouth at him, for they to whom it was not told of him, have seen, and they that heard not, have beheld.* Septuagint: “Behold, my servant (*puer*) shall understand, and he shall be exalted and glorified exceedingly. (14) As many shall be amazed over you, so shall your outward appearance (*species*) be inglorious by men, and your glory by the sons of men. (15) Thus shall many nations wonder at him, and kings shall keep their mouths shut, for they to whom no report was brought concerning him, shall see; and they who have not heard, shall understand.”

Lest the readers be left with any uncertainty, God the Father Almighty is clearly showing who that one is who said, “I myself who spoke, behold I am here” [[Isa 52:6](#)], and what is the holy arm of the Lord that has been revealed to all nations [cf. [Isa 52:10](#)]. He says, *Behold my servant* (*servus*), or “my boy (*puer*)” *shall understand*. Above we have spoken about the difference between these terms. But he *shall understand* not as the word of God and wisdom, but as a *servant* and “boy.” He who “though he was in the form of God” deigned to receive the “form of a slave, having become obedient” to the Father “unto death, even death on the cross; wherefore he *exalted* him and gave him the name that is above every name” [[Phil 2:6–9](#)],<sup>229</sup> who says in the Psalm, “I shall bless the Lord who gave me *understanding*” [[Ps 16:7](#)]; and of whom David sings, “who made the heavens with *understanding*” [[Ps 136:5](#)]. For he is understanding and wisdom itself, who advanced as a “boy” in stature and wisdom [cf. [Luke 2:52](#)]. Peter also says of him, “The God of our fathers has *glorified* his Son Jesus, whom you indeed handed over and denied before the face of Pilate, who wanted to release him; but you denied the holy and just one” [[Acts 3:13–14](#)]. We have shown that it is also written about him above: “I am witness, says the Lord, and the servant (*puer*) whom I have chosen” [[Isa 43:10](#)]. “Very many shall be amazed over” him, when they have perceived the signs [cf. [John 6:2](#)].

And therefore the greater miracle will be that *his appearance* (*aspectus*) *shall be inglorious among men*. He does not mean physical ugliness, but that he came in humility and poverty. Although he was rich, he became poor for our sakes [cf. [2 Cor 8:9](#)] and said to the faithful, “Learn from me, for I am meek and humble in heart” [[Matt 11:29](#)]. Even Clement, an apostolic man, who ruled the Roman church after Peter, writes about him to the Corinthians, “The scepter of God, the Lord Jesus Christ did not come with the ostentation of pride, though he had power over all things, but in humility.”<sup>330</sup> So much so was this the case that when he was slapped by the servant of the priest, he answered, “If I have spoken ill, expose the sin; but if well, why do you strike me?” [[John 18:23](#)], though he had twelve thousand angels that obeyed his beck and call [cf. [Matt 26:53](#)].

*He shall sprinkle many nations*, cleansing them with his blood and consecrating them, in baptism, to God’s service. *Kings shall shut their mouth at him*, the rulers of the age, whose whole wisdom was overturned by the preaching of the cross [cf. [1 Cor 1:18–23](#)].<sup>331</sup> And those very ones who had not had the law and the prophets, and “to whom no report was brought

<sup>229</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 42 (333, 1–. 19–2).

<sup>330</sup> [Clement of Rome, 1 Cor 16.2](#). P. Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 93, states that Jerome read Clement’s epistle in Greek, since he does not follow the text of the Old Latin translation.

<sup>331</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 42 (334, 18–7).



concerning him, shall see” and understand. The Savior too speaks of these ones: “Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed” [[John 20:29](#)]. In comparison with them, the hardness of the Jews is chided, who, while seeing and hearing, have fulfilled in themselves the prediction of Isaiah, who said, “With hearing you will hear and you will not understand, and seeing you shall look and you will not see; for the heart of this people has become fat and with difficulty they have heard with their ears” [[Isa 6:9–10](#); cf. [John 12:39–41](#)].

22. ([53:1–4](#)) *Who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? (2) And he ascends as a tender plant before him, and as a root out of a thirsty ground. There is no beauty in him, nor comeliness, and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness, and we have desired him, (3) one who was despised and the last of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity, and his countenance was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed him not. (4) Truly he has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows, and we have thought him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and humiliated.* Septuagint: “O Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? (2) We have declared, as if a child (*puer*) before him, as a root in a thirsty ground. He has no beauty nor glory, and we have seen him, and he had no beauty (*speciem*) nor comeliness, (3) but his form (*species*) was ignoble, and inferior to that of the sons of men, a man in sorrow, and acquainted with the bearing of infirmity, for his face was turned away, despised and not esteemed. (4) He carries our sins, and suffers for us, and we accounted him to be in sorrow, and in misfortune, and in affliction.”

After the Father’s words, in which he had declared that his Son would come into the world, and before the scandal of the cross, about which he would say, “His appearance shall be inglorious and his form compared with the sons of men” [[Isa 52:14](#)], he had first spoken of the “glory” of the one rising again: “He shall be exalted and lifted up and shall be exceeding high” [[Isa 52:13](#)]. Thus he has anticipated the humiliation of the cross by the glory of the resurrection. The band of prophets responded that they had fulfilled their duty, and as far as was in them they had announced to everyone his *arm* and power. But in what he says, *Who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*, he is indicating the scarcity of believers from the Jews.

As for what follows, *He will ascend*<sup>332</sup> *as a tender plant before him*, which the Septuagint translated as, “We have declared as a small child (*parvulum*) before him,” Symmachus translated *tender plant* as “branch,” in order to show the assumed humanity that came forth from the virgin’s womb. Concerning this he adds, *as a root out of a thirsty ground*. Instead of *thirsty* Aquila translated “impassible,” in order to demonstrate the privilege of [Mary’s] virginity (*virginitatis*), because he was created *out of* previously impassible *ground* without any human seed. This is the one of whom we also read above, “There shall come forth a rod (*virga*) out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall ascend out of his root” [[Isa 11:1](#)].<sup>333</sup> Consequently, he has signified his birth in the world as an ascent.

But if he “had no beauty nor glory,” but “his form (*forma*) was ignoble and inferior to that of the sons of men,” or, as the Hebrew contains, *despised and the last of men*, how could it be said

<sup>332</sup> The lemma has “e ascends.”

<sup>333</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 42 (335, 9–3).

in the Psalms, “Gird your sword upon your thigh, Most Mighty One, in your beauty and in *comeliness*” [Ps 45:3]? The solution is easy. He was *despised* and “ignoble” when he was hanging on the cross, and having become a curse for us [cf. Gal 3:13] “carried our sins” and said to the Father, “God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” [Matt 27:46]. But he was glorious and comely in appearance when the earth shook at this passion, the rocks split [cf. Matt 27:51], and when the sun fled and the elements were afraid of eternal night [cf. Matt 27:45]. Also the bride in the Song of Songs says of him, “My kinsman is radiant and ruddy, chosen from thousands” [Song 5:10]. He is “radiant” with the fullness and purity of the virtues; “ruddy” in his passion, of which later on we will read, “Who is this who comes up from Edom, his red garments from Bosor” [Isa 63:1]; he was “chosen from thousands” in the resurrection. Hence, he who was the firstborn of all creation [cf. Col 1:15] became the firstborn from the dead [cf. Col 1:18].

Now as for what he adds, “A man in sorrow, and acquainted with the bearing of infirmity,” or *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity*, he is showing the true body and the true soul of a human being, who though “acquainted with the bearing” of infirmities, he overcame them all by his divine nature. *And his countenance was hidden and despised*, so that the divine power was concealed in a human body. Above it was said of him, “You are a hidden God, and we did not know” [Isa 45:15]. He who *truly has carried our infirmities* and “sins and suffers for us,” not putatively, that is τω δοκειν [to appearances], as an ancient and recent heresy imagines,<sup>334</sup> but he was truly crucified, he truly suffered pain, saying in the Gospel, “My soul is sad, even unto death” [Matt 26:38], and, “Now my soul is troubled” [John 12:27].

*And we thought that he was unclean*, or “in sorrow” as the Septuagint translated it, which Aquila and Symmachus recorded as “leprous,”<sup>335</sup> Theodotion as “scourged.” The latter is understood as another way of speaking of leprosy, in Hebrew idiom, according to what is written in the Psalm: “No scourge shall draw near to your tabernacle” [Ps 91:10]. And the sense is, *We thought that* the one who was *humiliated* for our sake and crucified with thieves was *struck by God* for his own sins. What Symmachus translated as εν αφη οντα, that is, “with leprosy,” Aquila recorded as αφημενον, that is, “leprous.” Many do not understand this word and think it means “abandoned,” and others read καθημενον, that is, “sitting.”

And [in the Epistle] to the Romans, the Apostle Paul makes use of the testimony found at the beginning of this chapter, where it is said according to the Septuagint, “O Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” Paul explains this in connection with the Lord’s passion [cf. Rom 10:16]. “O Lord” is not found in the Hebrew but was added to help the reader understand the person to whom the words are spoken.

23. (53:5–7a) *But he was wounded on account of our iniquities, he was bruised for our wicked deeds. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his bruises we were healed. (6) All we like sheep have gone astray, each one has turned aside into his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (7) He was offered because it was his own will, and he*

<sup>334</sup> The ancient heresy would be Docetism, to which Marcion also adhered; it claimed that Jesus only “appeared” human, and it was combated by Irenaeus and others. The recent heresy, I believe, would be Apollinarianism (from Apollinaris), which denied that Christ had a human soul but said that the Divine Logos had replaced it.

<sup>335</sup> This is how Jerome has rendered it in the lemma.

*opened not his mouth.* Septuagint: “He was wounded on account of our sins, and was made weak because of our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his bruises we were healed. (6) All we as sheep have gone astray, a man has gone astray in his own way, and the Lord handed him over because of our iniquities, (7) and he, because of his affliction, did not open his mouth.”

We thought, he says, that he was a man of sorrows, or according to the Septuagint “in sorrow and struck by God,” and that he was suffering for his own sins [cf. [Isa 53:4](#)]. *But he was wounded on account of our iniquities*, since he says in the Psalm, “They pierced my hands and feet” [[Ps 22:16](#)]. Thus he healed our wounds by his wound, and *he was bruised* or “made weak” *for our wicked deeds*, so that by becoming a curse for us [cf. [Gal 3:13](#)], he set us free from the curse; for “cursed is every man who hangs on a tree” [[Deut 21:23](#)].<sup>336</sup>

This is why *the chastisement of our peace is upon him*. For what we endured for our wicked deeds, he suffered for us, making peace through the blood of his cross, whether with things on earth or with things in heaven [cf. [Col 1:20](#)]. “For he himself is our peace, who made the two one and destroyed the middle wall of the enclosure, the enmity in his flesh” [[Eph 2:14](#)], *and by his bruises we were healed*. From this it is clear that, just as his scourged and mangled body bore the marks of his injuries in his welts and bruises, so too his soul truly suffered pain for us, lest we should believe partial truth and partial falsehood with respect to Christ.<sup>337</sup>

He says, *All we like sheep have gone astray*, and have stood in need of the mercy of God [cf. [Rom 3:23](#)]. We all say in the Psalm, “I have gone astray like a lost sheep” [[Ps 119:176](#)], the sheep that in the parable of the Gospel was carried back on the shoulders of the good and solicitous shepherd [cf. [Luke 15:5](#)]. The following verse shows what these *sheep* are: “A man has gone astray in his own way,” or *each one has turned aside into his own way*. Accordingly, each one has followed his own private error, abandoned the right road, and felt different things about the Crucified.

*But the Lord has laid on him the iniquities of us all*, or “handed him over for our sins,” so that what we were not able to bear on account of the feebleness of our strength, he carried for us, who *was offered because it was his own will*. For he did not endure the cross out of necessity, but by his own will, since he says in the Gospel, “Shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?” [[John 18:11](#)]. And he said to Peter, who was scandalized at the mystery of the cross and was alarmed with human fear, “Get behind me, Satan, you are a stumbling block to me, for you are not mindful of the things of God but of the things of men” [[Matt 16:23](#)]. Otherwise, if he had not been offered of his own will, he who was able to point out and predict the betrayer [cf. [Matt 26:21, 23](#)] and who said to the apostles, “You shall all be scandalized this night because of me” [[Matt 26:31](#)], he could have turned them away who had been sent to him. Instead he met them bravely, and offered himself without being asked, saying, “Whom do you seek?” [[John 18:4](#)]. Immediately they fell backward [cf. [John 18:7](#)]; for they were not able to bear the voice of God in person.

And he has added beautifully, *And he opened not his mouth*, since he was unwilling to

<sup>336</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 42 (336, 7–).

<sup>337</sup> I believe this is directed against the error of Apollinaris.

respond to Pilate's question: "Do you not speak to me?" [[John 19:10](#)];<sup>338</sup> or, according to the Septuagint, "When afflicted he opened not his mouth"; or, according to Symmachus and Theodotion, "When hearing he opened not his mouth."

24. ([53:7b–10a](#)) *He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and he shall not open his mouth. (8) He was taken away from distress and from judgment; who has declared his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the wickedness of my people he struck them. (9) And he shall give the ungodly for his burial, and the rich one for his death, because he has done no iniquity, neither was there deceit in his mouth. (10) And the Lord willed to bruise him in infirmity.* Septuagint: "He was led as a sheep to the sacrifice and as a lamb before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. (8) In his humiliation his judgment was taken away. Who has declared his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth, because of the iniquities of my people he was led to death. (9) And I will give the wicked for his burial, and the rich ones for his death; for he practiced no iniquity, or deceit in his mouth, (10) and the Lord wills to purge him from his stroke."

When in the Acts of the Apostles the eunuch of Queen Candace, while riding in a chariot, did not understand this testimony as he read it, Philip interpreted it of the passion and name of the Savior, and he came to understand it [cf. [Acts 8:26–35](#)]. And immediately he was baptized in the blood of the lamb [cf. [Rev 7:14](#)] about whom he had been reading [cf. [Acts 8:36–38](#)], and earned the right to be called a man, and was sent as an apostle to the nation of the Ethiopians [cf. [Acts 8:39–40](#)]. Therefore, he who was offered to Pilate and did not respond, because it was his own will [cf. [Isa 53:7](#)] for him to ascend the gallows, having been condemned for us, *he was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and was dumb as a lamb before his shearer.* "For Christ our Passover has been sacrificed" [[1 Cor 5:7](#)], whom John the Baptist pointed to when he said, "Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" [[John 1:29](#)]. And in the Apocalypse of John the Evangelist he is often mentioned as the lamb that was slain [cf. [Rev 5:6, 12; 13:8](#)]. In Jeremiah he speaks concerning his own self, "But I, as an innocent lamb led to the sacrifice, knew not" [[Jer 11:19](#)]. For though he did not know sin, he was made sin for us [cf. [2 Cor 5:21](#)]. And just as when a lamb is led to the sacrifice, it does not fight back, so he suffered willingly, in order to destroy him who held the power over death [cf. [Heb 2:14](#)], humbling himself even unto death, even the death of the cross [cf. [Phil 2:8](#)]. This is the lamb, just as its type was found in the lamb whose blood was smeared on the doorposts, which put to flight the destroyer of Egypt [cf. [Exod 12:22–23](#)]. Not only did he redeem us by his blood [cf. [Rev 5:9](#)], but he covered us with his wool [cf. [Ezek 34:3](#)], so that he might give warmth with his own clothing to those who were cold with unbelief, and we would hear the Apostle speaking to us: "As many of you who were baptized in Christ have put on Christ" [[Gal 3:27](#)]; and in another passage: "Put on Christ Jesus" [[Rom 13:14](#)].

As for what follows, *He was taken away from distress and from judgment, or, as the Septuagint translated it, "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away,"* this means that he ascended to the Father from tribulation and *judgment* as a victor, or that the judge of all found no truth in his *judgment*, but without any guilt was condemned through the seditious plot of the Jews and the voice of Pilate. This is why the prophet expresses admiration that the God of

<sup>338</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 42 (336, 26–8).

all handed himself over to the passion. Paul says of him, “For if they had believed, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory” [[1 Cor 2:8](#)].

Then follows, *Who has declared his generation* (generationem)? This is understood in two ways: one should either interpret it concerning his deity, that it is impossible to know the mysteries of the divine generation (*nativitatis*), of which he himself says in Proverbs, “He begets me before all the hills” [[Prov 8:25](#)], in accordance with what we read elsewhere, “Who,” that is, no one, “has known the mind of the Lord, or who has become his counselor?” [[Isa 40:13](#)]; or it should be understood concerning his birth from a virgin, that it could scarcely be explained. After all, when the angel said to Mary, “You shall conceive and give birth to a son” [[Luke 1:31](#)], she answered, “How is this possible for me, since I do not know a man?” [[Luke 1:34](#)]. The angel then said to her, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you” [[Luke 1:35](#)]. Thus the mysteries of this birth alone are told, either by angel or evangelist. The declarer of it is quite rare, according to the following: “Who is wise and shall understand these things, understanding and he shall know them?” [[Hos 14:9](#)]. But suppose a smart reader shall think to himself, in silent reflection: Why is it written, “No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wants to reveal him” [[Matt 11:27](#)]? For surely one who knows the Father and the Son can also tell the mystery of his generation. Let this reader hear that it is one thing to know, something else to divulge. For frequently we conceive things with our mind that we are unable to articulate in speech. Therefore saints can know by faith, rather than speak about, the mystery of a divine generation in a body. Apart from these considerations, even the Apostle, when he was caught up to the third heaven and paradise, heard words that human language is not able to express [cf. [2 Cor 12:4](#)]. Moreover, the Spirit intercedes for us with inexpressible groans [cf. [Rom 8:26](#)].

Therefore, either none or few can declare the generation of him whose “life was taken away from the earth,” so that he lived not on earth but in heaven; or *he was cut off out of the land of the living*, so that what is written about him in the Apocalypse of John was fulfilled: “I am the first and the last, I was alive, and I died, and behold I am alive forever” [[Rev 1:17–18](#)]. Thus after the life that he lived on earth, having died on earth, he lives in heaven forever.

As for what is linked, *Because of the wickedness of my people he struck them*, or, according to the Septuagint, “Because of the iniquities of my people he was led to death,” this has two meanings. For either by his death *he struck* the persecutors and wicked members of his people, or “because of” the greatness of the sins of the “people” whom he always regarded as special [cf. [Deut 7:6](#)], “he was led to death” in order to call them back to life through his death. He himself gave *the ungodly for his burial, and the rich man for his death*; or “the wicked for his burial, and the rich men for his death,” signifying both peoples. Consequently, the multitude of Gentiles is shown in the bad and the “wicked,” who did not have the knowledge of God before [cf. [Rom 1:28](#)]; in the “rich ones,” the Jewish people are shown, to whom belonged the covenant and the legislation and the prophets [cf. [Rom 9:4](#)]. Therefore it is for this reason that the Lord suffered and was buried, to gather together a church to himself out of both peoples.<sup>339</sup> Or, this should be said: after the Lord’s passion, God handed over to the Romans the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, priests and high priests, who previously ruled the people and who

<sup>339</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (337, 18–9).

overflowed with excessive wealth [cf. [Luke 16:14](#)], and subjected them to eternal servitude.

The one, for whose *burial* and *death* the *ungodly* and the “rich ones” were handed over, *practiced no iniquity, and no deceit was found in his mouth*. This can be understood of absolutely no human being, that he has not sinned either in deed or speech, since the Scripture says, “No one is clean from filth, not even if his life shall be one day long” [[Job 14:4–5](#)];<sup>440</sup> and, “All we like sheep have gone astray, each one has turned aside to his own way” [[Isa 53:6](#)]. The only exception is that one who carried our sins and suffers pain on our behalf, and was wounded for our iniquities, and was afflicted on account of our wicked deeds, by whose bruises we were healed [cf. [Isa 53:4–5](#)]. When Peter the prince of the apostles explains this testimony concerning him, he says, “For unto this were you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that you should follow his steps, who committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth, who, when he was reviled, did not revile, and when he suffered, he threatened not” [[1 Pet 2:21–23](#)].

But *the Lord willed* “to purge him from the stroke,” which he had received when he was pierced by the soldier’s lance [cf. [John 19:34](#)], or *to bruise him in infirmity* and with a wound. He himself also spoke of this: “For they persecuted the one whom you struck” [[Ps 69:26](#)]; and God says through Zechariah, “I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered” [[Zech 13:7](#)]. Therefore it was not by necessity that he suffered, but by his own will and the Father’s, to whom he himself said, “God, I have willed to do your will” [[Ps 40:8](#)]. We have also read above about this, “He was offered, because it was his own will” [[Isa 53:7](#)].

25. ([53:10b–11](#)) *If he shall lay down his life (animam) for sin, he shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be directed in his hand. (11) Because his soul (anima) has labored, he shall see and be filled; by his knowledge shall this just servant of mine justify many, and he shall bear their iniquities.* Septuagint: “If you shall give your life (*animam*) for sin, you shall see the seed of a long time. (11) The Lord also wills to take away his soul from suffering, to show him light, and to form [him] with understanding; to justify the just one who serves many well; and he shall bear their sins.”

Here is the meaning according to the Hebrew: *If that one whom the Lord willed to bruise or purge* [cf. [Isa 53:10a](#)] *shall lay down his life (animam) for sin, he shall see a long-lived seed*, which he sowed in the good earth [cf. [Matt 13:8, 23](#)], of which it is written in the Gospel, “The sower went out to sow” [[Matt 13:3](#)], and again, “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field” [[Matt 13:24](#)].<sup>441</sup> *And the will of the Lord shall be directed in his hand*, so that whatever the Father willed is fulfilled in the virtues of him who says to the Father, “I have preserved them in your name; those whom you gave me I have kept; and none of them has perished, except the son of destruction” [[John 17:12](#)]. But *he shall see an eternal seed, and the will of the Father shall be directed in his hand, because his soul (anima) has labored* for a “long time,” not finding rest among the Jews [cf. [Matt 11:28](#)], and saying in the Gospel, “Foxes have holes and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no where to place his head” [[Matt 8:20](#)]; and in this same prophet: “I have become weary (*laboravi*) of bearing [them]” [[Isa 1:14](#)].

<sup>440</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (337, 22–8).

<sup>441</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (338, 4–).



*Because he has labored*, therefore, he will see churches rising up throughout the whole world and he will *be filled* with their faith. Finally, when he sat down at Jacob's well hungry and thirsty, with the sun roasting at midday [cf. [John 4:5–6](#)], he was unwilling to use purchased food [cf. [John 4:33–34](#)], because he had already been *filled* with the faith of the Samaritan woman and of the city of Sychar that came out to him [cf. [John 4:39–42](#)]. He spoke in accord with this meaning in the middle of the eight beatitudes: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice" [[Matt 5:6](#)]. *By his knowledge*, that is, by his teaching, *shall this just one*, who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth [cf. [Isa 53:9](#)], and *servant* of the Father, who had received the form of a servant [cf. [Phil 2:7](#)], and had served the will of the Lord [cf. [Matt 26:42](#); [Heb 10:7](#)], *justified many* believers from the whole world. *And he bore their iniquities*, which they were unable to bear, and by the weight of which they were being overwhelmed.

According to the Septuagint, it means this: O you, on account of whose sins the Son of God was led to death [cf. [Isa 53:8](#)], you wicked ones, rich in evil, who were given for his burial and death [cf. [Isa 53:9](#)], "if" you shall be willing to repent and to offer a pleasing sacrifice to God "for your sins" [cf. [Ps 51:19](#); [Rom 12:1](#)], an afflicted spirit [[Ps 51:17](#)], "your soul (*anima*) shall see the seed of a long time," namely, the Lord and Savior himself, of whom it is sung in the eighty-eighth Psalm, "His seed remains forever, and his throne is as the sun before me" [[Ps 89:36](#)]; and again, "I will establish his seed forever and ever, and his throne as the days of heaven" [[Ps 89:29](#)]. This is what the angel says to the virgin using different words: "Behold, you shall conceive in your womb and give birth to he who shall be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord shall give to him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" [[Luke 1:31–33](#)].

For "the Lord wills to take away from the suffering of his soul," who had said, "My soul is sad, even unto death" [[Matt 26:38](#)]. Consequently the shame of the cross was moderated by the glory of the resurrection. "And to show him light," so that he sees everyone illumined through himself. "And to form" supply him "with understanding," upon whom the spirit of wisdom and understanding descended [cf. [Isa 11:2](#)].<sup>442</sup> "And to justify the just one who serves many well"; for he came not to be served, but to serve [cf. [Matt 20:28](#)], by washing away the sins of all the apostles in the feet of Peter [cf. [John 13:5–9](#)]. "He appeared in the flesh, was justified in the spirit" [[1 Tim 3:16](#)], of whom even Judas the betrayer confesses, "I have sinned by handing over just blood" [[Matt 27:4](#)], and the wife of Pilate says, "Have nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered much today in a dream because of him" [[Matt 27:19](#)]. And one should take note that he was not justified in order to become just from being unjust; but the just one is justified, not that he began to be what he was not, but that what he was appeared to all. This just one suffered for the unjust in order to offer us all to God [cf. [1 Pet 3:18](#)]. To the Jews, it is said of him, "And you denied the holy and just one, and you requested that a murderer be given to you" [[Acts 3:14](#)]. He says, "And he has borne their sins," as a physician bears the illnesses of the sick, of whom the healthy have no need, but those who are sick [cf. [Matt 9:12](#)].

26. ([53:12](#)) *Therefore I will distribute to him very many, and he shall divide the spoils of the*

<sup>442</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (338, 13–6).

*strong, because he has handed over his soul*<sup>443</sup> *unto death, and was reckoned with the wicked, and he has borne the sin of many, and has prayed for the transgressors.* Septuagint: “Therefore he shall inherit many, and he shall divide the spoils of the strong, because his soul was defiled in death, and he was reckoned with the unjust, and he accepted the sins of many, and was handed over because of their iniquities.”

He is giving the reasons why Christ obtains many rewards after his passion. He says, because he suffered and did everything which the words of the past have described, and he himself bore the iniquities of many [cf. [Isa 53:11](#)], *therefore I will divide out to him very many*, so that instead of the Lord’s portion Jacob and the line of his inheritance Israel [cf. [Deut 32:9](#)], those who come from the east and the west would believe in him and recline in the kingdom of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [cf. [Matt 8:11](#)], when that is fulfilled that is written: “Ask of me, and I shall give you the nations as your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as your possession” [[Ps 2:8](#)].<sup>444</sup> We read about this even in this same prophet, “There shall be a root of Jesse, and he who shall arise to rule the Gentiles, in him the Gentiles shall hope” [[Isa 11:10](#)]. But these *very many* were once being held by *the strong*, and under the image of a donkey and a colt had many masters, to whom the apostles said, “The Lord has need of them” [[Matt 21:3](#)]. They were *strong* before Christ assumed a human body, overcame the strong man, and plundered his house [cf. [Matt 12:29](#)].

Therefore, *he has handed over* and “divided the plunder of the strong” to his apostles, so that Peter, James, and John became the princes of the circumcised people [cf. [Gal 2:9](#)], and Paul and Barnabas were sent to the Gentiles [cf. [Acts 13:2](#)]. They were separated in respect to their locations, not in spirit, and they were stationed on different battle lines under one Lord, so that the victory of each column raised up a triumph for the Savior. Therefore, those who say that the diplomatic dispute between Peter and Paul was truly a quarrel and a conflict, that they might give satisfaction to the blasphemer Porphyry, and who assert that the ceremonies of the old law need to be preserved in Christ’s church by the descendants of believing Israel, ought to wait as well for a golden Jerusalem of one thousand years [cf. [Rev 20:2–6](#)], so that they may offer sacrifices and be circumcised, stay put on the Sabbath, sleep, be filled, get drunk, and rise up to play [cf. [Exod 32:6](#)], play that offends God.<sup>445</sup>

We have said this on account of what is now being prophesied: *And he shall divide the spoils of the strong*. This accords with what is written in another passage, “When the Heavenly One divided out kings upon it” [[Ps 68:14](#)]; and again, “The king of the virtues of the beloved, and for the beauty of the house to divide the spoils” [[Ps 68:12](#)]. After all, in the Hebrew, it is said of the Apostle Paul, who was from the tribe of Benjamin [cf. [Rom 11:1](#); [Phil 3:5](#)], “Benjamin, a ravenous wolf, shall eat in the morning and toward evening shall divide the spoils” [[Gen 49:27](#)]. Also, it was already said earlier about them, “They shall rejoice before you as those who rejoice

<sup>443</sup> Or “ife.”

<sup>444</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 42 (338, 24–8).

<sup>445</sup> I believe this comment may be directed against Augustine himself, who had severely criticized Jerome’s mitigating interpretation of the conflict between Peter and Paul at Antioch recorded in [Gal 2:11–](#). See my discussion in [St. Jerome’s Commentaries on Galatians, Titus and Philemon](#), trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010), 31–9.

in harvest, and as those who divide the spoils” [[Isa 9:3](#)]. They divide out to themselves the churches of Christ in the whole world.<sup>446</sup>

Now the reason he shall receive *very many* Gentiles, who came to preach release to the captives [cf. [Isa 61:1](#)], and who led the captivity that was previously captive to the devil and demons, and gave it gifts to men and believers [cf. [Eph 4:8](#)], is *because he handed over his soul unto death, and was reckoned with the wicked*, or “with the unjust.” For if his Apostle became as if he were without law to those who were without law—though he was not without law, but was under Christ’s law [cf. [1 Cor 9:21](#)]*—why should not Christ as well be “reckoned with the unjust,”* in order to redeem the “unjust” from sin, and become all things to all men so that he might save them all [cf. [1 Cor 9:22](#)]? For he bore our sins on his body [cf. [1 Pet 2:24](#)], nailing them to the wood of his cross [cf. [Col 2:14](#)], that he might blot out the handwritten document [cf. [Col 2:14](#)] that we had made to the devil and his angels, written with the hands of the soul, that is, with its works. The Apostle Paul speaks about this, “And he made you alive with Christ, when you were dead in sins” [[Eph 2:1](#)] and “in the desires of the flesh” [[Gal 5:16–17](#)], “forgiving us all our sins” [[Col 2:13](#)]; and, “Blotting out the handwritten document that was against us, which was contrary to us, and he has taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the cross, despoiling them in his flesh; he exposed to shame the principalities and powers, triumphing confidently over them” [[Col 2:14–15](#)].

Now the Evangelist Mark understands “the unjust” with whom “he was reckoned” as the thieves, since he writes, “And with him they crucified two thieves, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, and the Scripture was fulfilled, which says: ‘And with the unjust he was reckoned’ ” [[Mark 15:27–28](#)].<sup>447</sup> This can also be understood in a deeper sense, since the Lord says of himself, “I have been reckoned with those who go down to the pit, I became as a man without help; free among the dead” [[Ps 88:4–5](#)]. For he was truly “reckoned” among sinners and the unjust, when he descended into hell (*infernium*), which in many passages of Scripture is called “the pit,” and he set free those bound in prison. “Who was handed over for our sins, and rose again for our justification” [[Rom 4:25](#)]. It was characteristic of such great mercy to *pray* on the cross *for transgressors*, no, for his persecutors, and say, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” [[Luke 23:34](#)].

## [THE FIFTEENTH BOOK]

1. I know, Eustochium, that I have said repeatedly that whenever the apostles and evangelists cite testimonies from the Old Instrument, if there is no difference between the Hebrew and the Septuagint, they usually make use either of their own words or of those of the Septuagint

<sup>446</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 42 (338, 28–3).

<sup>447</sup> Many ancient Greek mss. omit [Mark 15:28](#). Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 42 (339, 5–).

translators; but if there is one meaning in the Hebrew, another in the old version,<sup>11</sup> they follow the Hebrew rather than the Septuagint translators.<sup>22</sup> In short, just as we have shown that they recorded many things from the Hebrew that are not found in the Septuagint, so let our rivals learn that some testimonies are taken from the Septuagint that are not in the Hebrew books, and our controversy is at an end.<sup>33</sup> We have said this because the wording of the present chapter is different, though the meaning is one.<sup>44</sup> The fifteenth book on Isaiah commences with an explanation of this.

2. (54:1) *Give praise, you barren one, who bear not, sing forth praise, and make a joyful noise* (hinni = *neigh*), *you who did not give birth; for more are the sons of the desolate than of her who had a husband, says the Lord.* Septuagint: “Rejoice, you barren one, who bear not; break forth and cry, you who are not in labor; for more are the sons of the desolate than of her who has a husband.” Symmachus translated this passage as follows: “Rejoice, you barren one, who have not given birth; rejoice in exultation and *make a joyful noise*, you who have not been in labor; for more are the sons of the scattered one than of her who was under a husband.” Theodotion and Aquila do not disagree with Symmachus apart from a few words.

After the Savior’s birth and progress in life and virtues, after the suffering of the cross and glory of the resurrection, when he laid his life down and saw a long-lived seed [cf. [Isa 53:10](#)], and in his knowledge the just one himself justified very many [cf. [Isa 53:11](#)], and divided the spoils of the strong, and prayed for transgressors [cf. [Isa 53:12](#)], giving them an opportunity for repentance, he passes on to the calling of the Gentiles and describes in detailed language those who will believe in him.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, even the Apostle Paul applies this passage to the church under the name of Sarah and Isaac [cf. [Gal 4:24–26](#)]. For the first people from Mount Sinai and Hagar are in slavery with its sons, but the second is free, of which Isaiah says, “Rejoice, you barren one, who bear not; break forth and cry, you who are not in labor; for more are the sons of the desolate than of her who has a husband” [[Gal 4:27](#)]. And he says immediately, “Now we, brothers, are the sons of promise, as Isaac was. But as then he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was according to the Spirit, so also it is now. But what does the Scripture say? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. But we, brothers, we are not the sons of the

1 I.e., the Old Latin translation of the Septuagint.

2 The evidence does not support Jerome’s claim here. According to H. W. Swete, [An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek](#), rev. R. R. Ottley (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1989; originally published by Cambridge University Press, 1914), [392](#), the LXX is the principal source from which the writers of the New Testament derive their Old Testament quotations.

3 For a close parallel to this passage, cf. [Jerome, Apology against Rufinus 2.34–5](#). Jerome wrongly assumes that the LXX translators used the same Hebrew text that he and his contemporary Jews knew.

4 Jerome seems to be acknowledging that the NT quotations from [Isa 54](#) follow the LXX, but allegedly this is only because the LXX has preserved the same meaning as the Hebrew. He seems to be begging the question, that is, assuming what needs to be demonstrated, namely that the meaning is the same in two passages that are translated differently.

5 Cf. [Eus Is 2](#), 43 (339, 10–5).

bondwoman, but of the free, by the freedom that Christ has given us” [[Gal 4:28–31](#)].

If, therefore, the vessel of election [cf. [Acts 9:15](#)] takes the testimony from Isaiah that we now have in hand and has applied it to the sons of promise and to the church from the Gentiles, or to the one gathered from both peoples, which had been *desolate* and forsaken among the Jews, which did not have God as husband, and had not accepted the law or the prophets, for this very reason we are compelled to follow in the footsteps of the predecessor and say that this *desolate woman* is she of whom we read above, “Rejoice, O desolate one” [[Isa 35:1](#)], and the remaining things that are similar to these. It is also written of her in Jeremiah from the persona of God, “She that *gave birth* to seven has become empty, her soul has fainted, the sun has set for her while it is yet noon” [[Jer 15:9](#)]; and in the Book of Samuel, “The *barren* one has *given birth* to seven, and she who had more *sons* has become feeble” [[1 Sam 2:5](#)]; and in the Psalms, “Who settles the *barren woman* in a house [as] a mother rejoicing over her *sons*” [[Ps 113:9](#)]. Now the synagogue is said to have given birth to seven sons on account of the mystery of the number seven and of the Sabbath, which the first people had been obligated to keep. Or, by seven, we should understand “more” in accordance with the ambiguity of the Hebrew language, in which the word signifies both “Sabbath” and “more.” In the *Book of Hebrew Questions* that we wrote on Genesis, we spoke about this in greater detail.<sup>66</sup>

Therefore she was producing very many sons for God, as long as she had God and the divine word (*sermonem*) as husband and was united to the law [cf. [Rom 7:2](#)].<sup>77</sup> But because she received a bill of divorce [cf. [Isa 50:1](#)], and was unwilling to answer to the husband who was calling [cf. [Isa 50:2](#)], and she heard, “You are a daughter of your mother, who abandoned her husband” [[Ezek 16:45](#)], and again, “You did not call me as a master, and as the father and guide of your virgin time” [[Jer 3:4](#)]; for this reason in this same prophet it is lamented, “How has the faithful city Zion, full of judgment, become a harlot, in which justice slept in her, but now thieves?” [[Isa 1:21](#)]. Moreover, this point needs to be made, that when he says, “More are the sons of the desolate than of her who had a husband,” the synagogue is not being excluded absolutely from the bearing of children, but the multitude of Gentiles is being placed before it; for in the apostles and through the apostles even the synagogue herself gave birth to the first people from the Jews. This is why the two princes of the apostles divided the columns of believers in Christ among themselves between those of the circumcision and those of the Gentiles [cf. [Gal 2:9](#)], so that out of both peoples they could build the formerly desolate and poor little Jerusalem [cf. [Isa 51:21](#)]. The Hebrew has recorded the word *neigh* (*hinnitum*) for joyfulness, which indicates the greatness of the joy, like a horse that is neighing for the win. In Job it is written about this more fully [cf. [Job 39:19](#)].

The Jews and our Judaizers apply this passage and the other things that follow to Jerusalem, which they say is to be restored as a kingdom for a thousand years [cf. [Rev 20:4–6](#)]. They say that the same [city] that previously had a husband, and later ceased having one, shall have more sons by far after the divorce than she previously had under her husband, since a comparison of the two women is clearly recorded, of her who had a husband and was divorced, and of her who was always desolate and without a husband. It is not surprising that the Jews

6 Cf. *HQG* q 21:30–1; 41:29.

7 Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 43 (339, 26–2).

fail to see plain truth, whose eyes and ears are closed. I do not know what to say of the Christians, who out of the desire for lands and pleasures for a thousand years surrender to the Jews, even though the Apostle says that these things are allegories, and he refers Sarah and Hagar to two covenants, the old and the new [cf. [Gal 4:24](#)].<sup>88</sup>

3. ([54:2–3](#)) *Enlarge the place of your tent, and stretch out the skins of your tabernacles; spare not, lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. (3) For you shall pass on to the right hand, and to the left, and your seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and shall inhabit the desolate cities.* Septuagint: “For the Lord has said: Enlarge the place of your tabernacle, and of your curtains, fix [the pins], spare not, lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes; (3) enlarge it yet to the right and the left, and your seed shall possess the Gentiles, and you shall make the desolate cities to be inhabited.”

He is now instructing the same one to whom he had said, “Give praise, O barren one who does not give birth, break” the chains with which you were previously being held fast, and “cry out” [[Isa 54:1](#)] in thanksgiving to the Lord, you who had no children.<sup>99</sup> In imitation of the “tabernacle” of Moses, which she once had in the desert, she is to *enlarge* her *tent*, *stretch out* her *skins*, and *lengthen* her *cords and stakes* by which every *tent* is made strong. She is to fasten them deep and strengthen it so that it is not removed by the blowing of the wind. And she is to *pass on to the right hand, and to the left*, and not imitate the narrowness of the Jewish tabernacle, which comprised one hundred cubits in length and fifty in width [cf. [Exod 27:18](#)]. Nor should she be shut in by the compactness of the temple, which was sixty cubits long and twenty wide [cf. [1 Kgs 6:2](#)]. Instead, let her not cease making room *on the right hand and on the left*.

And what is more, lest we should think that this is being said about the Zion that, in accordance with a frivolous quarrel of the Hebrews, is to be reestablished by the Lord to its ancient condition, he records quite openly what was concealed: *And your seed shall inherit the Gentiles.* We read about this in the Gospel: “The sower went out to sow” [[Matt 13:3](#)]; and again: “Did you not sow good seed in your field?” [[Matt 13:27](#)]. This seed likewise “makes the desolate cities to be inhabited,” so that the churches of the Gentiles may arise in the whole world. Or at any rate, the remnant of the apostles and of the Jewish people should be called *seed*, of which it is said in this same prophet, “Unless the Lord Sabaoth had left us seed, we would have been as Sodom and we would have become like Gomorrah” [[Isa 1:9](#)]. Moreover the Apostle says, “A remnant has been saved” [[Rom 11:5](#)]. This concerns the greatness of the churches, which in place of one extremely confined location in Judea shall *enlarge* its borders into the entire world.

Let us come to the spiritual understanding. The one who is in the “tabernacle” does not “possess” a firm and perpetual stage (*mansionem*)<sup>110</sup> [cf. [John 14:2](#)], but he is always changing

<sup>8</sup> This is the kind of needless polemic against orthodox Christians (such as St. Irenaeus and other Christian millennialists) that led some of Jerome’s contemporaries to find him arrogant and offensive. Christian chiliasts were hardly unaware of [Gal 4:24](#) or felt that it negated a literal application of [Isa 54:2–](#) to the future millennial kingdom.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 43 (340, 5–4).

<sup>10</sup> “tage” is a standard translation of *mansio* in Origen’s *Homilies on Ezekiel* and *Numbers*.



locations and hastening to ones that are further on. He says with the Psalm, “I will move on to the place of the wonderful tabernacle” [Ps 42:4]. He forgets the past and stretches himself toward the future, until he reaches the prize of the upward call [cf. Phil 3:13–14]. We also read about this “tabernacle” in another passage, “How beloved are your tabernacles, O Lord of virtues! My soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord” [Ps 84:1–2]; and later he adds, “Blessed are they that dwell in your house, they will praise you evermore” [Ps 84:4]. For the goal of tabernacles is the possession of an eternal house, which does not change its foundations and is not moved from one place to another. For those who have been planted in the house of God flourished first in its courts [cf. Ps 92:13], so that they might go from flowers to fruit and be able to say, “But I am as a fruitful olive tree in the house of God” [Ps 52:8]. After all, a holy man who hastens to go past the tabernacles and longs to see the house of God claims to have one wish, that he may never leave the house of God: “One thing I have asked for from the Lord, this I shall seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life” [Ps 27:4].

Therefore the “tabernacle” and “curtains” must be “enlarged,” the *skins stretched*, the *cords* of multiple and various words *made longer*, and the *stakes strengthened* by means of reason *on to the right hand, and to the left*, so that the *seed* of the word, that is of the doctrine of God, may be able to “possess the Gentiles,” and “make the cities inhabitable.” Cities are what the one who had doubled his mina received [cf. Luke 19:17]. Now the *right hand and the left* in the Holy Scriptures are understood in a good sense when we understand them both according to the spirit and according to the letter, “with the weapons of justice *on the right hand and on the left*” [2 Cor 6:7]. Consequently, both the lowlier understanding may contain instruction for life and examples for the elders, and the spiritual and lofty interpretation may move us from the present things to the future things. And this is what the Lord was saying to the enquiring Pharisees: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s” [Matt 22:21]. Thus we are subject both to the authorities of this world [cf. Rom 13:1], which do not carry the sword unjustly, for vengeance against those who have done evil [cf. Rom 13:4]—these are understood as the *left hand*—and we render to God the things that are God’s, so that we fear no one else but him, who has authority over both the soul and the body [cf. Matt 10:28]—this is the meaning of the *right hand*. After all, it is said of the wisdom of God to which no precious thing can be compared [cf. Prov 3:15], that she holds the length of life and very many years in her *right hand*, and *in her left hand* wealth and glory [cf. Prov 3:16]. Hence this wealth should be understood of the things that consist in one’s present knowledge and good works, and the glory is that which he receives by whose works God is glorified among the nations; but the length of life and the very many years signify eternal life, which hastens toward the future things by neglecting the things of the present.

4. (54:4–5) *Fear not, for you shall not be confounded; nor blush, for you shall not be put to shame, because you shall forget the shame<sup>111</sup> of your youth, and shall remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.* (5) *For he who made you shall rule over you, the Lord of hosts is his name, and your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, shall be called the God of all the earth.* Septuagint: “Fear not, because you have been confounded, and do not be confounded, because you were reproached; for you shall forget your eternal shame, and shall not remember the

<sup>111</sup> Or *confusion*.

reproach of your widowhood, (5) for [it is] the Lord that made you; the Lord Sabaoth is his name, and he that delivered you shall be called the God of the Israel of the whole earth.”

A question arises as to how, if it is said to the church gathered from the nations, “Rejoice, O barren one that bears not,” and, “More are the sons of the desolate one than of her who has a husband” [[Isa 54:1](#)]*—namely, because the one did not have a husband who later on produced many sons, and the other was converted to barrenness who previously had a husband—how is it not said to her who did not have a husband, you shall remember no more the reproach of your widowhood and you shall forget the shame of your youth?* Because of this, the Jews want everything that is being said to be understood as spoken to Jerusalem, which though deserted by God will again be restored by him. They shall easily be refuted when they are reminded that it is said in Zechariah under the persona of the Lord, “And I have taken for myself two rods, the one I called Beauty, and the other I called a Cord, and I fed the flock” [[Zech 11:7](#)]. We have spoken in greater detail about this in its own passage, and now it is spoken to a partial extent: the “two rods” are the two peoples, that of the Gentiles and that of the Jews, the former of which was called the throng of heathen that received natural law rooted in their hearts, which Paul discusses very forcefully when writing to the Romans [cf. [Rom 2:14–15](#)]. Nothing is more beautiful than this rod, so that all creation is summoned equally to worship its Creator. But the second rod, that is the Jewish people, was called a “cord,” which after the stumbling block of the Gentiles is called “the Lord’s portion and the cord of his inheritance,” Israel [[Deut 32:9](#)]. After all, after Israel was called in Abraham, the Lord says: “I took my rod that was called Beauty, and I cut it asunder to make void my covenant, which I had made with all nations” [[Zech 11:10](#)].

Therefore, at the advent of Christ it is said to the rod that had been cut asunder, *Fear not, and do not be ashamed* and blush like a girl, for you will not be “confounded” any longer, as you had formerly been confounded, and you shall not *be mindful of the shame of your youth, nor remember your widowhood* by which you were abandoned by God. For your own Maker himself *shall rule over you*, whose name is the Omnipotent One, who reigns not over a single nation in Judea, but over the entire world. Finally, it follows, the very one who had made you has himself redeemed you with his own blood, *and he shall be called the God of all the earth*, because he is the God of all who live on the earth. By this he makes very clear that this is not being addressed to Jerusalem, which never ruled over the whole world, but to the church of Christ whose inheritance is the possession of the world.

5. ([54:6–8](#)) *For the Lord has called you as a woman forsaken and mourning in spirit, and as a wife cast off from her youth, said your God. (7) At a point for a little have I forsaken you, but with great mercies will I gather you. (8) In a moment of indignation have I hid my face a little while from you, but with everlasting mercy have I had compassion on you, said the Lord your Redeemer.* Septuagint: “The Lord has not called you as a woman forsaken and fainthearted, nor as a woman who is hated from her youth, said your God. (7) For a little while I left you, but with great mercy will I have compassion upon you. (8) In a little wrath I turned away my face from you, but with everlasting mercy will I have compassion upon you, said the Lord who delivers you.”

Here the friends of the Jews vilify the *woman forsaken* and the *wife cast off from her youth* whom the Lord *forsook at a point* and *for a little*, claiming that she refers to Jerusalem, who

though *hiding his face a little while*, received her *with everlasting mercies* and changed her past grief into joy. This is according to the Hebrew. On the other hand, according to the Septuagint he says that “the Lord has *not* called” her “as a woman forsaken and fainthearted, nor as” a *wife* who is held in hatred “from her youth”; but that the reason he “left” her “for a little” and “turned away his face” was so that he might “have compassion” upon her forever.

If therefore the Jews and our Judaizers say that Israel was “forsaken for a little” so that at the advent of Christ God would have compassion on it, and if they interpret the “little” in comparison with all of eternity, why do they not also grant to us to say that the Gentiles were forsaken for a “little while” in order that those who had been *cast off* publicly, who had been God’s in her youth, might later in old age attain eternal mercy? This is especially the case since even in the calling that took place during the time of Israel, the throng of heathen was never excluded. On the contrary, the door to return always stood open to them as proselytes. Consequently, just as by their calling we seem to be excluded for a little while, so by their perpetual exclusion a return to God is allowed to us. Now we have spoken of “perpetual exclusion,” if they do not repent. In any case the Apostle Paul says, “God has shut up all under sin, so that he may have mercy on all” [[Rom 11:32](#)].

What we have interpreted concerning the church gathered out of both peoples, and which the Jews understand of Jerusalem, those who follow tropology alone and in very difficult passages flee from the questions that arise as digressions in an open discussion, apply this to the sinning soul [cf. [Hos 2:9](#)], which has been *cast off* by God, not owing to his hatred of it, but owing to his governance. Hence once it is overwhelmed by the weight of evils, it may return to its own former husband and not despair over the father’s clemency, though its property has been lost [cf. [Luke 15:12–13](#)]. Or is it not an act of great mercy to meet the returning son, give him a ring, a robe and a kiss, and speak to the jealous brother [cf. [Luke 15:20–21](#)] in the form of another parable, “Friend, if I am good, why is your eye evil?” [[Matt 20:15](#)].

6. ([54:9–10](#)) *This thing is to me as in the days of Noah, to whom I swore that I would no more bring in the waters of Noah upon the earth, so have I sworn not to be angry with you, and not to rebuke you. (10) For the mountains shall be moved, and the hills shall tremble; but my mercy shall not depart, and the covenant (foedus) of my peace shall not be moved, said the Lord who has mercy on you. Septuagint: “This is to me from the water that was during the time of Noah, as I swore to him at that time, [saying] of the earth, I will no more be angry with you, neither when you are threatened (10) to remove the mountains, nor shall your hills be removed, so neither shall my mercy fail, nor shall the covenant (testamentum) of my peace be removed, said the Lord who is gracious to you.”*

In order that the congregation of the saints might trust in the everlasting mercy of the Lord [cf. [Isa 54:8](#)], and believe that the reason they were deserted even for a brief moment [cf. [Isa 54:7](#)] was so that they would be united in God’s friendship by an eternal *covenant*, he records examples from the ancestors, saying, Just as while the whole world was sinning, when all the earth corrupted the Lord’s way [cf. [Gen 6:12](#)], a flood came and all sins together with the authors of the sins were blotted out, and the human race was preserved in one man, Noah, to whom I swore that a flood must not be brought in upon the lands [cf. [Gen 9:11](#)], and my promise has been kept up to the present time, and it will never become void; so I swear to my

church, which I have redeemed for myself with my blood [cf. [Eph 1:7](#); [1 Pet 2:18–19](#)], that I will not be angry with those upon whom I have compassion, nor is my mercy to be exchanged with any harsh rebuke. For it will be easier for *mountains* and *hills* to be *moved* than for my judgment to be changed. This accords with what is also said in the Gospel: “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” [[Matt 24:35](#)]. But this is my mercy, he says, that the *covenant of peace* by which the world was reconciled to me [cf. [2 Cor 5:19](#)], is preserved not by the merit of those to whom it has been given, but by my mercy.

In the Septuagint the meaning is confused, and everything is so disorderly that whatever is said can hardly be understood. It is not that I am unaware of what a most intelligent man has said on this chapter,<sup>112</sup> but that it does not satisfy my mind. For he posits a figurative (*tropologicum*) flood, which he interprets in respect to the baptism of the Savior. He heaps up a stockpile of testimonies, as for example the following: “The Lord inhabits the flood” [[Ps 29:10](#)]; and again: “The Lord is good to those who wait on him in the day of affliction, and he knows those who fear him; in the flood of the journey he will make an utter end” [[Nah 1:7–8](#)], namely, because he blotted out all sins in baptism, since in another passage he says, “I, even I, am he who blots out your iniquities” [[Isa 43:25](#)]. “For all have turned aside, together they had become useless” [[Ps 14:3](#)]. “There was no one who was practicing mercy or truth; there was no knowledge of God upon the earth; cursing, lying, murder, adultery, and theft had overtaken everything, and they had mingled blood with blood” [[Hos 4:1–2](#)]. This is why he says through the prophet, “Alas for me! For the godly has perished from the earth! There is none among men that does the right thing, they all quarrel even to the point of bloodshed, each one grievously afflicts his neighbor, and they prepare their hands for mischief” [[Mic 7:1–3](#)]. And there are other things similar to these, among which is this: “No one is pure from filth, not even if his life upon earth shall be one day long” [[Job 14:4–5](#)]. This is why [he says] the Lord brought the flood, who according to the Apostle Peter was killed in the flesh, made alive in the spirit, and he preached to the spirits who were in prison, when the patience of God was waiting in the days of Noah, bringing the flood upon the ungodly. As an example of this, water cleanses us, not washing away the filth of the flesh, but as an inquiry of a good conscience after God [cf. [1 Pet 3:18–21](#)]. Now [this man] wants the *mountains and the hills* that are not *moved* in a flood of this sort to be understood as referring to the saints, who have received an everlasting covenant. They were *moved* in the former flood and had abandoned their own firm position [cf. [Jude 6](#)]. He speaks of the *mountains* as being both the demons and the adversarial powers, who saw the daughters of men, that they were good, and wounded by the dart of love they took wives for themselves, from all whom they chose [cf. [Gen 6:3](#)], and they lost their former strength, and they will not exist in this flood. That man will have said these things. I leave his explanation to the reader’s choice.

7. ([54:11–14a](#)) *O poor little one, tossed by a tempest, without any comfort, behold, I will lay your stones in order, and will lay your foundations with sapphires, (12) and I will make your bulwarks of jasper, and your gates of graven stones, and all your borders of desirable stones. (13) All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your sons. (14) And you shall be founded in justice.* Septuagint: “Lowly and unstable, without comfort, behold, I

<sup>112</sup> He probably means Origen.

will prepare carbuncle for your stone, and sapphire for your foundations; (12) and I will make your bulwarks jasper, and your gates stones of crystal, and your walls choice stones. (13) And [I will cause] all your sons [to be] disciples of God, and your sons shall have great peace. (14) And you shall be built in justice.”

Where we have said, *I will lay your stones in order*, in Hebrew *baffuch* is written, which all but the Septuagint translated similarly: “I will lay your stones in stibbic,”<sup>113</sup> like a woman with makeup on, who paints her eyes with stibbic. This signifies the beauty of the city.<sup>114</sup> And where we said *jasper*, following the Septuagint, the Hebrew has recorded *chod-chod*, which Symmachus alone translated as *καρκηδονιον* (chalcedony). Also, instead of “crystal,” which is read in Hebrew as *ecda*, Symmachus and Theodotion recorded “carving,” that is *γλυφης*, Aquila *τρυπανισμου*, a word which expresses the meaning of gems that have been bored and engraved. We have spoken about the variety of translations. Let us come to the meaning.

He is still speaking to the church, formerly “lowly” and a *poor little one*; it did not have the law and the prophets, nor the word (*sermonem*) of God, and it was *tossed by a tempest* and “unstable.” It had sustained many storms in the world, and was being tossed about in the midst of the various errors of idols. It had no comforter, and in vain it wasted all its substance on doctors [cf. [Luke 8:43](#)]. He is telling it that he is coming, he is descending to build the heavenly Jerusalem on earth, which in the Apocalypse of John is called the bride and wife of the lamb [cf. [Rev 21:9](#)]. It has a light that resembles a precious stone like *jasper* and “crystal” [cf. [Rev 21:11](#)], and a great “wall” and twelve gates inscribed with the names of the tribes of Israel [cf. [Rev 21:12](#)], three of which were on the east and three on the north and three on the south and three on the west [cf. [Rev 21:13](#)]. And the wall was supported by twelve foundations [cf. [Rev 21:14](#)], its whole structure was of jasper stone, and each of the foundations of the walls had individual stones, the first, a jasper, the second, a sapphire, the third, a chalcedony (*charchedonium*), the fourth, an emerald, the fifth, sardonyx, the sixth, sardius, the seventh, chrysolite, the eighth, beryl, the ninth, a topaz, the tenth, a chrysoprasus, the eleventh, a jacinth, the twelfth, an amethyst [cf. [Rev 21:19–20](#)]. We who read these things exclaim and say the following, “O the depth of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways! Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” [[Rom 11:33–34](#)]. And again, “Who is wise and will understand these things, understanding and shall know them?” [[Hos 14:9](#)].

Let those who love only the letter that kills [cf. [2 Cor 3:6](#)] and who are preparing exquisite foods for their luxuriant gluttony during the thousand years, “whose God is their belly and their glory is in their shame” [[Phil 3:19](#)], who after the second coming of the Savior in glory expect marriage and children who live a hundred years [cf. [Isa 65:20](#)], as well as the injury of circumcision, the blood of sacrifices, and a perpetual Sabbath [cf. [Isa 66:23](#)], who say with Israel in a perverse manner, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall reign” [cf. [1 Cor 15:32](#)], answer this: What is this heavenly Jerusalem to which it is now being said, *Behold, I will lay your stones in order*? Or according to the Septuagint, “Behold, I will prepare carbuncle for your

<sup>113</sup> *L & S*: A sulphuret of antimony used by women in the form of powder to color their eyebrows and eyelashes black. Cf. [2 Kgs 9:30](#).

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 43 (342, 1).

stone,” so that the whole city is filled with carbuncle, and has *foundations of sapphire and bulwarks of jasper*, or chalcedony (*charchedonium*), and “gates of crystal” or αναγλυφας, and the “wall” surrounded by precious *stones*, and “all its sons” do not have human beings for teachers, but “God,” and they are called “disciples of God” and there is perpetual *peace* in it and the building of *justice*?<sup>115</sup>

From this it is clear that under the occasion of *justice*, which is the name of a virtue, we ought to seek other virtues as well in the building of the church, not to follow Jewish delusions. For let them explain what that means that is said about wisdom in Proverbs, “It is more precious than all the most precious stones” [[Prov 3:15](#)]. For if Christ is the virtue of God and the wisdom of God [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)], it is folly to compare Christ with insensible stones. And on the other hand we read about the judgments of God, “The judgments of God are right, justified in themselves, more to be desired than gold and many precious stones” [[Ps 19:8–10](#)]. From this it is clear that this stone is being compared to other stones of which above in this same prophet it is said from the persona of God, “Behold, I lay for the foundations of Zion a cornerstone, a choice precious stone, and he that believes on him shall not be ashamed” [[Isa 28:16](#)].

The builders rejected this stone, namely, the scribes and the Pharisees and the rulers of the Jews. It became the head of the corner [cf. [Ps 118:22](#)]. And the Apostle Peter discusses this and says, “To us, therefore,” we who have believed in the choice and precious cornerstone, “he is honor, but to unbelievers, a stone of offense and rock of stumbling” [[1 Pet 2:7–8](#)]. And in the Acts of the Apostles he says to the rulers of the priests, “This is the chosen and precious stone, whom you spurned by rejecting” [[Acts 4:11](#)]. He has become the head of the corner and holds together two peoples, that of the Gentiles and that of Israel. He has built a city [[Isa 45:13](#)] whose builder and maker is God [cf. [Heb 11:10](#)], of which the Apostle also writes to the Corinthians, “You are God’s building” [[1 Cor 3:9](#)], and,

As a wise builder, I laid the foundation; another is building on it, but let every man take heed how he builds; for another foundation no man can lay, but that which is laid, Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood,

<sup>115</sup> The polemic is directed against Christian millennialism, as represented by Papias, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Victorinus, Lactantius, Apollinarius, and Severus; but Jerome has seriously distorted the teaching of these theologians. J. P. O’onnell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, Dissertationes ad Lauream 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 70–1, observes that Jerome is “ot quite accurate in attributing to them the materialistic features of the millennium that he describes.” While precise information is not available due to the lack of extant texts, “renaeus, Tertullian, and Lactantius can hardly be accused of teaching all for which Jerome seems to hold them responsible. While they are certainly millenarists, Irenaeus and Tertullian do not speak of marriage during the millennium; and Lactantius speaks of marriage during the millennium only among those who are still alive at that time and not among the risen saints. Again, the reintroduction of Jewish practices, like circumcision, is not proposed by the above-mentioned authors as a feature of the millennium. Yet Jerome never describes anything but the materialistic type of millennium including the details just mentioned.”



hay, stubble, every man's work shall be manifest. [[1 Cor 3:10–13](#)]

And he speaks of this foundation in another epistle: “Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself the cornerstone” [[Eph 2:20](#)], and again: “among whom all of you as living stones are being built into a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices” [[1 Pet 2:5](#)]. Of these stones it is said mystically, “Holy stones are rolled on earth” [[Zech 9:16](#)], out of which Christ builds his church on earth, saying in the Gospel, “Upon this rock I shall build my church” [[Matt 16:18](#)]. The one who will have merited the right to enter this city says while rejoicing in the Lord, “As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of virtues, in the city of our God, God has founded it forever” [[Ps 48:8](#)]. And concerning the maker of this city it is also said in another place, “He shall build my city and bring back the captivity of my people” [[Isa 45:13](#)].

But this is not the time to speak about the nature of the twelve stones and gems, since a very large number of both Greeks and Latins have written about this. I shall name only two of them, the bishop Epiphanius, a man of holy and venerable memory, who left behind for us an outstanding book of his genius and erudition, which is entitled, *Περὶ λιθῶν*,<sup>116</sup> and Pliny the Elder (*secundum*), the same man who is the orator and philosopher among the Latins. In his very fine work on *Natural History*, he filled up the thirty-seventh book, which is also the last, with a discussion of stones and gems. These twelve stones are recorded in order in Exodus and in Ezekiel, that is in the *λογίω* (oracular breastplate) of the high priest [cf. [Exod 28:15–29](#)] and in the crown and diadem of the prince of Tyre [cf. [Ezek 28:13](#)].

Let us speak first about Exodus. Four rows of stones were interwoven. The first row had a sardius stone, a topaz, and an emerald; the second had a carbuncle, a sapphire, and a jasper; the third a ligurius, an agate, and an amethyst; the fourth a chrysolite, a beryl, and an onyx, set round with gold; and they were inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel [cf. [Exod 28:17–21](#)]. In this one should take note that the second row of stones is likewise recorded in the present passage of Scripture: carbuncle, sapphire, and jasper. For we do not yet hold fast to what is perfect, we have not reached what is first, because we now see in a mirror and in a riddle [cf. [1 Cor 13:12](#)].

Furthermore, in Ezekiel we have found it written as follows:

You are a seal of resemblance, and crown of beauty, you were in the delights of the paradise of God. You have been clothed with all the best stones, the sardius, topaz, emerald, carbuncle, sapphire, jasper, silver too and gold, ligurius, agate, amethyst, chrysolite, beryl, and onyx; and you have filled your treasures and your storerooms in you with gold. From the day that you were created I placed you with the cherub on my holy mountain; you were in the midst of the stones of fire, faultless in your days, from

<sup>116</sup> The full title of this work is *De XII gemmis* (Περὶ τῶν δώδεκα λίθων). Cf. Quasten, *Patrology*, 4 vols. (Utrecht-Antwerp: Spectrum), 3:389. It was written in 394, dedicated to Diodore of Tarsus, and gives an allegorical interpretation of the twelve precious stones in the breastplate of the high priest. Only fragments of the Greek original survive, but an old Georgian version has preserved the entire text. Cf. PG 43:293–04, 321–66. For an English translation see Epiphanius, *De Gemmis*, trans. P. R. Blake and H. De Vis, *Studies and Documents 2* (London, 1934).

when you were created, until your iniquities were found in you. [[Ezek 28:12–15](#)]

For who is so foolish and of such a senseless mind that, whoever he shall acknowledge that one to be, he would think that it was the prince of Tyre who was set in the paradise of God, and was created among the cherubim and lived among the stones of fire (which we understand without any doubt as angels and heavenly powers); that he was the one who was adorned with earthly stones and had the likeness and seal of God?

This is not the time, therefore, to speak individually and one by one about the nature of each of these stones; for everything does not always need to be said. At this time let us discuss only the “carbuncle,” “sapphire,” and “jasper.”

The “carbuncle” that is “prepared” or *laid in order* seems to me to be the fiery word of doctrine, which illumines the hearts of believers after the error of darkness has been put to flight. This is what one of the seraphim brought to purge the lips of Isaiah, after seizing it with tongs [cf. [Isa 6:6](#)]. According to the reliable testimony of Genesis, it arises in the land of Havilah (*Evilath*), where there is the finest gold, carbuncle stone, and emerald [cf. [Gen 2:11–12](#)].

Furthermore, the “sapphire” that is placed in the “foundations” bears a likeness of heaven and of the air above us.<sup>117</sup> Consequently, the one who is like this could say the following along with Aristophanes’ Socrates: αεροβατω και περιφρονω τον ηλιον, which we can turn into Latin speech as, “I tread on air and I despise the sun”;<sup>118</sup> or with the Apostle Paul, “But our conversation is in heaven” [[Phil 3:20](#)]. Also, the Scripture of Ezekiel relates that the place where the throne of God is bears the likeness of sapphire [cf. [Ezek 1:26](#)], and the glory of the Lord consists in this color, which bears the image of the superheavenly [cf. [1 Cor 15:49](#)].

Moreover, in the Lord’s city the *bulwarks*, that is, the projecting points of the walls, are strengthened by *jasper*, [walls] that can destroy and overcome every height that raises itself up against the knowledge of God [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)] and render falsehood subject to the truth. Therefore the one who is the strongest in disputation and who has been fortified by testimonies from the Holy Scriptures is a “bulwark” of the church. There are many kinds of jasper. For there is one that bears a resemblance to the emerald found in the springs of the river of Thermodon<sup>119</sup> and is called αμαθουσιον, where they claim that all ghosts are banished. Another sort is greener than the ocean and dyed as if with flowers; they report that this one arises in Mount Ida in Phrygia and in its deepest caves. But another kind is found near the Hyrcanian Ebro (*Hiberos*) and the Caspian Sea, and especially near Lake Neusis. There is also another jasper that resembles snow and the foam from sea waves, and it has a slight reddish tint, as if it is mingled with blood. We have said this in order to become acquainted with all the spiritual graces that exist in the bulwarks of the church. The one who has them puts to flight vain fears and is able to say with the bride, “My kinsman is white and ruddy” [[Song 5:10](#)].

Now the *gates* of this city are made of “crystal stone,” which is carved in various ways so that there is nothing purer than this stone. After all, in the extremely violent cold of the Alps

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 43 (342, 16–2).

<sup>118</sup> Cf. [Aristophanes, Clouds 1503](#). Jerome quotes this line from Aristophanes also in *Commentary on Titus 2:15*.

<sup>119</sup> A river of Pontus, on which dwelt the Amazons.

and in caves inaccessible to the sun, water is said to congeal into crystal; and to the touch it is indeed stone, but to the sight it is water. This shows that those who are at the entrance of the church ought to be stained by no defilement, but to be of the purest faithfulness and say with the prophet: “I gained understanding by your commandments” [[Ps 119:104](#)] and to hear this: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” [[Matt 5:8](#)].

Now the “walls” of the city, or the *borders* and περιβολος (enclosing wall) are built with “choice stones,” which we can understand as the remaining stones; and “all its sons” are *taught by*, or “disciples of God.” The Lord makes use of this testimony in the Gospel of John and says: “No one can come to me unless my Father who sent me draws him, and all who hear and learn from the Father come to me” [[John 6:44](#)]. And after a little bit he says: “It is written in the prophets: They shall all be taught by God” [[John 6:45](#)]. And he says through Jeremiah: “I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their heart, and they shall no longer teach everyone his neighbors, and his brothers, saying: ‘Know the Lord;’ but they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest; for I will be merciful to their iniquities, and their sins I will not remember” [[Jer 31:33–34](#)].

But the teaching of the “disciples of God” has the “great peace” that was left to them by the Lord [cf. [John 14:27](#)];<sup>220</sup> and the act of building the most beautiful city is carried out with “justice,” so that he is God not of a single nation but of the whole world, inviting to its faith slaves and free, Greeks and barbarians, rich and poor, noble and common, men and women, children and elderly, and all that seems to be the opposite of the world. We have exceeded the measure of brevity that will be advantageous in everything that needs to be said, that we are seeking the city of God, not on earth, according to the Hebrews and our half Jews, but in heaven, the city that is set in Christ on a mountain and cannot be hidden [cf. [Matt 5:14](#)].

8. ([54:14b–c](#)) *Depart far from calumny, for you shall not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near you.* Septuagint: “Depart from injustice, and you shall not fear, and trembling shall not come near you.”

The progression is very beautiful. He had comforted the “poor little” and “lowly one” [cf. [Isa 54:11](#)], promising her spiritual graces. Now he shows what she ought to do, if she does not want to be afraid of the attacks of adversaries. And the meaning is, Do you wish not to fear your enemies? Do what I say: *Depart far from calumny*, or “from injustice,” since all “injustice” and robbery arises out of *calumny*; and *you shall not fear*, and “trembling” and fear *shall not come near you*, so that you do not fear men but God, saying with Moses, “I am trembling and fearful” [[Deut 9:19](#)], and with one of Job’s friends, “Horror and *trembling* came upon me, and caused all my bones greatly to shake” [[Job 4:14](#)], and with the prophet, “At the sound of my prayer, *trembling* entered into my bones” [[Hab 3:16](#)], and, “Upon whom has the Lord rested, but upon the humble and quiet, and the man that trembles at his words?” [[Isa 66:2](#)]. On the other hand, there is another “trembling” that belongs to the ungodly, which arises out of fear of punishment, of which it is written, “Trembling seized the ungodly” [[Isa 33:14](#)].

9. ([54:15](#)) *Behold, an inhabitant shall come, who was not with me; he that was a stranger to you before, shall be joined to you.* Septuagint: “Behold, proselytes shall come to you by me, and shall be sojourners with you, and shall run to you for refuge.”

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 43 (343, 8–0).

These things too the Jews think are being said to Jerusalem, that there will be many “proselytes” from the Gentiles and they will accept the law of Moses and its ceremonies. In accordance with the interpretation that has been undertaken, we apply this to the church, which has been gathered together from both peoples, which has no spot or blemish [cf. [Eph 5:27](#)], which is free and the mother of all believers [cf. [Gal 4:26](#)]. The Lord sent his disciples to gather these “proselytes” and *strangers*, saying, “Teach all nations” [[Matt 28:19](#)] to “run for refuge” to the gospel and to accept the new law, so that the former *inhabitants* of idolatry may become “sojourners” of the church. It is also written about them in the Psalms, “The Lord gives wisdom to the blind” [[Ps 146:8](#)], or, as it reads in the Latin copies, “The Lord enlightens the blind, the Lord loves the strangers” [[Ps 146:8–9](#)]. Consequently after the blind receive the light of truth, and the foolish have learned wisdom, then as they pass into the church, they are loved by the Lord and hear through the prophet, “I shall call not my people, my people” [[Hos 2:23](#)]. When he enters the temple of God, “zeal seized upon an untaught people” [[Isa 26:11](#)].

10. ([54:16–17](#)) *Behold, I have created the craftsman who blows the coals in the fire, and brings forth a vessel (vas) for his work, and I have created the killer to destroy. (17) No weapon (vas) that has been fashioned against you shall be deployed, and you shall judge every tongue that resists you in judgment. This is the inheritance of the servants of the Lord, and their justice with me, says the Lord.* Septuagint: “Behold, I have created you, not as the coppersmith blowing coals in the fire, and bringing out a vessel [fit] for work; but I have created you, not for ruin, that I should destroy you. (17) No weapon (vas) made against you shall prosper; and every voice shall rise up against you in judgment. You shall vanquish them all, and your guilty ones (*obnoxii*) shall be [condemned] in it. There is an inheritance to those who serve the Lord, and you shall be just before me, says the Lord.”

Let us speak first according to the Hebrew. If you desire not to be afraid and want fear to be far from you [cf. [Isa 54:14](#)], do the things that the former words have described; for I am the one through whom you shall have proselytes [cf. [Isa 54:15](#)]. I am he who *created the craftsman who blows the coals in the fire*, that is, the devil, master craftsman of all evil, not by compulsion of nature, but by the choice of his mind. He shall start fires and shall *bring forth vessels* against you, such as the magicians Simon [cf. [Acts 8:9](#)] and Elymas [cf. [Acts 13:8](#)], who *resisted* the apostles Peter and Paul. *I have created the killer* of those who shall be unbelievers, not that I am the cause of their “ruin,” but that the adversary who was created to fight is both the ruin of those whom he has vanquished and a cause of the rewards that go to the victorious. And none who have been *fashioned against you* by the *blowing craftsman shall be deployed*, but they will feel both the present and the future punishments.

And what previously seemed hidden is expressed more clearly in what follows: *And you shall judge every tongue that resists you in judgment*, by destroying the wisdom of the wise and by rejecting the prudence of the prudent [cf. [Isa 29:14](#)]. And by your *judgment* you shall condemn all the leaders of the heretics and the teachers of the Jews and the philosophers of the world, whom that *craftsman* had kindled into flame, just as the queen of Sheba and the Ninevites shall condemn unbelievers [cf. [Matt 12:41–42](#)]; and, on the other hand, Sodom shall be justified in comparison with Jerusalem, who is worse than she is [cf. [Ezek 16:51](#)].

After this, to keep them from thinking that the struggle is pointless and ends at one’s death

in the present, he adds things that are the future rewards. *This is the inheritance of the servants of the Lord*, that is, the kingdom of heaven and perpetual life and the repayment for labors, which “eye has not seen and ear has not heard and it has not entered into the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him” [[1 Cor 2:9](#)]. But if this is the case for those who love, therefore it will also be so for those who serve, who have no other Lord but God. And this is the *justice* of those who are *with* God, *says the Lord*. Thus the present affliction is compensated by future joy.

On the other hand, the sense according to the Septuagint seems to me to be this. I, your Creator, have not made “you” in the same way that the very wicked craftsman the devil kindles into flame “vessels” of iniquity by an unclean spirit and “brings” them out “fit for ruin.” He ought to know that vessels of this sort do not have a successful journey, but they are broken to pieces in midcourse. Now what these vessels are he shows in the words that follow: “And every voice” that “shall rise up against you in judgment, you shall vanquish them all.” The vessels of iniquity have a “voice.” This voice rises up against the church, when the heretics set their mouth against the Most High and their tongue passes through to the earth [cf. [Ps 73:9](#)]. And what follows, “And your guilty ones (*obnoxii*) shall be in it,” we have marked in front with an obelus, because it appears to have been added, not so much by the Septuagint as by bad copyists. But when the church shall have vanquished every voice rising up against it, at that time there shall be “an inheritance,” an eternal possession, for those who “serve” and obey “the Lord.” It is spoken of this in different wording in Jeremiah: “There is a reward for your works” [[Jer 31:16](#)]. Moreover, the inhabitants of the church “shall be just before the Lord.” For everyone who does justice is born of God [cf. [1 John 2:29](#)]. The Lord says to them, “Be holy, for I am holy” [[Lev 20:26](#)].

11. ([55:1–2b](#)) *All you who thirst, come to the waters, and you who have no money, make haste, buy, and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without silver, and without any exchange. (2) Why do you spend silver for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?* Septuagint: “You who thirst, go to the water, and all you who have no money, go and buy and eat and walk and buy wine and fat without money and without a price. (2) Why do you buy with money, and [give] your labor for that which does not satisfy?”

The Hebrew word *oi* is recorded here at the beginning of the chapter. Above in the prophecy against Ariel [cf. [Isa 29:1](#)],<sup>221</sup> I had said that it was an ambiguous word and signified either an exclamation of one calling, or “woe,” which is spoken with the emotion not of one who is grieving but calling. Since therefore he had said that every weapon (*vas*) fashioned against the church must be shattered [cf. [Isa 54:14](#)], and every voice and tongue that had armed itself against the knowledge of God must be defeated [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)], he summons believers to the river of God [cf. [Ps 65:9](#)], which is filled with waters, and whose flow gladdens the city of God [[Ps 46:4](#)]. He invites them to drink waters from the fountains of the Savior [cf. [Isa 12:3](#)], who says to the Samaritan woman, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, ‘Give me to drink,’ you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water” [[John 4:10](#)]. For “whoever drinks of the water that I give him, there shall become in him a fountain of water springing up to eternal life” [[John 4:14](#)].

<sup>221</sup> Cf. [9.9](#).

Concerning these waters he called out in the temple, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink; whoever drinks from the water that I shall give him, rivers shall flow from his belly” [John 7:37–38], meaning the Holy Spirit whom believers were to receive [cf. John 7:39]. The prophet echoes this in mystical language: “My soul has thirsted for the living God” [Ps 42:2], and again: “With you is the fountain” [Ps 36:9], which spoke about itself, “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and they have dug for themselves broken cisterns that are not able to hold water” [Jer 2:13]. Clouds sprinkle these waters that the truth of God has reached, as it is written, “And the clouds sprinkle justice” [Isa 45:8]. And the thirsty are instructed not to drink the troubled waters of Sior [cf. Jer 2:18] and the overflowing whirlpools of the Assyrians [cf. Isa 8:6], but to go to the waters of Siloam (*Siloa*) [cf. John 9:7, 11?], which run silently. Let them not be afraid of the poverty of their eloquence, if perchance they do have no *silver* [cf. Acts 3:6], but let them hear the Apostle saying, “You were saved by grace” [Eph 2:8], and the Lord saying to his disciples, “Freely you have received, freely give” [Matt 10:8].

In a wonderful manner, they *buy* waters “without money” and do not drink but *eat* them. For he is both the water and the bread, who came down from heaven [cf. John 6:33]. Therefore, what is said in some copies, “Buy and drink,” has been altered by incompetent scribes who thought that it was more logical if the waters were drunk rather than eaten. But there is also the evil “money” or *silver* of which Scripture disapproves when it says, “Money that is given deceitfully shall be reckoned as a potsherd” [Prov 26:23]; and in another passage, “Your silver is rejected” [Isa 1:22]. Moreover, it is silver that is compared with the oracles of God: “The oracles of the Lord are pure oracles, silver tried by fire, tested on earth, purified seven times” [Ps 12:6]. Therefore, once that *silver* and “money” has been spurned, with which we cannot buy the Lord’s waters, let us go to him who while holding the cup of the mystery (*sacramenti*), said to his disciples, “Take and drink, this is my blood, which shall be poured out for you for the remission of sins” [Matt 26:27].

And wisdom has mixed this wine in its own mixing bowl [cf. Prov 9:2], summoning all the foolish of the age and those who do not have the wisdom of the world to drink [cf. Prov 9:4], and that we should buy not only wine but also milk, which signifies the innocence of little children. This custom and type is preserved even today in the churches of the West, of giving wine and milk to those reborn in Christ.<sup>222</sup> And Paul was speaking about this milk, “I gave you milk to drink, not solid food” [1 Cor 3:2], as well as Peter: “As newborn infants, desire rational milk” [1 Pet 2:2]. And this is why Moses understands the wine and milk in reference to the passion of Christ, and attests in mystical language, “His eyes shall be more cheering than wine and his teeth whiter than milk” [Gen 49:12].

In the present passage the Septuagint translated *milk* as “fat.” The saint speaks of this in the Psalm: “Let my soul be filled as with fat and fatness” [Ps 63:5], and in another passage: “He fed them with the fat of wheat and satisfied them with honey out of the rock” [Ps 81:16]. They are “fat” in no other respect than in their mystical flesh. The Lord exhorted them to this when he said, “Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you shall not have life in you” [John 6:54]. And this is why he was handed over in Gethsemane [cf. Matt 26:36], which means “fat,” or very

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 44 (344, 33–6).



fertile valley.<sup>223</sup>

And at the same time he rebukes those who follow secular wisdom and the depraved and fabricated teachings of the heretics and the traditions of the Pharisees, and all falsely named knowledge [cf. [1 Tim 6:20](#)], which is raised up against God [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)]; and who at a great “price” *spend silver for that instruction, and constant labor for that which is not bread*. Moreover they sweat for this food *that does not satisfy*. From this it is shown that that wisdom must be pursued that is not in the foliage and flower of words, but in the marrow and fruit of meanings, wisdom that does not flutter past the ear, but refreshes the spirit. In order to learn it, we do not cross the seas, nor does it require of us great expense, but the word is near in our mouth and in our heart [cf. [Deut 30:13–14](#)].

12. ([55:2c–3](#)) *Hearing, hear me and eat the good, and your soul shall be delighted in fatness. (3) Incline your ear and come to me, hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant (pactum) with you, the faithful mercies of David.* Septuagint: “Hear [me] and you shall eat good things, and your soul shall be delighted in good things. (3) Attend with your ears, and follow my ways and hear me, and your soul shall live in good things; and I will make with you an eternal covenant (*testamentum*), the faithful holy things of David.”

To prevent anyone from thinking that the divine words are exhorting those who will hear to the hearing of the flesh, not of the mind, he promises them “good things,” not of the flesh but of the soul. He says, For if you shall *hear me*, “you shall eat good things” of the land [[Isa 1:19](#)], or *the good one* who says, “I am the *good shepherd*” [[John 10:11](#)]; *and your soul shall be delighted* “in good things” and *in fatness*. Therefore, we should not believe that the “good things” that have been promised to the soul are riches, bodily health, and worldly honors, which even the philosophers call “indifferent things,” that is, neither good nor evil, and they are differentiated in view of the state of those who use them; but they are those to which God exhorts us: “Turn away from evil and do good” [[Ps 37:27](#)]. But if on the other hand uprightness and virtue are called goods of the soul, therefore it is not poverty, physical weakness, and obscurity that should be understood as evils, but all the vices that are truly evil.

After all, Abraham did not possess goods because he was wealthy, but because he used his wealth well. And Lazarus, who later on rested in his bosom [cf. [Luke 16:22–23](#)], did not suffer evils because he experienced the torments of disease along with his poverty; but from the things that were reckoned as evils in the world, he attained true goods. This is also why that rich man clothed in purple [cf. [Luke 16:19](#)] received his good things in his life [cf. [Luke 16:25](#)], things that were goods for him, who thought them to be goods; but concerning Lazarus, on the other hand, it does not say, “He received *his* evils in his life,” but, “He received evils in his life” [[Luke 16:25](#)], things that seemed to be evils not to him who endured them, but to others. Blessed Job has offered us an example of both situations. He was conquered neither by the goods of the age nor by its evils, but he endured everything with equal strength of mind [cf. [Job 1](#)].

This is the reason Solomon prays to God, “Give me neither poverty nor riches; but establish for me only what is necessary and sufficient, lest being filled, I should become deceitful and say, ‘Who is watching me?’ Or being compelled by poverty, I should steal, and swear by the name of the Lord” [[Prov 30:8–9](#)]. But if he pleads this, to have neither riches nor poverty, but only what

<sup>223</sup> Cf. [9.2](#).

is necessary for sustenance, of which the Apostle also says, “But having sustenance and clothing, with these we are content” [[1 Tim 6:8](#)], it is clear that riches and poverty, health and illness, pleasure and torment, are neither good nor evil but they become good and evil in view of the diversity of those who experience them. Therefore it is to the soul that the Lord is making these promises, and not, in accordance with the *χιλιαστας* (chiliasts), that he is promising an abundance of wealth, luxuriant foods, sleek bodies, pheasants,<sup>224</sup> stuffed turtledoves, honeyed wine, undiluted wine, beautiful wives, and swarms of children. On the contrary, it refers to those delights unto which he has summoned us mystically when he said, “Take delight” or “enjoy the delights in the Lord, and he will give you the requests of your heart” [[Ps 37:4](#)]. And elsewhere, “I believe I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living” [[Ps 27:13](#)]. Moreover, in another Psalm, it says, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, [bless] his holy name, who fills your desire with good things” [[Ps 103:1, 5](#)].

Finally, he adds, “Hear me, and your soul shall live.” The promise of all good things is everlasting life. But if you will be willing to hear, and your soul will live forever, *I will make an everlasting covenant (pactum) with you, the faithful mercies of David*. Of these, likewise, the Psalmist was singing, “I shall sing the mercies of the Lord forever, I shall declare your truth to generation and generation” [[Ps 89:1](#)]. And that we may know what these *mercies* are, he shows us in the words that follow, “Once have I sworn by my holiness, I will not lie unto David; his seed endures forever, and his throne as the sun before me, and as the moon perfect for ever, and a faithful witness in heaven” [[Ps 89:35–37](#)]. He is called *faithful*, then, because he has fulfilled the promises. The Septuagint translated this as, “the faithful holy things of David,” which can be understood for firm and strong things, as for example this: “Faithful are his commands, strengthened for all ages” [[Ps 111:7–8](#)]. And in another passage, “God is *faithful*, and there is no iniquity in him” [[Deut 32:4](#)]. Moreover, the Apostle Paul says, “If we deny him, he remains *faithful*; he cannot deny himself” [[2 Tim 2:13](#)]. And in another passage when writing to Timothy, “*Faithful* is the word and worthy of all acceptance” [[1 Tim 1:15](#)].

Now this *covenant* that the Lord promises shall not be brief and of one time period, as that of the Jewish people, but it shall abide forever, so that the true David may come and in the gospel the things that were promised under God’s persona may be fulfilled: “I have found David my servant, I have anointed him with holy mercy” [[Ps 89:20](#)]. He “set his hand on the sea and his right hand on the rivers” [[Ps 89:25](#)]. According to Ezekiel through many ages, while David was already asleep, he calls him his servant and shepherd, saying, “I shall raise up for you one shepherd, my servant David” [[Ezek 34:23](#)].

13. ([55:4–5](#)) *Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, for a leader and a teacher to the Gentiles. (5) Behold, you shall call a nation, which you did not know, and the nations that did not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.* Septuagint: “Behold I have given him for a testimony among the Gentiles, a prince and teacher to the Gentiles. (5) Nations that did not know you shall call upon you, and peoples that were not acquainted with you shall flee to you for refuge, for the sake of your God, the Holy One of Israel; for he has glorified you.”

<sup>224</sup> Lit., “birds of Phasis” see [Pliny the Elder, 10, 48, 67, § 132](#). The Phasis is a river in Colchis, which empties into the Black Sea.

He had summoned the Jewish people to believe, to incline their ears and receive the eternal covenant [cf. [Isa 55:3](#)] that the Lord had promised to David and to Abraham and his seed, saying, “In your seed shall all nations be blessed” [[Gen 22:18](#)]. The Apostle Paul explains this in detail, and says, “He did not say, ‘to seeds,’ but ‘to seed,’ which is Christ” [[Gal 3:16](#)]. And because he knew that when they became unbelieving, the *peoples* of the *nations* would believe, he passes to the *Gentiles* and says that the Son sent his *witness*, or “testimony” of all “nations,” who would announce his precepts and commands to the *peoples*. He says about himself, “This gospel must be preached in the whole world as a *testimony* to all nations” [[Matt 24:14](#)].<sup>225</sup> Finally, he silences the arrogant Pilate with these words: “For this I was born, to bear *testimony* to the truth” [[John 18:37](#)]. The Apostle Paul writes to Timothy about it, “There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as redemption for all, a *testimony* in the proper time, for which I was appointed herald and apostle” [[1 Tim 2:5–7](#)]. Therefore, everything that is said ought to be applied to him who “was led as a sheep to the sacrifice, and as a lamb before its shearer he did not open his mouth” [[Isa 53:7](#)].<sup>226</sup> Above it says of him, “We saw him and he had no form or beauty” [[Isa 53:2](#)], and, “He himself bore our sins and suffers pain for us” [[Isa 53:4](#)]. Those who previously *did not know* him “fled for refuge” or *ran* to him, saying, “Our God is a refuge and strength” [[Ps 46:1](#)], and again, “Lord, you have become a refuge to us in generation and generation” [[Ps 90:1](#)]. We have also read about their faith above, “They to whom it was not preached about him have seen, and those who had not heard shall understand” [[Isa 52:15](#)].

He is *witness* of all that the Father pledged and offered to the world, the mystery of which Paul summarizes in a few words to the Ephesians, when he says, “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory” [[Eph 1:17](#)]. And now it is written of him, *Because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you* with that glory that he had before the world was made [cf. [John 17:5](#)]. The prophet also bears witness to it: “The glory of God shall appear” [[Isa 40:5](#)]. He is the “splendor of his glory and the form of his substance” [[Heb 1:3](#)], when every tongue shall confess that the Lord Jesus is in the glory of the Father [cf. [Phil 2:11](#)]. It is he who responded to the Son’s request for the glory that he had previously by saying, “I have both glorified and shall glorify” [[John 12:28](#)]. And John the Apostle says of him, “We have seen his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” [[John 1:14](#)]. Therefore he is called the “Father of glory” [[Eph 1:17](#)] when God the Word who was in the beginning with God [cf. [John 1:1–2](#)] is speaking about him; but he is called “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ” when he is speaking about him who says in the Gospel, “Why do you persecute me, a man who speaks the truth to you?” [[John 8:4](#)]. It is not that there are two (*alter et alter*), which is a wicked error of many, but that one and the same Son of God speaks now from the standpoint (*affectibus*) of his deity in glory, now from that of our nature, which he deigned to receive and preserve.

14. ([55:6–7](#)) *Seek the Lord, while he can be found, call upon him, while he is near. (7) Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he is bountiful to forgive.* Septuagint: “Seek the

<sup>225</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 44 (346, 16–8).

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (346, 6–0).

Lord, and when you find him, call upon him; and when he draws near to you, (7) let the wicked leave his ways, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him be converted to the Lord, and he would find mercy; for he shall bountifully pardon your sins.”

Since, as we have already said above, you were unwilling to receive an everlasting covenant and the faithful mercies of David [cf. [Isa 55:3](#)], which, since you were unwilling, the throng of Gentiles undertook to receive, therefore I warn you my people, I, the prophet; and what is more, I am called as a witness, while there is time: repent; “be converted” to him who now speaks to you through the prophets, who will speak later on in person; *seek him while he can be found*, while you are in the body, while the opportunity for repentance exists, and seek him not in a place but by faith.

But we learn more fully in another passage how God may be sought: “Be mindful of the Lord in goodness, and in simplicity of heart seek him; for he is found by those who do not tempt him, and appears to those who do not distrust him” [[Wis 1:1–2](#)]. And this is why we who know what has been said about sinners, “Those who withdraw far from you shall perish” [[Ps 73:27](#)], should say to the Lord, “Where shall I go from your Spirit, and where shall I flee from your presence? If I should go up to heaven, you are there, if I should go down to hell (*infernium*), you are present” [[Ps 139:7–8](#)]. And let us *call upon him while he is near*. Otherwise he may withdraw far from our vices and sins.

For he “draws near” to those who draw near to him [cf. [Jas 4:8](#)], and while he is still a long way off he rejoices when he meets the son who returns after a long time [cf. [Luke 15:20](#)]. This is why the saint sings in the Psalm, “But it is good for me to cleave close to God” [[Ps 73:28](#)]; and Moses alone “drew near” to the Lord [cf. [Exod 24:2](#)]; and God says through Jeremiah, “I am a God who draws near and not far off” [[Jer 23:23](#)]. I draw near to those who draw near to me by faith, and I withdraw far off from those who withdraw far off from me through infidelity. On account of these things it is said to believers, “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” [[Jas 4:8](#)]. And what is more, to prevent us from thinking that this can be sufficient, he immediately adds, “Resist the devil, and he shall flee from you” [[Jas 4:7](#); cf. [1 Pet 5:9](#)]. Above this he had said of him, “Your adversary the devil goes around like a lion seeking whom he may devour; resist against him, strengthened by faith” [[1 Pet 5:8–9](#)].<sup>227</sup>

It is not sufficient to *seek the Lord*, and *while* there is time for repentance, to find him, and even to *call upon him while he is near*, unless *the wicked forsakes his former ways and old thoughts* by which he had turned away from the Lord. For at that time we shall *return to the Lord*, who *will have mercy on us*, and to the most clement Father, who is *bountiful* in his mercies and easily “pardons,” when we shall have forsaken our former *thoughts* and *ways*. Hence later on we may deserve to hear, “Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered” [[Ps 32:1](#)].

15. ([55:8–9](#)) *For my thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor your ways as my ways, says the Lord. (9) For as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are my ways exalted above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts.* Septuagint: “For my thoughts are not as your thoughts, nor are my ways as your ways. (9) But as the heaven is distant from the earth, so is my way distant from your ways, and your thoughts from my thought.”

<sup>227</sup> Notice the slight misattribution of this passage.

Lest you should think, he says, that what I am promising is difficult, and lest it seem unbelievable to you that the ungodly and the unjust can be saved [cf. [Isa 55:7](#)], whether the Jewish people or all who did not know God among the Gentiles, consider this: that there is a great difference between your counsels and mine, and the diversity of nature is as great as the diversity of will. For “there are many *thoughts* in the heart of a man, but the Lord’s counsel abides forever” [cf. [Prov 19:21](#)]. Often as men you regret the promise, and you subvert the old will by a newly acquired will. For “the Lord frustrates the counsels of the nations, and he rejects the *thoughts* of the peoples, and he brings to naught the will of princes; but the *thoughts* of his heart are from generation to generation” [[Ps 33:10–11](#)], and whatever he has decreed cannot be changed.

Do you want to know the difference between your counsel and mine? “As the heaven is distant from the earth,” and the dwelling place of angels is one thing, that of human beings is another, so are *my thoughts* separated from your counsels. For of *my thoughts* it is said, “His judgments are unsearchable and his ways beyond investigation” [[Rom 11:33](#)]. About yours, on the other hand, “They have thought out a plan, which they will be unable to establish” [[Ps 21:11](#)]; and in another passage, “Whatever counsel you take shall be dissolved, and whatever you speak shall not continue among you” [[Isa 8:10](#)]. What is clear does not require interpretation; therefore such things are touched upon rather than discussed.

16. ([55:10–11](#)) *And as the rain (imber) and the snow come down from heaven, and return no more there, but soak the earth, and pour into it, and make it germinate, and give seed to the sower (serenti), and bread to the eater, (11) so shall my word be, which shall go forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall do whatsoever I have willed, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it.* Septuagint: “Just as if rain (*pluvia*) comes down, or snow from heaven, and does not return until it soaks the earth, and it generates and rises, and gives seed to the sower (*seminanti*), and bread for eating, (11) so shall my word be, whatever shall proceed out of my mouth; it shall not return, until what I have willed is accomplished; and I make your ways prosperous, and my commands.”

What is said here is dependent upon what comes above. Briefly, here is the meaning. Let the people of the nations not be disbelieving, that after such great wickedness the ungodly is suddenly saved. For *my thoughts* are not as the *thoughts* of men, and “as the heaven is distant from the earth,” so are *my thoughts* separated from the *thoughts* of men. For I am most clement and bountiful to forgive [cf. [Isa 55:7–9](#)]. Do you want to have even another comparison? *As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return no more there, but soak the earth, and pour into it*, and cause various seeds to sprout, and with a full harvest *bread* is produced for man’s use, so is the *word* of my promise; what I have once promised, and what has *gone forth from my mouth* shall not be *void*, but everything shall be “accomplished” in deed.

Anagogically, the meaning is twofold, that the *word* of the Lord is either he of whom it is written, “In the beginning was the *Word*, and the *Word* was with God, and the *Word* was God” [[John 1:1](#)],<sup>228</sup> who does not return to him void, unless he does the will of the Father and shall have “accomplished” everything for the sake of which he had taken on a body, and shall have

<sup>228</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (347, 3–).

reconciled the world to God. He is said to proceed *from* his *mouth* and from the uterus and womb [cf. [Isa 44:2, 24](#)], not that God has these members, but that by means of our words we learn the Lord's nature. Or, surely, this should be said, that the *word* of the gospel teaching is being called *rain* and the "rains" that the spiritual clouds, to which the truth of God has reached [cf. [Ps 36:5](#)], *pour out* on the good *earth* [cf. [Matt 13:8, 23](#)]. In the song of Deuteronomy, Moses promises this *rain* and these "rains": "Let the earth hear the words of my mouth, let it await my speech as the rain (*pluvia*), and let my words come down like dew" [[Deut 32:1–2](#)]. Consequently, those who will have sown in tears shall reap in joy [cf. [Ps 126:5](#)], and those who have sown in justice and in spirit reap a harvest of everlasting life [cf. [Gal 6:8](#); [Hos 10:12](#)] and receive the *bread* of gospel doctrine, of which it is written both in Proverbs and in Ecclesiastes, "Open your eyes and be filled with *bread*" [[Prov 20:13](#)]; and again, "Send forth your *bread* upon the water, for you shall find it after a multitude of days" [[Eccl 11:1](#)].

For one must not believe that he is commanding those who feast, that they need to open their eyes in order to eat that *bread* by which bodies are nourished, and thus to be filled with the *bread* that the poor man in Habakkuk eats in secret [cf. [Hab 3:14](#)]. On the contrary, he is exhorting them to the *bread* of God's teaching, which we cannot eat unless we open the eyes of our heart [cf. [Eph 1:18](#)]. And Paul writes often about it to those who are nourished on words of faith and truth [cf. [2 Cor 9:10](#)]. Moreover, the teacher is commanded to cast the bread of his teaching on all water [cf. [Eccl 11:1](#)], and to *pour in* spiritual grace on all, and to know that if he shall do what is commanded, he shall receive rewards in the last time. And to me, it seems sufficiently unjust that he who gives alms makes friends for himself from unjust mammon, which friends receive him into eternal tabernacles [cf. [Luke 16:9](#)]; and the one who gives spiritual food and gives rations to his fellow slaves in his own time [cf. [Luke 12:42](#)], does not find them after many ages, which Ecclesiastes calls a "multitude of days" [cf. [Eccl 11:1](#)].

17. ([55:12–13](#)) *You shall go forth with gladness, and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills shall sing praise before you, and all the trees of the country shall clap their hands. (13) Instead of the wild nard, shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the stinging nettle, shall come up the myrtle tree, and the Lord shall be named for an eternal sign that shall not be taken away.* Septuagint: "For you shall go forth with gladness, and shall be taught with joy. The mountains and the hills shall jump for joy to welcome you, and all the trees of the field shall applaud with their branches. (13) And instead of the  $\sigma\tau\omicron\iota\beta\eta$  (broombush),<sup>229</sup> that is, the most worthless of shrubs, shall come up the cypress, and instead of the *konusa* (nettle)<sup>330</sup> shall come up the myrtle, and the Lord shall be for a name, and for an everlasting sign, and shall not fail."

My word shall not return void [cf. [Isa 55:11](#)], he says, but after it has accomplished everything that I have willed, and has done my will on earth, then it will come to me, and what is written shall be fulfilled: "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand until I place all your enemies as a footstool of your feet'" [[Ps 110:1](#)]. For *you shall go forth* from the blood of idolatry *with gladness, and be led forth with peace*, so that you may hear from the Apostle,

<sup>229</sup> Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, founded upon the seventh edition of Liddell and Scott' *Greek English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): a plant used for stuffing or padding.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*: a strong-smelling plant, fleabane, pulicaria.



“Grace to you and *peace*” [Rom 1:7]. Or, “you shall be taught with joy,” so that after the shadow of the law [cf. Heb 10:1], you may learn the truth of the gospel.<sup>331</sup> For *the mountains and the hills*, which we can understand as angels and the souls of the saints, which are called *mountains and hills* in view of the variety of their virtues, shall rejoice over the repentant and shall indicate the *gladness* of their minds by leaps of exultation. The Lord says this also in the Gospel, “The angels in heaven shall rejoice over one sinner who repents” [Luke 15:7].

“And all the trees of the field” *shall clap with their hands*, or “branches,” which have been planted beside a course of waters, [trees] which yield their fruit in season and their leaves shall not fall off [cf. Ps 1:3]. One of these trees said in the Psalm, “But I am like a fruitful olive tree in the house of the Lord” [Ps 52:8]. Let us ask those who follow the simple history only and eat the boiled flesh of the lamb [cf. Exod 12:9] whether the trees *clap* “with their branches” and make noise *with their hands*, and in what sense that which is said about the rivers needs to be interpreted: “The rivers shall clap their hands” [Ps 98:8].

Not only shall the *mountains and hills* “jump for joy” and *sing*, and “all the trees of the field,” which the Lord has blessed [cf. Gen 27:27], “shall applaud with their branches” and make noise with their *hands*, but even the *στοιβη* and *konuza*, or the *wild nard* and *nettle* shall be turned into the *fir tree* and also the *myrtle tree* and “cypress.” The reading of Symmachus and the Septuagint, *στοιβη*, is written in Hebrew as *nesus*. Aquila and Theodotion translated it as *κονυζαν*. Now the *conuza* is a most worthless and bitter plant and has a nasty smell. But where the Septuagint translated *κονυζαν*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *sarfod*, Symmachus translated it as *nettle*. However it might be that the unique meaning of the names is preserved, this must be said, that evils need to be turned into goods, and virtues should be born from vices, that is, justice in place of iniquity, courage in place of rashness, moderation in place of excess, prudence in place of foolishness.

Let us cite examples from the ancients. The tax collectors Matthew [cf. Matt 9:9] and Zacchaeus [cf. Luke 19:2] were *wild nard* and *στοιβη*, useless shrubs and *conyza*, of bitter taste and of the foulest odor. They were saying, “My sores have become putrefied and corrupted, because of my foolishness” [Ps 38:5]. These men were suddenly changed into apostles and became “cypress trees,” *fir* and *myrtles*, of the best odor and useful for various tasks. Moreover Paul, a persecutor of the church, was a *stinging nettle* when he heard from the Lord, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” [Acts 9:4]. “It is hard for you to kick against the goad” [Acts 26:14]. He had the stings of persecution. But when he preached the gospel in the whole world and was able to say, “We are Christ’s good odor” [2 Cor 2:15], he is rightly called a “cypress” and a *myrtle tree*. Prostitutes and tax collectors come before the Pharisees into the kingdom of God [cf. Matt 21:31], and the thief passes from the cross into Paradise [cf. Luke 23:43].

Therefore, what the Gospel says, “A good tree cannot make bad fruit” [Matt 7:18] does not refer to the peculiar property of its nature, as the heretics think, but to the choice of the mind. After all, he adds, “Either make a tree good, and its fruit is good” [Matt 12:33]. From this it is clear that it is by one’s own will that each person makes his own soul a good or evil tree whose fruit is varied.

Then follows, “And the Lord shall be for a name and for an everlasting sign, which shall not

<sup>331</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 44 (347, 26–8).

fail.” To those who have been changed from evil into good, “the Lord shall be for a name and for an *eternal* sign.” Thus Christians are named from his name and are burned with the brand of his cross. Simeon spoke of this *sign* while holding the infant in his arms: “This one shall be for the fall and resurrection of many, and for a *sign* to be spoken against” [cf. [Luke 2:34](#)]. And above, it was said of him, “The Lord shall give you a *sign*” [[Isa 7:14](#)], and the saint sings in the Psalm, “Make with me a *sign* for the good” [[Ps 86:17](#)]. And the very one who is the *sign* says, “When you see the sign of the son of man” [[Matt 24:30](#)], which “shall not fail” nor be changed by any end, but shall pass from the present form of life into the future.

18. ([56:1](#)) *Thus says the Lord: Keep judgment, and do justice, for my salvation is near to come, and my justice to be revealed.* The Septuagint translated *justice* as “mercy,” and the rest is similar.

With the prophecy about the Gentiles having come to an end, who at the advent of the word (*sermonis*) of God are to be changed from wild nard and stinging nettle trees into cypress and myrtle [cf. [Isa 55:13](#)], Isaiah tells the audience of that time period to do all that is right, and prepare themselves for the coming of the Savior, who is himself the *justice* [cf. [1 Cor 1:30](#)] and “mercy” of God. For if the thoughts of the saints are *judgments* [cf. [Prov 12:5](#)], and we need to have the senses trained for the discernment of good and evil [cf. [Heb 5:14](#)], why should we not *keep judgment* at all times, lest we should be partial to the poor man in the judgment, or be intimidated by the power of the rich man [cf. [Lev 19:15](#)]? But let us judge the great just as the small [cf. [Deut 1:17](#)], knowing with Moses that judgment is the Lord’s, who judges those who judge, in accordance with what we read in the Psalm, “God has taken his stand in the assembly of the gods, and in [their] midst judges gods” [[Ps 82:1](#)]. To that which is said here, *Keep judgment, and do justice*, the following words are similar: “Blessed are those who keep judgment and do justice at all times” [[Ps 106:3](#)], so that they justly pursue what is just—although under the name of justice all points of morality appear to me to be signified. For the one who does a single justice is shown to have fulfilled all the virtues, which follow each other in succession and cleave to each other. Consequently one who has one, has them all, and the one who lacks one, lacks them all. Something like this is expressed in the fourteenth Psalm: “He who walks blameless and works justice” [[Ps 15:2](#)]. And elsewhere it is written, “Learn justice, you who dwell upon the earth” [[Isa 26:9](#)]. But the words of the saints testify to the fact that the Savior, “who became for us justice, holiness and redemption” [[1 Cor 1:30](#)], is himself the “mercy” of God: “God sent forth his mercy and his truth” [[Ps 57:4](#)].

19. ([56:2](#)) *Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who shall lay hold on this, keeping the Sabbath lest he profane it, keeping his hands from doing any evil.* Septuagint: “Blessed is the man who does these things, and the man who holds by them and keeps the Sabbaths from profaning them, and keeps his hands from doing iniquity.”

It is the one who is able to say with the Apostle Paul, “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away the things of a child” [[1 Cor 13:11](#)], who attains to the present blessedness. He forgets the past and reaches out toward the future [cf. [Phil 3:13](#)], until he reaches the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ [cf. [Eph 4:13](#)], so that this Psalm can validly be applied to him: “Blessed is the man who has not

gone off into the counsel of the ungodly” [Ps 1:1]. This *man*, therefore, and *son of the inner man*, of whom it is said quite frequently in Leviticus, “man, man” [cf. Lev 17:3],<sup>332</sup> is *blessed* first of all in that which he *does*, and he *lays hold of* these things, namely judgment and also justice and the Lord’s salvation [cf. Isa 56:1], which is near and is to be revealed to all the nations, so that he not only does what is commanded, but he holds it with a tight fist and *keeps the Sabbath lest he profane it*.

Now the subsequent verse shows that the *Sabbath* is what he is commanding to be observed: *keeping his hands from doing any evil*. For it brings no benefit to sit down on the Sabbath [cf. Exod 16:29], or to sleep while longing for sumptuous feasts. But if while doing good things one rests in respect to evils and has a continuous Sabbath, that is, leisure, “from iniquity,” he does only those things that pertain to the salvation of the soul, and does not move himself toward any servile work. For “he who commits sin is a slave of sin” [John 8:34]. But we are called to freedom [cf. Gal 5:13; 4:31]. By this freedom, Christ has freely granted us to work not for the food that perishes [cf. John 6:27], but to cleave to the Lord and say with the prophet, “But for me it is good to cleave to God” [Ps 73:28]. And let us become one spirit with him [1 Cor 6:17], and let us fulfill “delightful Sabbaths” [Isa 58:13], let us not be of the six days in which the world was made [cf. Gen 1:1–2:1], of which the apostles were not, to whom the Lord said, “If you were of the world, the world would surely love its own; but now you are not of this world, but I have chosen you, and therefore the world hates you” [John 15:19].

20. (56:3) *And let not the son of the stranger, who cleaves to the Lord, speak, saying, “The Lord will divide and separate me from his people.” And let not the eunuch say, “Behold, I am a dry tree.”* Septuagint: “Let not the foreigner who attaches himself to the Lord, say, ‘Do you think the Lord will separate me from his people?’ And let not the eunuch say, ‘I am a dry tree.’ ”

Those who understand this passage humbly relate what is said to proselytes from the Gentiles and to those who are truly eunuchs, because both are *strangers*, if they receive the law of God and are circumcised; moreover *eunuchs* are not outside God’s salvation, if they are of the sort that he was who belonged to Queen Candace. He was unable to be idle even on a journey, and while seeking an interpreter of the reading found Christ whom he was seeking [cf. Acts 8:27–31]. But this is said against the Jews, they say, who boast about the nobility of their race and claim to be sons of Abraham [cf. John 8:33], and think that those who have seed in Zion and household members in Jerusalem are blessed [cf. Isa 31:9].

But that which we have translated above by wild nard, stinging nettle, *kouza* and *στοιβη*, which have been converted into fir, cypress, and myrtle trees [cf. Isa 55:13], we understand presently as the same ones who are being summoned to faith in the gospel. Let them not lose hope, if they *cleave to the Lord*, and let them not “think” that they are “separated from” God’s “people.” For all who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ [cf. Gal 3:27]; there is no Jew and pagan, circumcision and uncircumcision [cf. Col 3:11; Gal 3:28]. They are commanded in the song of Deuteronomy, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people” [Deut 32:43]. “His” refers to God’s, who had the former Jewish people. [The Gentiles] shall come from the east and the west [cf. Matt 8:11] and shall rest in Abraham’s bosom [cf. Luke 16:22]. And this is what John the Baptist was saying: “And do not say, ‘We have Abraham for a father’; for I tell you, God can raise

<sup>332</sup> See n. at 8.15.

up sons of Abraham from these stones” [Matt 3:9].

And just as there is no distinction among proselytes, but both men and women are called to salvation equally, so also among eunuchs who have castrated themselves for the sake of the kingdom of heaven [cf. Matt 19:12], both sexes are received. They are the ones who have put to death their members on earth, fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire [cf. Col 3:5], until they all attain to the perfect man [cf. Eph 4:13] and say with the Apostle, “We recognize no one according to the flesh; and if we did know Christ according to the flesh, yet now we no longer know [him]” [2 Cor 5:16]. Therefore those ones are not to be understood as the eunuchs whom the ardent poet describes by saying,

and there were unfortunate youth, mutilated by the sword,  
and castrated of their manhood,<sup>333</sup>

but those of whom the Lord speaks in the Gospel, “Those who have castrated themselves for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” [Matt 19:12]. The apostles were men like this, to whom when they were amazed about the difficulty of the matter and asked, “Who then can be saved?” [Matt 19:25], the Savior responded, “Let him accept it who can” [Matt 19:12]. This is also why the Apostle testifies concerning eunuchs of this sort, that is, concerning virgins, that he does not have a command from the Lord, but he gives a counsel as one who has received mercy from the Lord [cf. 1 Cor 7:25]. He wants all to be as he himself is [cf. 1 Cor 7:7], and says, “For the time is short; it remains that those who have wives should be as if they had none” [1 Cor 7:29]. For the one who was called free from slavery and from conjugal duty is truly a slave of Christ [cf. 1 Cor 7:22].

21. (56:4–5) *For thus says the Lord to the eunuchs: If they shall keep my Sabbaths, and shall choose the things that I have willed, and shall hold fast my covenant (foedus), (5) I will give to them in my house, and within my walls, a place, and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name which shall not perish.* Septuagint: “Thus says the Lord to the eunuchs: those who shall keep my Sabbaths, and choose what I will, and take hold of my covenant (*testamentum*), (5) I will give to them in my house and within my wall a renowned place, better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, and it shall not fail.”

He had set forth two things: proselytes and *eunuchs*. First he speaks about *eunuchs*, and he gives them commands for how to live, and he promises them rewards in the future. And after them he comes to the proselytes, promising them similar things as well. Therefore he speaks to the eunuchs, who said out of desperation, “Behold, I am a dry tree” [Isa 56:3], in order to prevent them from thinking that they are subject to the curse that is spoken to the barren: “Accursed is the barren one who does not produce seed in Israel.”<sup>334</sup> He says, *If they shall keep my Sabbaths, and shall choose those things that I have willed* from my commands, and not the things that I have granted as a concession, owing to the weakness of those who hear [cf. 1 Cor 7:34], and if they *shall hold fast my covenant* (foedus), or “testament” with complete faith, *I will give to them in my house, and in my temple, and within the walls of my very strong city, a place, and a name* “better than sons and daughters,” which shall not be blotted out by any oblivion.

<sup>333</sup> [Lucan 10:133–34](#).

<sup>334</sup> For this agraphon, see *Vetus Latina* 12,783–95.

We have told above who the *eunuchs* are who are solicitous for the things of God. Wisdom too, which is inscribed in the title as “of Solomon,” speaks of them, “Blessed is the barren who is undefiled, who has not known the sinful bed, she shall have fruit in the visitation of souls, and [blessed is] the *eunuch*, who with his hand has wrought no iniquity, nor imagined wicked things against the Lord; for [unto him] shall be given the chosen gift of his faith, and a portion in the temple of the delightful Lord” [[Wis 3:13–14](#)]. This barren one is fertile through virginity, this *eunuch* does violence to the kingdom of heaven and lays waste to it violently [cf. [Matt 11:12](#)]. This one is the keeper of the *Sabbaths*, so that he never does the works of marriage. This one has *chosen what the Lord has willed*, so that he offers more than what was commanded; he considers not the Apostle’s concession [cf. [1 Cor 7:6](#)], but his will. This one *holds fast* the Lord’s everlasting *covenant (foedus)*, so that he is free for prayer, not for a period of time and then again returns to the same thing [cf. [1 Cor 7:5](#)]; but he knows that he will receive the best *place* in the Lord’s *house*, which is his church; for there are many mansions with the Father [cf. [John 14:2](#)]. And the one who shall be a eunuch and moreover shall have done all that is written shall have the best *place* within his *walls*, namely, when he becomes the Lord’s tower and occupies the priestly rank and has a multitude of spiritual sons instead of sons of the flesh.

Church history hands down that the Evangelist John was a *eunuch* of this sort. Jesus loved him very much [cf. [John 13:23](#)], and he reclined upon the chest of Jesus [cf. [John 13:25](#)]. He ran to the Lord, lifted up by the wings of virginity, while Peter walked rather slowly [cf. [John 20:4](#)]. When he had immersed himself in the hidden mysteries of the divine nativity, he dared to speak what all the ages did not know: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; he was in the beginning with God” [[John 1:1–2](#)].<sup>335</sup> Therefore, let all the scoffing of the Jews be done with, and let them cease exposing themselves to ridicule by opening the kingdom of heaven to half men, since chastity pertains not to a defect of the body but to the will of the soul.

22. ([56:6–7](#)) *And the sons of the stranger who adhere to the Lord, to worship him, and to love his name, to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it, and who holds fast my covenant (foedus), (7) I will bring them into my holy mountain, and will make them joyful in my house of prayer.* Septuagint: “And [I will give it] to the foreigners who have been added to the Lord, to serve him, and to love his name, to be his servants and handmaids, and [as for] all who keep my Sabbaths from profaning them, and that take hold of my covenant (*testamentum*), (7) I will bring them to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer.”

After the eunuchs, he moves on to the “foreigners,” whom he had previously named [cf. [Isa 56:3](#)]. He promises them rewards too, but they would only be his servants if they have served him and moved from service to the love of his name. The Apostle Paul was such a man. He writes at the beginning of his Epistles, “Paul a *servant* of Jesus Christ” [cf. [Rom 1:1](#)]. So was Moses the servant of God [cf. [Heb 3:5](#)]. But what was added in the Septuagint, “and handmaids,” we have marked in front with an obelus. For it is not possible that in the spiritual gifts there should be any difference of sex, since in Christ Jesus there is neither man nor woman

<sup>335</sup> Cf. [Eusebius, HE 3.24.11](#); [6.14.7](#); [Irenaeus, Adv Haer 3.1.1](#); Jerome, [Commentary on Matthew](#), pref 2.

[cf. [Gal 3:28](#)], but we should all be one in him. We have spoken above about the *Sabbath* and the everlasting *covenant*.

Therefore God *will bring to his holy mountain* the one who does these things, and he will *make him joyful in his house of prayer*. The *holy mountain* refers either to the dogmas of the truth and the confession of the Trinity, or to the Lord himself, to whom very many nations will flow in the last time, according to this same Isaiah and Micah the prophet [cf. [Isa 2:2](#); [Mic 4:1](#)]. And the *house of prayer* is the church that is distributed in the entire world, and not the temple of the Jews, which was compressed within very narrow confines in the land of Judea.

23. ([56:7b–9](#)) *Their whole burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall please me upon my altar, for my house shall be called the house of prayer for all peoples, says (8) the Lord God, who gathers the scattered of Israel. I will still gather unto him his congregation. (9) All you beasts of the field, come to devour, all you beasts of the forest.* Septuagint: “Their whole burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon my altar. For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, (8) said the Lord, who gathers the scattered of Israel; for I will gather to him a congregation. (9) All you wild beasts of the field, come, eat, all you beasts of the forest.”

The difference between sacrifices and *whole burnt offerings* we learn in greater detail in Leviticus [cf. [Lev 2–7](#)]. *Whole burnt offerings* are those that are completely cremated on the altar, *victims* and sacrifices, a part of which is offered to the altar, part is handed over to the priest. One should not believe therefore that the sacrifices of “foreigners” and eunuchs are being required here by the Judaic ritual. But we need to recognize that those who dedicate themselves completely to God are offering a eunuch’s *whole burnt offerings*, but those who leave room for prayer for a time [cf. [1 Cor 7:5](#)] offer the *sacrifices* of a “foreigner,” of whom God says, “The sacrifice of praise glorified me” [[Ps 50:23](#)], and in another passage, “Offer to God a sacrifice of praise” [[Ps 50:14](#)]. Concerning these sacrifices and whole burnt offerings, the Lord said through Hosea, “I want mercy and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than whole burnt offerings” [[Hos 6:6](#); cf. [Matt 9:13](#); [12:7](#)]. These are offered upon the Lord’s altar, which John in the Apocalypse testifies that he saw in heaven, under which were the souls of the martyrs [cf. [Rev 6:9](#)], from which one of the seraphim brought a coal that it had seized with tongs to purge the lips of Isaiah [cf. [Isa 6:6–7](#)]. This is the altar and this is the tabernacle to the likeness of which everything is reported to have been made in Exodus [cf. [Exod 25:9](#), [40](#); [Heb 8:5](#); [9:24](#)], on which spiritual sacrifices are offered [cf. [1 Pet 2:5](#)]. In any case, God likewise testifies above about physical sacrifices and *whole burnt offerings*, “To what purpose [do you offer] me the multitude of your *sacrifices*, says the Lord? I am full! I desire not whole burnt offerings of rams, and fat of lambs, and blood of goats and bulls” [[Isa 1:11](#)].

For *my house shall be called the house of prayer for all peoples*, not for a single nation of Judea, and not in the single location of the city of Jerusalem, but in the entire world, not [a house] of bulls and goats and rams, but of prayer. The Lord used this testimony when speaking against those in the temple who were selling the gifts of the Holy Spirit [cf. [Acts 8:18–20](#)] in the name of doves [cf. [Matt 21:12–13](#)]. They were sitting in the seats of pestilence [cf. [Ps 1:1](#)], and they occupied the tables of moneychangers, doing everything for the sake of base gain [cf. [Titus 1:11](#)]. They were unaware of what is written: “Freely you have received, freely give” [[Matt 10:8](#)].

Now the *Lord* has promised this for the future, *who gathers the scattered of Israel*, to whom



also the Apostle Peter writes an epistle [cf. [1 Pet 1:1](#)], and of whom the Evangelist says, “And this he spoke not on his own, but being the high priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but to gather together into one the sons of God, that were *scattered*” [[John 11:51–52](#)]. And what was said was fulfilled: “The *congregation* of the peoples shall encircle you, and for this [cause], return on high” [[Ps 7:7](#)].

Now when the remnant of Israel has been *gathered* by the apostles, and when those who had been previously *scattered* are driven back into one flock, *all the beasts* are summoned to *come* and *devour* Israel, namely those who refused to believe, of whom the Apostle says, “For indeed the end has come upon them” [[1 Thess 2:16](#)]. Moreover, the Lord says in the Gospel, “And when you shall see Jerusalem surrounded by an army, then know that its consummation has arrived” [[Luke 21:20](#)]. Or, this should be said, that they are handed over to be devoured to the *beasts* that the prophet curses, when he says, “Do not hand over to the *beasts* a soul that gives praise to you” [[Ps 74:19](#)]. Above we have read about these *beasts* tropologically, which once devoured a certain portion of the Lord, “Syria from the rising of the sun, and the Greeks from the setting [of the sun], who devour Israel with open mouth” [[Isa 9:12](#)]; and in Jeremiah, “Israel is a wandering sheep; the lions have driven him out; the king of Assyria first devoured him, and lastly the king of Babylon has gnawed his bones” [[Jer 50:17](#)]. And this can be said, that when the previously rabid nations are summoned to faith with the people of Israel, so that they desert the *forest*, which killed a large number from the army of Absalom [cf. [2 Sam 18:8](#)], they would “come” to the church and “eat” the heavenly bread [cf. [John 6:36–38](#)], and be filled with the flesh of the lamb [cf. [John 6:53](#)].

24. ([56:10–12](#)) *His watchmen are all blind; they are all ignorant, dumb dogs not able to bark, seeing vain things, sleeping and loving dreams. (11) And most impudent dogs, they have not known satisfaction. The shepherds themselves knew no understanding; all have turned aside into their own way, every one after his own gain, from the first even to the last. (12) “Come, let us take wine, and be filled with drunkenness, and it shall be as today, so also tomorrow, and much more.”* Septuagint: “See how they are all blinded; they have all not known; they are dumb dogs unable to bark, dreaming of their little beds, loving to slumber. (11) Yea, they are dogs of an impudent spirit, that have not known satisfaction, and they are wicked, having no understanding; all have followed their own ways, each together from its top. ‘Come, let us take wine and get drunk, and let tomorrow be such a great day with even more excess.’ ”

The cause of all the beasts of the forest coming to devour the congregation [cf. [Isa 56:9](#)], he says, or of the throng of Gentiles succeeding in the place of the Jews, is their *watchmen*, namely the scribes and Pharisees, who being *all blind have not known* the Lord and Savior and were unwilling to see the light when it was present to them. The Lord said to them, “You foolish and *blind* men, what is greater: the gold, or the altar that sanctifies the gold?” [[Matt 23:17](#)]. And again, “*Blind* guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel” [[Matt 23:24](#)]; and, “If the *blind* lead the *blind*, both fall into the pit” [[Matt 15:14](#)]. Now we also read above that teachers are called *watchmen*. For in that passage, where according to the Septuagint, it says, “The voice of your guards is exalted” [[Isa 52:8](#)], it is written in the Hebrew, “the voice of your watchmen.” Ezekiel was one of these, to whom God says, “Son of man, I have appointed you watchman to the house of Israel” [[Ezek 3:17](#)]. But the latter *watchmen* were not *blind*; after all, they were

called “seers” [cf. [1 Sam 9:9](#)]. But the former, of whom the prophet is now speaking, are called not only *blind watchmen*, but even *dumb dogs* that are “unable to bark.” For those who were obligated to guard the Lord’s flock and drive off wolves, and to bark on behalf of the master, “love dreams” and take delight in demonic visions. And the meaning is, They are not able to speak truth, but all falsehoods.

And they were not contented with this end, those who slept while on watch over the Lord’s flock and were unable to bark and loved their bed, by which bodily pleasure is indicated, but among their own people “of impudent spirit” they “have not known satisfaction,” who are never sated by their own error. They devour the Lord’s people as the food of bread [cf. [Ps 14:4](#)] and the homes of widows [cf. [Matt 23:14](#)], and they are enslaved to the gullet and to lust. For they are unable to say, “The commandment of the Lord is clear, illumining the eyes” [[Ps 19:8](#)], and to know what is written: “A man’s wisdom illumines his face” [[Eccl 8:1](#)]. And the “dogs” that are “dumb” against the enemies are those of whom it is written, “Do not give what is holy to dogs” [[Matt 7:6](#)]. And the sleeping dogs who do not know that it is commanded, “Do not give sleep to your eyes and slumber to your eyelids” [[Ps 132:4](#)]; and again, “Stay awake, for you do not know at what hour your Lord will come” [[Matt 24:42](#)]. And therefore, by giving room to the devil, they are the most “impudent dogs,” who are never sated; for they vomit out what they have eaten, and they return to their own vomit [cf. [Prov 26:11](#)]. And the Apostle Peter says of them, “That of the true proverb has happened to them: ‘The dog returns to his vomit,’ and, ‘The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire’ ” [[2 Pet 2:22](#)].

The words that follow show that the same shepherds are the *watchmen* and the *dogs*: *The shepherds themselves knew no understanding*. For the Hebrew word *roim*, which is written with four letters, *res, ain, ioth, and mem*, if it is read as *roim*, it means “shepherds”; if as *raim*, it means “wicked.” We have said this to show the reason for the different translations. For they have all sought their own things, not the things that are God’s [cf. [Phil 2:21](#)], and they have not walked by the way of the Lord, of which it is written, “Seek what is the good way and walk on it” [[Jer 6:16](#)], but according to what is read in the Book of Judges: “There was no king in Israel, each one did what seemed right to himself” [[Judg 17:6](#)], they were following their own errors.

And as for what follows, *Every one after his own gain* (avaritiam), *from the first even to the last*. “Come, let us take wine, and be filled with drunkenness, and it shall be as today, so also tomorrow, and much more,” this is not found in the Septuagint translators, but is marked in front with asterisks,<sup>336</sup> having been added from the Hebrew. Finally, none of the ecclesiastical interpreters discuss these brief lines, but they leap over them, as if over an open pit in public, and they leave it unmentioned. But what he says, that is, since *they have turned aside from the Lord’s way* and “have followed their own paths,” therefore they burn with *avarice from first to last*, from the princes to the common people, so that when they have begun to strike their fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards [cf. [Matt 24:49](#)], they say, Come, let us take wine, and be filled with drunkenness, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die [cf. [Isa 22:13](#); [1 Cor 15:32](#)].

*And it shall be*, he says, *as today, so also tomorrow, and much more*. This is what he said above: *They have not known satisfaction*, and they are not satisfied with past pleasures, but

<sup>336</sup> Lit., “Illuminating stars.”

they prepare future delights, greater by far than they had indulged in earlier.

If this is said about the rulers of the Jews, because of whom the Lord's people have been devoured by *beasts*, let us avoid the examples of the worse and not be *drunk* with wine in which there is excess [cf. [Eph 5:18](#)], and let us not be ruined by pleasures, and let us not be *mute* when it comes to speaking against our adversaries, but rabid dogs against our own people; but let us instead follow God's ways rather than our own, and let us hear the Scripture that admonishes, "Think of the Lord in goodness" [[Wis 1:1](#)],<sup>337</sup> and again, "Those who practice it have the best understanding" [[Ps 111:10](#)]. And if we were dogs, let us not lose hope of salvation. Let us listen to the words of the Canaanite woman who says to the Lord, "Yes, Lord, and the pups eat from the crumbs that fall from their masters' table" [[Matt 15:27](#)]. For this utterance she received mercy and heard from the Lord: "O woman, great is your faith; be it done to you as you will" [[Matt 15:28](#)]. For she was able to say with the prophet, "I have run the way of your commandments" [[Ps 119:32](#)], and again, "Lead me on the right way" [[Ps 86:11](#)].

25. ([57:1–2](#)) *The just man is perishing, and no man lays it to heart, and men of mercy are gathered, because there is none that understands; for the just man has been gathered from before the face of evil. (2) Let peace come, let him rest in his bed who walks in his uprightness.* Septuagint: "See how the just man has perished, and no one lays it to heart, and just men are taken away, and no one considers; for the just has been removed from before the face of injustice. (2) His burial shall be in peace, he has been removed out of the way."

Because of the blind watchmen and the dumb dogs [cf. [Isa 56:10–11](#)], who are the shepherds themselves, who do not know understanding, and are not satisfied by pleasures of the present, but they are ever preparing themselves for future ones, *the just man is perishing*. The wife of Pilate says of this, "Have nothing to do with that *just man*" [[Matt 27:19](#)]. After washing his hands, he says, "I am innocent of the blood of this *just man*" [[Matt 27:24](#)]. In this, one should consider that the words about perishing, of which the heretics often stir up calumny, which indicates destruction and annihilation forever, are recorded in respect to Christ, whose perishing assuredly shows the greatness of the persecution, not the end of his substantial being.

*And no man lays it to heart, or "considers,"* he says. For it was impossible for the blind and dumb, who see vain things, love dreams, and do not know understanding and wisdom [cf. [Isa 56:10–11](#)], to think of the things that are of God. And what follows, *And men of mercy, or "just men," are gathered, and moreover "are taken away."* This signifies the apostles, who are killed by the ungodly and are *gathered* by the Lord. And he gives the reasons why the *just man* was killed and "taken away" when he says, *For the just man has been gathered from before the face of evil*, so that he did not see the evils of the age. Or, on account of the evil of men, whose sins he bore [cf. [Isa 53:4](#)], he ascended as a victor to the Father.

Now as for what it says according to the Hebrew, *Let peace come, let him rest in his bed, let him walk in his uprightness*, the meaning is indeed clear, but the logical coherence of the words, which depend on an idiom in their language, seems to us to be confusing. Now what he is saying is this. *Let the peace* of the just man *come*, which he left with the apostles while he was ascending to the Father, when he said, "My *peace* I give you, my peace I leave with you" [[John 14:27](#)]. And when the *peace* of Christ *comes*, "which surpasses all understanding" [[Phil 4:7](#)], his

<sup>337</sup> Notice how Jerome calls this passage from the deuterocanonical book of Wisdom "cripture."

apostles *rest in their beds* and their death *rests*. From this he shows that the martyrs do not perish, but conquer and *rest* in an eternal home. In fact, he himself to whom the *peace* belongs and whose apostles *rest in their beds, walks in his own uprightness*, as a victor ascending to the Father on a straight journey.

On the other hand, what is read in the Septuagint, “For the just man has been removed from before the face of wickedness, his burial shall be in peace, he has been removed out of the way,” refers entirely to Christ, without commingling of the persona of the apostles. His “burial” is “in peace” and “he was removed out of the way.” For his flesh did not see corruption [cf. [Acts 2:31](#)], and he did not remain in the tomb, who was free among the dead [cf. [Ps 88:5](#)], since the angel says to the women, “Jesus whom you seek is not here; come and see the place where the Lord was laid” [[Matt 28:5–6](#)].<sup>338</sup> The Jews think that both these things and the other things that follow are to be understood either generally concerning all the just, whose blood Manasseh shed and with which he filled Jerusalem from gate to gate [cf. [2 Kgs 21:16](#)]; or at any rate that Isaiah was prophesying about his own death, since he was to be sawn in two by Manasseh with a wooden saw, which is a very certain tradition among them. This is why very many even of our own people refer to the sufferings of Isaiah what is recorded in the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the sufferings of the saints: “They were sawn in two” [[Heb 11:37](#)].

<sup>338</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 45 (351, 32–52, 3).

## [THE SIXTEENTH BOOK]

1. A very eloquent orator has expressed this outstanding thought: “The arts would surely prosper if none but artists were allowed to criticize them.”<sup>11</sup> And indeed, lest I seem to be taking examples from the profane realm, there is of course the following statement that the prophet points out with different words: “Blessed is he who speaks in the ears of those who hear” [[Sir 25:12](#)]. How was it lucky for you, daughter Eustochium, to have made me your master? For you have read the brief introduction to the previous book, in which I claimed that the apostles and evangelists have recorded only those testimonies from the seventy translators that agreed with the Hebrew, either in their words or in their own; but if anything has been added [to the Septuagint] by others, they have completely passed over it. On the spot, you raised no trivial question for me, namely that the Apostle when writing to the Romans employed eight verses from the third and tenth Psalms, which are read in the churches and are not found in the Hebrew: “Their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues they have dealt deceitfully [[Ps 5:9](#)]; the venom of asps is under their lips [[Ps 140:3](#)], their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness [[Ps 10:7](#)]; their feet are swift to shed blood, grief and misery are in their ways [[Isa 59:7–8](#); [Prov 1:16](#)]; and the way of peace they have not known, there is no fear of God before their eyes [[Ps 36:1](#)]” [[Rom 3:13–18](#)].

When I heard this, it was as if I had been punched by a very powerful boxer. I began quietly to heat up and my pale face displayed the amazement of my mind. He who was a “Hebrew of Hebrews,” I said, “according to the law, a Pharisee” [cf. [Phil 3:5](#)], and who was educated at the feet of Gamaliel [cf. [Acts 22:3](#)], either did not know these things, or he took advantage of the ignorance of those who were about to read. The former of which pertains to a man lacking education, the latter to a shrewd man with malice at heart. Neither apply to him who said, “And if I am unskilled in speech, but not in knowledge” [[2 Cor 11:6](#)], and again, “In simplicity and sincerity I have proclaimed the word to you” [[2 Cor 1:12](#)]. Finally, when I returned to myself, I

1 In [Ep. 66.9.2](#) to Pammachius (NPNF2, [6:138](#)) Jerome ascribes the following sentence to “abius” “ccording to Fabius crafts would be sure to prosper if none but craftsmen were allowed to criticize them. No man can adequately estimate a poet unless he is competent himself to write verse. No man can comprehend philosophers, unless he is acquainted with the various theories that they have held.” Fremantle identifies Jerome’s referent as Fabius Pietor, a historian; cf. [Cicero, De Or 2.12](#). There is also Fabius Quintilianus, author of the rhetorical work *Institutiones Oratoriae*. H. Hagendahl, [Latin Fathers and the Classics: A Study on the Apologists, Jerome and Other Christian Writers](#) (Göteborg, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1958), 232, says that [Quintilian, Inst 12, 10, 50](#) is no parallel to what Jerome says here: *Iudices artis habeat artifices* (Let [a literary work] have judges who are craftsmen of the art).

requested the space of a day so that my response would not be the argument of human ingenuity, but the fruit of constant reading.

And so, having surveyed the entirety of Scripture in my mind, I have noticed that just as nearly all the Epistle to the Romans has been constructed from the Old Instrument, so also has this testimony been woven together from the Psalms and Isaiah. For the first two verses, “Their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues they have dealt deceitfully” [[Rom 3:13](#)] are from the fifth Psalm [cf. [Ps 5:9](#)]. What follows, “The venom of asps is under their lips” [[Ps 140:3](#)] is from the [139th Psalm](#). And again, the words, “Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness” [[Ps 10:7](#)] has been taken from the ninth Psalm. But the three little lines that follow, “Their feet are swift to shed blood, grief and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known” [[Isa 59:7–8](#)], I have found in Isaiah. I will explain them in the sixteenth book of this commentary, which I now desire to dictate. But the final verse, that is, the eighth, “There is no fear of God before their eyes” [[Ps 36:1](#)] is from the beginning of the thirty-fifth Psalm. May it not appear divergent to anyone in this respect, if what is expressed in the original passages in the singular is recorded by the Apostle in the plural. For he was writing to a large number of people and was heaping up many citations into a single meaning.

I think that your question has been solved, and our rule about the translation of the Old Instrument has been struck rather than shaken, and it is not so much that the Apostle has taken from the thirteenth Psalm what is not found in the Hebrew, as that those who were ignorant of the Apostle’s skill in interweaving Scripture with Scripture have failed to track down the appropriate passage when they recorded the citation adopted by him, which they assumed was not recorded apart from the authority of Scripture. Finally, all the massagers of Greece who have left behind for us their learned commentaries on the Psalms mark these brief verses with a critical sign and pass over them, plainly admitting that they are not found in the Hebrew, and they are not in the Septuagint translators, but are in the common edition which is called ΚΟΙΝΗ in Greek and is published throughout the world.<sup>22</sup> But now it is time to turn our attention to the work we have begun and pursue the rest.

2. ([57:3–4a](#)) *But draw near hither, you sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer, and of the harlot. (4) Upon whom have you jested? Upon whom have you opened your mouth wide, and put out your tongue?* Septuagint: “But draw near hither, you sons of the iniquitous one, the seed of adulterers and the prostitute. (4) At whom have you jested, and upon whom have you opened your mouth, and against whom have you put out your tongue?”

With the just man removed, or rather, removed out of the way, whose burial is in peace [cf. [Isa 57:1–2](#)], you who are *sons* of “iniquity,” *draw near* to me and hear what I say. For just as “he who does iniquity is a slave of iniquity” [[John 8:34](#)], so he who is a son of perdition like Judas the traitor [cf. [John 17:12](#)] can be called a “son of iniquity.” After all, of the Lord and Savior it is written, “And the *son of iniquity* will not afflict him again” [[Ps 89:22](#)]. In place of the

2 He means the Old Latin translation of the LXX. The whole of [Rom 3:13–8](#) was interpolated into the text of LXX [Ps 13](#), so as to follow straight on after the words quoted in [Rom 3:12](#). This is how these lines found their way into the Roman and Gallican Psalters (though in the latter they were originally obelized). Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, [The Epistle to the Romans](#), vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1975), 193n1.



Septuagint's translation of "iniquity," or "iniquitous ones," Theodotion recorded the Hebrew word itself,  $\omega\nu\eta\nu\alpha$ , which we have translated in accordance with Symmachus as *of the sorceress*, namely because Jerusalem, which is the mother of those who hear [cf. [Gal 4:26](#)], was always devoted to idolatry. For this reason he calls them *the seed of the adulterer*, or "adulterers," of whom it was said, "And they committed adultery with wood and stone" [[Jer 3:9](#)]. Doubtless he means the same one of whom we read above, "How has the faithful city of Zion become a prostitute?" [[Isa 1:21](#)].<sup>33</sup>

*Upon whom have you jested?* he says, by spitting in his face and plucking out his beard [cf. [Isa 50:6](#)]. And *upon whom have you widened* and "opened" *your mouth, and put out your tongue*, when you said to him, "You are a Samaritan and have a demon" [[John 8:48](#)]? And again, "This man does not expel demons except by Beelzebub, the prince of demons" [[Matt 12:24](#)]. And later on during the passion, "Crucify, crucify him!" [[Luke 23:21](#)]. And again, "His blood be upon us and upon our children" [[Matt 27:25](#)]. And elsewhere, "Hah, he who destroys the temple and rebuilds it in three days; he saved others, he cannot save himself; let him come down now from the cross and we [will] believe in him" [[Matt 27:40](#)].

3. ([57:4b-5](#)) *Are you not wicked sons, a false seed, (5) who seek your comfort in gods under every leafy tree* (lignum), *sacrificing little children in the torrents, under the overhanging rocks?* Septuagint: "Are you not sons of perdition, a lawless seed (5) who call upon idols under the leafy trees (*arbores*), sacrificing your sons in the valleys in the midst of the rock?"

He says, You have done these things that the previous words have described. You who are *wicked sons*, or "sons of perdition," of the sort that even Judas the betrayer was, who was called a "son of perdition" [[John 17:12](#)]; and "a lawless" or *false seed*, and of falsehood, you who take delight *in gods under every leafy "tree,"* and you *sacrifice "your sons" in the torrents*. The histories of both Kings and Chronicles describe this, that they "sacrificed their sons" to the gods and consecrated them in fire [cf. [2 Kgs 16:3](#); [17:17](#); [21:6](#); [2 Chr 28:3](#); [33:6](#)]. Indeed there is no doubt that both Ahab the king of Israel and Manasseh the king of Judah did this. They went from being murderers of children to shedding the blood of prophets, of which Hosea also says, "You have sacrificed men, for the calves have failed" [[Hos 13:2](#)]; or, as it is written in the Hebrew, "Sacrificing men, you worship calves." And in the Psalms, it is written in greater detail: "they were mingled with the nations, and learned their works. And they served their graven images; and it became an offence to them, and they sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons, and shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, and they sacrificed to the graven images of Canaan; and the land was murdered with blood, and was defiled with their works" [[Ps 106:35-38](#)].

Therefore, since the history is clear, that the murderers of Christ are the sons of those who do these things, a question occurs as to how sons may be called "sons of perdition." This is said against those who want there to be diverse natures [of souls], one that is lost and evil and cannot be saved, and another that is good and cannot perish. For if, as they think, the "sons of perdition" are evil by nature, how has what was previously lost been found? After all, in the parables of the penitent ones, both the sheep that was lost from the hundred sheep [cf. [Luke 15:4](#)], and the drachma that had been lost from the ten [cf. [Luke 15:8](#)], are found again;

3 Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 45 (352, 9-2).

moreover, the lost son is found, concerning whom the father had said to the one older by birth, “This brother of yours was lost, and has been found, he was dead and has come to life again” [[Luke 15:32](#)]. For nothing is ever lost except what was previously safe,<sup>44</sup> and nothing ever dies but what was formerly alive. Therefore those who are now being called “sons of perdition,” or of iniquity and *wickedness*, abandoned God through their own fault, and they began to be “sons of perdition” from being the Lord’s sons. For this same prophet says to them, “You have forsaken the Lord and provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel” [[Isa 1:4](#)].

We can also interpret these things tropologically and against the heretics, who are “sons of perdition” and evil *seed*, or of *falsehood*. For they are *false* from the beginning, like the devil, its father, who is the father of all falsehood [cf. [John 8:44](#)]. “Under leafy trees” and groves do they call those whom they have deceived to the idols or images of their dogmas. They promise them pleasures and delights, or they conceal their impurities. And this is why Adam, after he had sinned, hid himself in paradise under a “tree” [cf. [Gen 3:8](#)], to keep himself from being exposed to the sight of God. And there is no doubt that “sons of perdition” of this sort and “lawless seed” would have very many sons in those whom they have deceived. And they kill them “in” the deep “valleys” and in the pit of impiety, *under the overhanging* (imminentes) *rocks*, which constantly threaten (*minantur*) to collapse. They are called *rocks* in the plural because of the various kinds of falsehood and the variety of perverse dogmas. But we have one “rock,” which always follows the people of God [cf. [1 Cor 10:4](#)], from which the people of Israel used to drink formerly, when they enjoyed intimacy with the Lord.

4. ([57:6](#)) *In the parts of the torrent is your portion; this is your lot, and you have poured out a libation to them, you have offered sacrifice. Shall I not be indignant over these things?* Septuagint: “This is your portion, this is your lot, and you have poured out libations to them, and you have prepared sacrifices to these things. Shall I not therefore be angry over these things?”

The things that are said fit into Isaiah’s times:<sup>55</sup> for all mountains, valleys, and *torrents* were filled with the worship of demons, of which Jeremiah says that fathers and sons gather wood and kindle a fire to make cakes (*chauonas*) to the host of heaven [cf. [Jer 7:18](#)], while the women grind and mix fat with fine wheat flour. Thus have they provoked God to anger [cf. [Isa 1:4](#)]. No one doubts that he means flat cakes or cookies prepared by hand for the craftsman—for this is what *chauonas* means in our language. In the song of Deuteronomy, Moses predicted these by a prophetic spirit under the persona of the Lord: “They bitterly angered me with strange [gods]; and they provoked [me] to anger with their abominations, they sacrificed to demons, and not to God” [[Deut 32:16–17](#)]. And they did this by their own will, because to decide for good or evil is based upon our choice.

After all, concerning those who have offered themselves to God [and] to the virtues, it is said, “He has chosen his own inheritance for us, the beauty of Jacob which he loved” [[Ps 47:4](#)]; and in another passage, “His people Jacob have become the *portion* of the Lord, Israel the line of his inheritance” [[Deut 32:9](#)]; and in the Acts of the Apostles it is related that very many devoted themselves to the *portion* and *lot* of Paul and Silas [cf. [Acts 17:4](#)]. Therefore those who

4 Or “aved.”

5 Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 45 (352, 31–7).

have been the Lord's *portion* and *lot*, like the Levites, shall have the Lord's *portion* and shall be able to say with David, "The Lord is my *portion*" [[Ps 119:57](#)].

We can also interpret these things concerning the persona of the heretics. For they worship the images of their errors, having set aside the worship of God, and they offer victims and "pour out libations" to them. They do things in secret that are shameful to speak about [cf. [Eph 5:12](#)], and they "take captive silly women laden with sins, who are led away with divers desires, ever learning, and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth" [[2 Tim 3:6-7](#)]. Since therefore the impious do these things with each act of impiety, is it not just that God's wrath is provoked against them?

5. ([57:7-8a](#)) *Upon a high and lofty mountain you have laid your bed, and you have gone up there to offer victims. (8) And behind the door, and behind the post you have set up your memorial.* Septuagint: similarly.

Sacred history narrates that Israel *offered victims* to the gods of the nations *upon high mountains* and hills, and like the most brazen prostitute she spread her legs to all the demons [cf. [Ezek 16:25](#)]. And no place existed that was undefiled by the filth of idolatry, to such an extent that *behind the posts* of the *houses* they *set up* idols, which they call household gods (*lares*), and both publicly and privately they poured out the blood of their souls. The cities of many provinces labor under this error and evil custom of long duration, and Rome herself, mistress of the world, in individual apartment buildings<sup>66</sup> and homes, venerates the image of a protective deity (*tutela*) with tapers and lamps, which they call by this name for the protection (*tuitionem*) of the shrines. Thus, both while entering and leaving their homes, they are always reminded of this inveterate error.

The heretics too, whose heart is lifted up by pride, and who show contempt for the humility of the church, promise themselves *high* things, and ascend the *loftiest mountains* of their dogmas, and *there* they prostitute their *bed* to demons. And since according to the prophet they have turned backward [cf. [Isa 1:4](#)], imitating Lot's wife, they are changed into a statue of salt [cf. [Gen 19:26](#)], having the image of the condition of the church, and not having its taste at all. They are cast outside and are good for nothing but to be trampled under the feet of all [cf. [Matt 5:13](#)]. This is why in the Gospel, the Lord warns the one holding the handle of a plow not to look *behind* his back [cf. [Luke 9:62](#)].

6. ([57:8b-9](#)) *For you have uncovered near me, and have received an adulterer; you have enlarged your bed, and made a covenant with them; you have loved their bed with open hand, (9) and you have adorned yourself for the king with ointment, and have multiplied your pigments. You have sent your ambassadors far off, and have been humbled even to hell.* Septuagint: "Did you think that if you should depart from me, you would have something more? You loved those who slept with you; (9) and you have multiplied your fornication with them, and you have increased the number of them that are far from you, and have sent ambassadors beyond your borders, and have been humbled even to hell."

First let us discuss the Hebrew, which differs greatly from the Septuagint on this passage. To her to whom he had said above, "Upon a high and lofty mountain you have laid your bed" [[Isa 57:7](#)], and whom he had rebuked like a harlot, prostituted in the entrance of the homes and in

6 Or "slands."

dark places behind the gates, so that whoever wanted to enter shrines would have his pleasure exposed before their eyes, this same woman he now rebukes and silences as an adulterous wife, because while “she was sleeping with” her husband, she was secretly *receiving an adulterer*, and *uncovered* the bed cover, or rather, *enlarged* her *bed*, and made an agreement, as if she were drawing up the documents of a dowry with adulterers. Now he says this to show that she has worshiped idols not only in the fields and in homes, but in the temple too she has set up an image of Baal, which Ezekiel also says that he saw when he had dug through a wall [cf. [Ezek 8:8–10](#)].

*You have loved their bed with open hand*, he says, so that you were not ashamed of your sin, and you did not desire to conceal the disgrace of your “fornication” but you sinned with complete freedom, *and you have adorned yourself for the king with ointment, and have multiplied your idols*. And the meaning is, You have sought various adornments in order to attract adulterers by sight and smell. Now the words, *You have adorned yourself for the king* are understood in two ways: either *for God the king*, while you are adorned with those things which he had given, and you commit acts of prostitution with idols; or at least *for the king* idol of the Ammonites, which is called Moloch and means *king* in our language. In the Septuagint, we read this as Melchom in other passages [cf. [Jer 49:3](#)].

And *you have sent your ambassadors far off*, so that you pursued fornication not only with the idols of the neighboring nations but also with those located far away. But he intends the gods of the Babylonians and Egyptians. *And you have been humbled even to hell*, he says, not with that humility that is praiseworthy, but that by which Ammon had *humbled* his own sister Tamar [cf. [2 Sam 13:1–19](#)]. And indeed, great is the humility, or rather the headfirst plunge *even to hell*, to plunge headlong from the light and the summit of purity into the darkness of a brothel, or rather, into the abyss of lustful desires. In another passage it is said to him, “You will be led down to hell” [[Isa 14:15](#)].

According to the Septuagint, in those parts that are discordant [with the Hebrew], the sense seems to me to be the following. “Did you think,” O prostitute, “that if you should depart from me,” and unite yourself with your lovers, you would have found “something more”? And through Ezekiel God says to her, “Wages are given to all prostitutes; but you have given wages, and this has happened to you in a way that is reversed” [[Ezek 16:33–34](#)]. For not only have you not received anything from your lovers, but you have even lost those things that you had received from your husband. Now what follows, *You have enlarged your bed, and made a covenant with them*, is not found in the Septuagint.

She “loved those” lookouts and dumb dogs [cf. [Isa 56:10](#)] “who slept with” her, those sleepers who see dreams of vanity, and she “has multiplied her fornication,” and she was mingled not one time and not with one man, but repeatedly and with many. For this reason, she made many “depart far from” her, either the angels who were there for her protection, or holy men who “departed” from any involvement with such a prostitute.

Indeed, we can say this also concerning the heretics, who follow their own errors and have abandoned God, and they think they have “something more,” though by following lies they have lost the truth, and they have “multiplied their fornication,” not with a single doctrine but with many, and they have caused the protecting angels of the churches to “depart” from them. Not

content with fornicating with neighbors, they “send ambassadors beyond their borders” to the dogmas of the heathen and errors of foreign nations, that they may deceive audiences by the novelty of their words.

7. ([57:10](#)) *You have labored in the multitude of your way, and you did not say, “I will rest”; you found life of your hand, therefore you did not ask.* Septuagint: “You have labored with your many journeys; and you did not say, ‘I will cease’; having been strengthened, you have done these things, therefore you did not ask me.”

He does not *labor* who walks on the one royal *way*, concerning which God gives instruction through Moses: “You shall walk on the royal *way*, and you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left” [[Num 20:17](#)].<sup>77</sup> The *way* of truth is one, which says in the Gospel, “I am the *way* and the life and the truth” [[John 14:6](#)], and the ways of falsehood are many. Jerusalem is presently being rebuked for having walked by them. Above, to those who are astray, God expresses the difference between these ways: “My way is not like your ways” [[Isa 55:8](#)]. They are the ones who say and confess to the Lord, “You have made our ways turn aside from your ways” [[Ps 44:18](#)]. Once the one royal *way* has been recognized, therefore, let us see what are the right and left ways (by which we are forbidden to travel). The royal *way* is balanced and has neither more nor less in itself.

For instance, prudence is the right and royal way. We turn aside to the right, if we are more wise than is fitting [cf. [Rom 12:3](#)], and instead of prudence we esteem the cunning by which the serpent was more prudent than all the beasts in paradise [cf. [Gen 3:1](#)] and the sons of darkness are more prudent than the sons of light [cf. [Luke 16:8](#)]. And we turn aside to the left when we are foolish and less wise than is necessary. Of them, it is said, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’ ” [[Ps 14:1](#)].

Also, piety and true religion are the royal *way* from which one turns aside to the right, who is superstitious and who deserves to hear, “Do not be overly just” [[Eccl 7:17](#)]; to the left, who neglects the worship of God and is numbered among the kids and goats [cf. [Matt 25:33](#)].

Generosity, too, and diplomacy is a very great virtue from which one turns aside to the right, who is stingy and does not give what is necessary, not merely to others, but not even to himself; to the left, who squanders his wealth with prostitutes [cf. [Luke 15:30](#)] and says with Israel, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die” [[Isa 22:13](#)].

Likewise courage and steadiness is the royal *way* from which one turns aside to the right who is rash and stubborn; to the left who is timid and panicky. This is why the holy man expresses his desire to walk down the right way, and prays, “Guide me, O Lord, on the right way” [[Ps 86:11](#)]; and in another place, “Make known to me, O Lord, the way on which I should walk, since I have lifted up my eyes to you” [[Ps 143:8](#)]. And elsewhere, Scripture makes mention of this sort of way: “Seek the good way and walk in it, and you will find purification for your souls” [[Jer 6:16](#)].

Therefore, the reason Jerusalem has been humbled even to hell [cf. [Isa 57:9](#)] is because she has *labored* in her “many” *ways*; and she did not say, I will correct the error by penance, but instead, I will be “strengthened” in the undertaking, and I shall not cure the sentence of the one who warns, “Withdraw your foot from the rough way and your throat from thirst” [[Jer 2:25](#)].

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 45 (353, 24).

After all, it follows, “But she answered: *ανδριουμαι*, that is, I will act like a man” [[Jer 2:26](#)], which is now being expressed with a different word: I shall be “strengthened.” And because she did these things that the previous discourse narrated, therefore she has not sought the Lord in prayer. She is confident in her own strength rather than in God.

On the other hand, what is recorded in the Hebrew, *You found life of your hand, therefore you did not ask*, has this meaning. Because you abounded in all things and you overflowed with wealth, therefore you neglected the Lord. This is the wealth that even Solomon shirks from possessing lest he should forget God [cf. [Prov 30:8–9](#)]. And Ezekiel says to the Sodomite that because he is satisfied with bread, he has grown arrogant [cf. [Ezek 16:49](#)]. But not only does wealth put man to the test, so does poverty. This is why it was written above, “I have tested you in the furnace of poverty” [[Isa 48:10](#)]. This is where the poor man Lazarus was also tested [cf. [Luke 16:20–21](#)], who endured poverty together with physical disability.

8. ([57:11](#)) *For whom have you been solicitous and afraid, that you have lied, and have not been mindful of me, nor thought [of me] in your heart? For I am silent, and as one that sees not, and you have forgotten me.* Septuagint: “Through fear of whom have you been terrified, and lied to me, and have not remembered me, nor set your mind and heart on me? And, when I see you I despise you, and you have not feared me.”

Since you with your full barns were trusting in your wealth [cf. [Luke 12:16–18](#)] and were unwilling to ask me, therefore *you have been afraid* of many. For you were unable to say, “The Lord is my helper, and I despise my enemies” [[Ps 118:7](#)], and again, “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?” [[Ps 27:1](#)]. But even if, contrary to the awareness of your mind, you wanted to say this at some time, *you have lied*. For how could you call upon me when you had no memory of me, and have never *thought* about the commands of the one who says, “Honor the Lord, and you will be strong, and fear no one but him” [[Prov 7:2](#)]? For I am he who, according to Symmachus and Aquila, am always *silent* regarding your sins, and with regard to whatever wicked deeds you were doing, I was *as one that sees not*. I neglected them by a feigned ignorance, in order that you would come back to me, if not out of fear of me, at least because of my patience. I am the one who questions the sons of men not with eyes but with eyelids [cf. [Ps 11:4](#)]. But you, on the other hand, *have forgotten me*, and have deserved to hear, “You have forgotten the law of your God, and I shall forget your sons” [[Hos 4:6](#)]; and again, “They have walked perversely before me, and I shall walk before them with a perverse fury” [[Lev 26:40–41](#)].

“Mind,” which is joined with “heart” in the Septuagint, is not written in the Hebrew. It is an interpretive addition, as it were, indicating how “heart” needs to be understood in the Scriptures.

9. ([57:12–13a](#)) *I will declare your justice, and your works shall not profit you.* (13) *When you shall cry, let your companies deliver you.* Septuagint: “And I will declare your justice, and your evils, which shall not profit you. (13) When you cry, let them rescue you in your affliction.”

I who was always silent, and who overlooked your sins as if I saw them not [cf. [Isa 57:11](#)], shall not be silent any longer, but I shall speak what I have already said before: “I have been silent; shall I always be silent?” [[Isa 42:14](#)]. And *I will declare your justice, and your works*. This should be read as irony. It is as if someone says to one who has been caught in the act of



committing wicked deeds, “Behold *your good works!*” Therefore, if a time of “affliction” should come upon you, and you begin to stretch forth your hands, not to the idols that you worshiped, but to heaven, and to implore God’s help, let those ones hear you and *deliver* you from danger, those whom you worshiped when you were secure. God also says this to her through Jeremiah, “Where are your gods that you made for yourself? Let them rise up and save you in the time of your evils” [[Jer 2:28](#)]. What the Septuagint translated as, “Let them rescue you in your affliction,” and we have expressed as, *Let your companies deliver you*, Symmachus translated, “Let your synagogues rescue you.” Therefore he is speaking especially to the Jews, that the throng of their synagogues does not have the power to *deliver* them at the time of the siege.

10. ([57:13b–14](#)) *And the wind shall carry them all off, a breeze shall take them away; but he that puts his trust in me shall inherit the land, and shall possess my holy mountain.* (14) *And I will say, “Make a way, grant a journey, turn out of the path, remove the stumbling blocks out of the way of my people.”* Septuagint: “For the wind shall take them all away, and the tempest shall carry them off; but those who hope in me shall possess the land, and shall obtain my holy mountain, (14) and they shall say, ‘Clear the ways before him, and remove the stumbling blocks out of the way of my people.’ ”

The Jews claim that these things are being prophesied about the Babylonians, that when they were defeated by the power of God, the people return to Judea and possess Mount Zion, and all impediments for the *journey* are taken away, and they do not suffer from the ambushes of any nation, because the Lord will have *made the way* level for his people. Moreover, they contend that these things were fulfilled under Zerubbabel and Ezra. We, however, link what is said with what comes before it, and we claim this, that all the idols that were unable to deliver them, a *wind* and a “tempest” *carries off*, and they are as dust that the wind drives away from the face of the land [cf. [Ps 1:4](#)]; but those who *put* their *trust in* the Lord will “possess the land,” of which we shall read in this same prophet, “He will raise you up to the good places of the land” [[Isa 58:14](#)]. Therefore, it is clear that this *land* is not below, but above, to which the saint shall ascend when the Lord raises him, of which we have repeatedly said, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land” [[Matt 5:4](#)]; and, “I believe I will see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living” [[Ps 27:13](#)]. But the *holy mountain* of God should be understood as that one of which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, “You have come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to many thousands of angels, and to the church of the firstborn ones, who are written in the heavens” [[Heb 12:22–23](#)].<sup>88</sup>

We can also understand the *land* and *mountain* of the Lord that the saints will *possess* as the Holy Scriptures, which the Lord threatens must be *taken away* from the Jews, when he says, “The kingdom of God will be *taken away* from you and will be given to a nation producing its fruit” [[Matt 21:43](#)]. Consequently, they find in them that mountain of which we read in this same prophet, and in Micah, “The mountain of the Lord will be manifest in the last days” [[Isa 2:2](#); [Mic 4:1](#)]. And the Lord himself instructed the apostles and all teachers of the church to solve, by means of their interpretation, anything that seems rough and difficult,<sup>99</sup> and to *grant* a *way* to understanding, and to *remove all stumbling blocks* from the midst, so that the Lord’s

8 Cf. *ibid.* (354, 14–7).

9 Cf. *ibid.* (354, 11–4).

people may understand what they are reading [cf. [Acts 8:30](#)] without any impediment and make progress in the fear of God. John the Baptist also spoke about these *ways*: “Prepare the *ways* of the Lord, make straight paths for our God” [[Matt 3:3](#)].

Where we have recorded as spoken under the persona of God, *And I will say*, the Septuagint recorded, “And they shall say,” namely those who “shall possess the land and obtain the holy mountain” of God. And they shall not be content with their own salvation, but they shall summon others as well to teach the people. Symmachus translated this passage as follows: “But he who trusts in me will possess the land, and will obtain my holy mountain, and will say, ‘Make the way straight,’ ” and the remaining things, because he himself who will have possessed the land and the mountain, should instruct others to prepare the way for the Lord.

11. ([57:15](#)) *For thus says the high and lofty inhabitant of eternity, and his name is holy, who dwells in the high and holy place, and with a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble ones, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* Septuagint: “Thus says the High One, who dwells on high for ever, Holy in the holies is his name, high resting in the holies, and giving patience to the fainthearted, and life to the brokenhearted.”

The prophetic discourse had begun by being directed against the Jewish people, whose teachers he called blind lookouts, dumb dogs, shepherds lacking understanding [cf. [Isa 56:10–11](#)], wicked sons, and the seed of adulterers and of the harlot [cf. [Isa 57:3](#)].<sup>110</sup> After that, he comes to Jerusalem, and rebukes its fornication, because she enlarged her bedroom to her lovers and received them with an open hand [cf. [Isa 57:8–9](#)], and adorned herself for all the idols and sent ambassadors far off to enjoy foreign lovers as well [cf. [Isa 57:13](#)]. With this rebuke having come to an end, he arrives at those who trust in the Lord, and to whom he had promised that they would possess the land and the mountain, and for whose return he had commanded a journey to be prepared [cf. [Isa 57:14](#)]. Doubtless this refers to preparation by the apostles, at whose preaching they have believed from both peoples. This is why he begins with the praises of God, and the things that he has promised concerning the return of his people he testifies to in the words that follow.

*For thus says the high and lofty Lord, “who dwells in the high places,” and the “Holy in the holies,” dwelling in them not spatially, but by the merit of those in whom he dwells, one of whom says in the Psalm, “I shall exalt you, Lord, because you have taken me”* [[Ps 30:1](#)], and again, “Be exalted, you who judge the earth” [[Ps 94:2](#)]. It is not that God may be lifted up by human words, but in accordance with what is said elsewhere, “The Lord has become my salvation” [[Ps 118:14](#)], likewise he becomes *high* to the lowly. He “resists the proud and gives grace to the humble” [[Jas 4:6](#)], so that he may raise them up and dwell in the high ones. “For the Lord is high and regards the lowly things” [[Ps 138:6](#)]. And in the Gospel, the angels shout, “Glory to God in the heights, and peace upon earth” [[Luke 2:14](#)]; and again in the Psalms, “Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights” [[Ps 148:1](#)]. And not only does the *high* one dwell in the heights, but also the *holy one in the holy ones*, who says in another place, “Be holy, for I am holy” [[Lev 11:44](#)].

And just as wisdom does not enter into a perverse soul [cf. [Wis 1:4](#)], nor dwell in a body that is subject to sins, so the *holy one dwells* “in those who are holy,” and wherever there is filth,

<sup>110</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 46 (354, 26–2).

cleanness cannot dwell, since the saint says to the Lord, “But you, the praise of Israel, dwell in the holy ones” [Ps 22:3]. And this is why we dare to say in prayer, “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name” [Matt 6:9]. Moreover, we read in the second Psalm, “He who dwells in heaven shall scoff at them, and the Lord shall mock them” [Ps 2:4]. For Christ does not dwell in those who are earthly, but in those who are super-heavenly [cf. 1 Cor 15:48], who declare the Lord’s glory [cf. Ps 19:1], of whom it is said, “He shall hear him from his holy heaven” [Ps 20:6], and again, “The heaven of heaven [is] the Lord’s” [Ps 115:16]. And with unanimity, Moses the servant of the Lord agrees with this sense: “Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heaven belong to the Lord your God” [Deut 10:14].

Surely we should not interpret this in a Judaic fashion, that God is confined to some location and dwells solely in heaven, who is diffused everywhere, and by whom all things are held together. Instead we should understand the *high places* as both the heavens and those who are holy by merit and by their virtues. For he is the one who *dwells* in heaven, of whom it is written in the Gospel, “No one ascends into heaven except he who came down from heaven, the son of man who is in heaven” [John 3:13]. He “rests in the holy ones” and *dwells* in the *humble*, and in those who are *contrite* in *spirit*, of whom it is said, “An afflicted spirit is a sacrifice to God, a contrite and humbled heart God does not despise” [Ps 51:17].<sup>111</sup> He “gives patience to the fainthearted,” so that when they are found in distress, they may endure afflictions by means of the hope of the things that are to come. He himself gives “life,” surely to those who had died to sin [cf. Eph 2:1, 5], of whom it is said, “With you there is a fountain of life” [Ps 36:9], who says in the Gospel, “I am the life and the way and the truth” [John 14:6].

12. (57:16) *For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be angry all the way to the end, because the Spirit shall go forth from my face, and I will make breathings.* Septuagint: “I will not take vengeance on you forever, neither will I be always angry with you; for [my] Spirit shall go forth from me, and I have made every breath.”

“The Lord who dwells in the heights and has regard for the lowly things” [Ps 113:5–7], whose name is holy, and he rests in the holy ones, who sustains the afflicted and confers life upon the oppressed [cf. Isa 57:15], has said this: *I will not always be angry*, nor will I continually be indignant. The reason I strike is in order to heal, the reason I kill is in order to make alive [cf. Deut 32:39]. For I pity my creation, and those whom I myself have created I shall not allow to perish forever. My “Spirit” too, who “shall go forth from me,” or (according to the Hebrew, and Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion) who “surrounds all things”—for that is the significance of περιεληθησεται and περιβαλλει—he is the enlivener of all things. And “I have made breath,” or in the plural *breathings*—for that is what *nasamoth* means—of which elsewhere it is written, “Let every breath,” or, “all that breathes, praise the Lord” [Ps 150:6]. At the beginning of Genesis it is written about this “Spirit” and “breath,” “God breathed in the breath of life, and man became a living soul” [Gen 2:7]. Job too says something similar to this: “The Spirit of the Lord who is in my nostrils, and the breath of the almighty who teaches me” [Job 27:3].<sup>112</sup> Since therefore the Spirit “goes forth from me,” and all things are invigorated and live by my breath and inspiration, it is not just those to perish “forever” who are sustained by my breath and

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (355, 20–6).

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (355, 34–56, 5).

Spirit.

Some of our own people say that this spirit is the one with which the whole world is inspired and ruled, and by which all things have the knowledge of God, whom the famous poet describes in accordance with the Stoics, by saying, “In the beginning, spirit nourishes all things from within, the sky and the lands, the liquid fields, the shining globe of the moon and Titan’s star. It was mind that set all this matter in motion, infused throughout its members, it mixes itself with that great body,”<sup>113</sup> and so on. But others understand the Holy Spirit, who in the beginning was borne upon the waters and gave life to everything [cf. [Gen 1:2](#)]. He who “goes forth from” the Father, and on account of fellowship and unity of nature is sent by the Son, who says, “It is expedient for you that I go; for if I do not go, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I shall send him to you” [[John 16:7](#)]. Again he says of him, “When the Paraclete shall come, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who *goes forth* from the Father” [[John 15:26](#)]. Let no one be scandalized if the Spirit is said to “go forth from” the Father, since even the Son said of himself, “I have come forth from the Father and have come, for I have not come forth on my own, but he sent me” [[John 16:28](#)]. Of this Spirit, he said, “I shall ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete to be with you always, the Spirit of truth” [[John 14:16](#)]. This is the Spirit of whom Moses also writes, “Who would grant that all the Lord’s people be among the prophets, and let the Lord give his Spirit upon them?” [[Num 11:29](#)]. And Joel says under the persona of God, “I shall pour out from my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy” [[Joel 2:28](#)]. And Zechariah says, “But receive my words and my ordinances, which I command by my Spirit to my servants the prophets” [[Zech 1:6](#)]. And again, “I shall pour out upon Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and mercy” [[Zech 12:10](#)], and many other things from both testaments that it would take too long to repeat. We say only this, that the same prophet has spoken about this Spirit and breath equally: “Thus says the Lord who made heaven” [[Isa 42:5](#)], and a little later: “Who gives breath to his people who are on it, and spirit to those who tread it” [[Isa 42:5](#)].

13. ([57:17–21](#)) *On account of the iniquity of his covetousness, I was angry, and I struck him; I hid, and I was angry, and he walked [away] mourning in the way of his own heart. (18) I saw his ways, and I healed him, and brought him back, and restored comforts to him, and to those who mourn for him. (19) I created the fruit of the lips, peace, peace to him who is far off, and to him who is near, said the Lord, and I healed him. (20) But the wicked are like the raging sea which cannot rest, and its waves overflow in trampling and mire. (21) There is no peace to the wicked, said my God.* Septuagint: “On account of sin, for a little while I grieved him, and struck him, and turned away my face from him; and he was grieved, and he walked [away] sorrowful in his ways. (18) I saw his ways, and healed him, and I comforted him, and gave him true comfort; (19) peace to those who are far off and who are near, says the Lord, and I will heal them. (20) But those who are unjust shall be tossed, and shall not be able to rest.”

After the rejection of the Jewish people and of those who refused to believe in the Savior, he had promised to those who were trusting in themselves a land of the meek and a mountain of saints [cf. [Isa 57:13](#)], and he had commanded the apostles, “Make a way for the people who are returning and take away every stumblingblock out of the midst” [[Isa 57:14](#)]. And to prevent

<sup>113</sup> [Vergil, Aeneid 6.724–27](#).

this from seeming incredible, he sets forth his own power, that the high and great one can easily grant pardon to the penitent [cf. [Isa 57:15](#)]. Moreover, it is just that the Creator show mercy to his creation [cf. [Isa 57:16](#)]. On account of these things, he adds that he was *angry* and has “grieved” his own people. The reason for this was that they had committed “sin” and had the *covetousness of iniquity*, and they were not content with a single act of iniquity, but they always added sins to sins [cf. [Isa 30:1](#)].

And *I struck him*, he says, for a brief time, in order to *heal*, and *I hid*, supply “my face”—in order that they would long for me all the more, and would say: “Show your face and we shall be saved” [[Ps 80:3](#)], and *I was angry*. For while he was feeling sad, he went on to say, “All day I went on sad” [[Ps 38:6](#)], and *he walked mourning*, or “converted” *in the way of his heart*, so that he repented not to the face of men but in his heart. Therefore, when *I saw the ways* of his conversion, *I healed* the wounds by which I had previously *struck him*, and *I brought him back* to me, the one whom I had previously cast out, and *I restored to him* “true comfort”—for many comforts are false, by which the human race is deceived—or “I comforted” *those who mourn for him*, I who said in the Gospel, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” [[Matt 5:5](#)]. And what follows, *I created the fruit of the lips*, has this meaning: I have fulfilled what I had promised, saying, “I live, says the Lord, I prefer the repentance of a sinner to his death” [[Ezek 33:11](#)], or I have bestowed everything that I had previously promised.

But what is the Lord’s promise? “My peace I give you, my peace I leave with you” [[John 14:27](#)]. And this is what he now says, “peace upon peace,”<sup>114</sup> not merely to one nation, but to the entire world, namely to those who were *far off*, and *who were near*, that is, first to the Gentiles, and afterward to those who wanted to believe out of Israel. The Apostle also speaks of them, “It was indeed necessary to proclaim the word of God to you, but because you have judged yourselves unworthy of salvation, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles” [[Acts 13:46](#)]. When writing to the Ephesians, he discusses in great detail both the people of the circumcision and of the Gentiles, and has concluded, “But now in Christ Jesus, you, who at one time were *far off*, have been brought *near* by the blood of Christ; for he is our peace, who has made both one, and breaking down the middle wall of partition, the enmity in his flesh” [[Eph 2:13–14](#)], and the rest; and again, “And coming, he announced peace to you that were *far off*, and peace to those who were *near*, for by him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father” [[Eph 2:17–18](#)]. But by giving peace upon “peace to those who were far off and who were near,” who had not possessed the law and the prophets, and who had not received it previously, he received and “healed” them.

But the *wicked* or the “unjust shall be tossed” *like the raging sea*, “and shall” never “be able to rest.” Although this could be understood of every wicked man, yet it refers especially to the Jewish people, who shouted out in unison and persevered in their wickedness, saying, “Crucify him, crucify him; we have no king but Caesar” [[John 19:15](#)]. Therefore, just as the *raging sea cannot rest*, but *its waves overflow* and are rolled onto the shore, and they are again swallowed up, and when they break against each other they become *mire* that is *trampled* underfoot, so the wicked shall be subjected to an eternal *trampling*, for whom there is no joy, and who do not rest in peace because they persevere as wicked ones.

<sup>114</sup> The LXX lemma says simply “eace.”

Some interpret this passage with special reference to the Savior, that “on account of the sins” of the world, he was “grieved for a little while,” saying: “My soul is sorrowful unto death” [[Matt 26:38](#)], and the Father “struck him,” who says through Zechariah, “I shall *strike* the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered” [[Zech 13:7](#)], who even himself said of himself in the sixty-eighth Psalm, “because they themselves persecuted him whom you have *struck*” [[Ps 69:26](#)]. Moreover, God “turned away his face from him” so that he could receive the form of a slave for a little while [cf. [Phil 2:7](#); cf. [Heb 2:7, 9](#)], and he “walked on grieved and sorrowful.” He was lamenting the sins of the people and weeping for Jerusalem [[Luke 19:41](#)]. And since the Father “saw his ways,” therefore he “healed him” who was free among the dead [cf. [Ps 88:5](#)], and his flesh did not see corruption [cf. [Acts 2:31](#)]. Thus he who was “struck” on the cross was “healed” in the resurrection.

“And I comforted him,” he says, by giving him the whole world in place of the single nation of the Jews, *and those who mourn for him*, supply “I comforted.” Doubtless this refers to the apostles [cf. [John 16:20](#)]. And he fulfilled *the fruit of their lips*, he who had said to him, “Ask of me, and I shall give you the nations for your inheritance and the ends of the earth for your possession” [[Ps 2:8](#)], “peace upon peace,” reconciling the world to God [cf. [2 Cor 5:19](#)], so that he invited both peoples to himself, and they were “healed” by the Father. But he compares the *wicked*, of whom we have spoken above, to the *sea*, which is never “able to rest,” but even in its supreme tranquility is convulsed by *waves* breaking on the shore, and its end is *mire* and *trampling*.

14. ([58:1](#)) *Cry out, cease not, lift up your voice like a trumpet (tuba), and declare to my people their wicked doings, and to the house of Jacob their sins.* Septuagint: “Cry out in strength, and spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet (*tuba*), and declare to my people their sins, and to the house of Jacob their iniquity.”

The previous section has come to an end, in which peace is declared to the just and no rest to the wicked [cf. [Isa 57:20–21](#)]. God commands Isaiah the prophet to “cry out in strength,” and to “lift up his voice like a trumpet,” and not to be afraid of telling the “sins” and *wicked doings* of the *people* of Israel. He should fear neither death nor the savage jeers of the wicked; but instead let him consider God’s command. And because they have deaf ears and are scarcely able to hear, let him turn his throat into a trumpet (*bucinam*); according to Symmachus and Aquila, what is expressed in Hebrew as *sophar* they have translated as ΚΕΡΤΙΥΗΥ, that is, horn.

And indeed above, when it was said to the apostles, “O you who bring glad tidings to Zion, go up on the high mountain; lift up your voice *in strength*, you who bring glad tidings to Jerusalem; lift it up, fear not” [[Isa 40:9](#)], neither trumpet (*bucina*) nor trumpet (*tuba*) is adopted, but they are commanded to go up on a mountain and to shout out with their own voices.<sup>115</sup> But here, since it was to sinners that the message had to be declared, and they were lingering below, the prophet is not commanded to go up on a mountain, but merely to *lift up his voice like a trumpet* and to declare to them the wars that are coming. In any case, even on the day of judgment, when the last trumpet also speaks for the resurrection of the dead, it is written, “For the trumpet shall sound and the dead will rise incorruptible” [[1 Cor 15:52](#)], so that just as they are to be judged at the sound of a trumpet, so Israel who has died to sin would hear

<sup>115</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 47 (357, 10–1).



their *wicked doings*; and at the same time they are called the people of God in order to learn what sort of Father they have lost, who invites even his own sinful people.

15. ([58:2a–b](#)) *For they seek me from day to day, and desire to know my ways, as a nation that has done justice, and that has not forsaken the judgment of their God.* Septuagint: similarly.

This especially fits the Jews who rush daily to their synagogues and meditate on the law of God [cf. [Ps 1:2](#)], *desiring to know* what Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the other saints have done, and by rereading by heart the books of the prophets and of Moses, they repeat monotonously the divine commands. The following shall be most justly applied to them: “Bad men shall seek me, and they shall not find” [[Prov 1:28](#)]. For if it is written, “Everyone who seeks shall find” [[Matt 7:8](#)], whoever does not find is convicted of having sought badly; for the Lord is found by those who seek him in goodness [cf. [Wis 1:1–2](#)], and he is shown to those who do not disbelieve him. Therefore, since they have also *forsaken the judgment of their God*, by which terms Christ is shown, since the Psalm writer says, “God, give your *judgment* to the king and your justice to the king’s son” [[Ps 72:1](#)—for Christ “has become for us redemption, holiness, and justice” [[1 Cor 1:30](#)]]—in vain do they boast in their knowledge of the law. For the saint glories not in the knowledge of the Scriptures, but in works, saying, “I have run the way of your commandments, when you enlarged my heart” [[Ps 119:32](#)].

16. ([58:2c–4b](#)) *They ask of me the judgments of justice and they are willing to draw near to God.* (3) “*Why have we fasted, and you have not regarded? [Why] have we humbled our soul, and you have not taken notice?*” *Behold, in the day of your fast [your own] desire (voluntas) is found, and you exact of all your debtors.* (4) *Behold, you fast for debates and strifes and strike with the fist wickedly.* Septuagint: “They now ask of me a just judgment, and desire to draw near to God, (3) saying, ‘Why have we fasted, and you have not seen? [Why] have we humbled our souls, and you did not know it?’ For in the days of your fasts your desires (*voluntates*) are found, and you afflict all who are subject to you, (4) fasting for judgments and strifes, and you strike the lowly with your fists.”

This is another foolhardy action of the Jews: they ask for “a just judgment,” as if they have confidence in their good conscience, and they imitate the words of the saints who say, “Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in my innocence” [[Ps 26:1](#)], and again, “Prove me, O Lord, and try me, purify as with fire my reins and my heart” [[Ps 26:2](#)], and in another passage, “Judge my case and redeem me” [[Ps 119:154](#)]. And they desire *to draw near to God*, though this takes place not spatially but in one’s affections, and not in the affections of one with an idle mind, but in one characterized by energetic work. After all, Scripture teaches what it means to draw near to God when it says, “Seek the Lord; but when he draws near to you, let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unjust man his thoughts” [[Isa 55:6–7](#)]. For the Lord draws near to those who draw near to him [cf. [Jas 4:8](#)], and to those who justly pursue what is just [cf. [Deut 16:20](#)], and who can say, “But it is good for me to cleave close to God” [[Ps 73:28](#)]. For if almighty God is the Father of truth and justice, whoever is a liar and unjust cannot draw near to God, of whom it is written, “The malicious shall not dwell with you, nor shall the unjust continue before your eyes” [[Ps 5:4–5](#)].

*Why have we fasted, they say, and you have not regarded?* “[Why] have we humbled our

souls, and you did not know it?" They accuse God of injustice, because he does not notice their good works, and they hold up to God solely the hunger of their bellies, apart from the works of the virtues, that they do not eat those foods that God created for the faithful and for those who know the truth, that they may receive them with thanksgiving [cf. [1 Tim 3:3–4](#)]. Instead they eat that food of which it is written in the Proverbs, "For these are nourished on the food of impiety and they are drunk on the wine of iniquity" [[Prov 4:17](#)]. The Pharisee, filled up with feasts of this sort, boasted among his other arrogant words that he fasted twice a week [cf. [Luke 18:12](#)]. He is one who had not drunk wine from the vine of Sorech [cf. [Isa 5:2](#)], but from the vine of the Sodomites, whose wine is the rage of dragons and the incurable rage of asps, and their grape is the grape of gall [cf. [Deut 32:32–33](#)]. God rebukes them through the prophet, "They devour the sins of my people" [[Hos 4:8](#)], and again, "Why have you passed over ungodliness in silence and reaped its iniquities as vintage, and why have you eaten fruit of falsehood?" [[Hos 10:13](#)].

The reason they had proposed a question to God is because they desire to know why they had "fasted" and "humbled their souls," when God did not notice it. They are oblivious to ancient history. For why did God not have regard for the gifts of Cain, who indeed was offering them rightly, but was not rightly sharing them with his brother [cf. [Gen 4:5, 7](#)]? For Cain did not see the love of God, since Scripture says, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself" [[Matt 22:37, 39](#)]; therefore God answered that he does not reprove the fasts, but the works that are done during the fasts. He says, "In the days of your fasts your desires (*voluntates*) are found," and not those of God, but you do "your desires," which Paul, when writing to the Ephesians, reproves: "According to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now works in the children of unbelief, in which also we all conversed in time past, in the desires of our flesh, fulfilling the will (*voluntatem*) of the flesh and of our thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest" [[Eph 2:2–3](#)].

And what follows in the Septuagint, "and you" pierce, or "afflict all who are subject to you," Theodotion and Symmachus translated better, and we have followed them in this passage: *And you exact of all your debtors*. He is showing here that it is not without danger to *exact* from a poor man who does not have the means to repay, and to fail to give back to a freezing cold debtor the cloak that you took as a pledge of repayment. Otherwise his cry may reach God. For "he who has mercy on the poor man lends to God" [[Prov 19:17](#)]. On the other hand, he who *exacts* from one who does not have does violence to God. And what is more, that we may know that this meaning is found in the present passage, we shall likewise read in what follows in the same chapter, "Loose the bands of wickedness, undo the bundles that oppress" [[Isa 58:6](#)]—doubtless referring to handwritten IOUs. For what good does it do to have faces that are pale because of fasts, and to *fast for debates and strifes*, when the Scripture says, "Should the one who loves his sins rejoice in *strifes*?" [[Prov 17:11](#)]. "But the Lord's servant should not *debate*, but be gentle" [[2 Tim 2:24](#)], and imitate him who says, "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" [[Matt 11:29](#)]. Let his humility not be put on, but from the heart; let him not seek glory from men, but let him have a conscientious soul.

You "fast," he says, and "you strike the lowly with your fists," and you beat him with slaps. This is why the bishop is not to be a striker [cf. [1 Tim 3:3](#)]. For how can someone bridle lust, when he does not have the strength to control his hand and tongue? The Lord rebukes fasting of

this sort at the beginning of this prophet, when he says, “[Your] fasting and rest from work, [your] new moons and Sabbaths, and your other feasts my soul hates” [[Isa 1:13–14](#)].<sup>116</sup> This is why it is commanded through Joel, “Sanctify a fast, proclaim a healing” [[Joel 2:15](#)], so that we might fast from vices, and by good works and by sins that have been healed, our fasting might become holy. After all, it follows, “Let the bridegroom go forth from his chamber, and the bride out of her private room” [[Joel 2:16](#)], so that at the time of fasting we might be free for prayer [cf. [1 Cor 7:5](#)]. Otherwise, our inner man might feed on the flesh of the dragon, who was given as food to the Ethiopian nations [cf. [Ps 74:14](#)].

Now we say these things, not in order to reprove fasting, by means of which Daniel, the “man of desires” [cf. [Dan 9:23](#)], knew the future [cf. [Dan 1:8](#)]; the Ninevites appeased the wrath of God [cf. [Jonah 3:5–10](#)]; and Elijah and Moses were satisfied by their intimate friendship with God after being hungry for forty days [cf. [1 Kgs 19:8](#); [Exod 34:28](#)]. Moreover, the Lord himself fasted in the wilderness for the same number of days [cf. [Matt 4:2](#)], in order that he might leave behind for us solemn days of fasting. Instead, we are saying that it does no good to carry around an empty belly while doing other things that are displeasing to God, and what is more, to pass over other things, to wear gloomy faces in order to appear to men to be fasting, as ones who, because they receive glory in the present, are excluded from the kingdom of God, because they have received their reward [cf. [Matt 6:16](#)]. And this is why the Apostle says that without the love of God that is in the heart’s good conscience, he would shed his blood in vain, even if he should hand over his body to martyrdom, in order to burn, or boast [cf. [1 Cor 13:3](#)]<sup>—</sup>for both readings are attested in the manuscripts.

17. ([58:4c–5](#)) *Do not fast as [you have done] until this day, to make your cry to be heard on high. (5) Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, for a man to afflict his soul for a day? Is this it, to wind his head about like a circle, and to spread sackcloth (saccum) and ashes? Will you call this a fast, and a day acceptable to the Lord?* Septuagint: “Why do you fast to me as [you do] today, to make your voice to be heard in crying? (5) I have not chosen this kind of fast, nor a day for a man to humble his soul. Neither if you should bend down your neck like a circle, and spread under [you] sackcloth (*cilicium*) and ashes, neither thus shall you call a fast acceptable.”

Lest he should seem to be reproving fasting, which he himself had commanded, he shows how one should fast. Or rather, before he shows what follows, he instructs them in what they should turn away from. He says, *to make your cry to be heard on high*. Do not announce your cry as a prayer, praying in the synagogues and on the street corners, that you may be seen by men [cf. [Matt 6:5](#)]; do not lift up your “voice” *on high*, and declare your fasting and works together with the Pharisee who is condemned by the Lord’s judgment [cf. [Luke 18:12](#)]. Because of these things, the Lord rejects the prayer of the Pharisees, and teaches his disciples how they ought to pray: with the room of their own heart closed [cf. [Matt 6:6](#)],<sup>117</sup> in order that they may speak to God alone, who can hear the silence of their heart, that they may cry out in their hearts, “Abba, Father” [[Rom 8:15](#)]. They are not to wear gloomy faces, but to wash them with water and to anoint their head with oil [cf. [Matt 6:16–17](#)]. The Evangelist John also writes about this, “And you have an anointing from the holy one” [[1 John 2:20](#)], by which they too may

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (358, 1–).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (358, 17–3).

become holy when they have been anointed.

For God does not seek *affliction* alone, and the “humiliation of the soul” through bodily injury, so that the body is *wound like a circle* and submits its “neck” and walks on in grief [cf. [Isa 57:17](#)], in accordance with what is said in the Psalms, “I am afflicted and *bent down* unto the end, all day I walked on in grief” [[Ps 38:8](#)]. Nor does he seek that one should put on *sackcloth* and sleep in *ashes*, which we read about David [cf. [2 Sam 3:31](#)] and Ahab [[1 Kgs 21:27](#)]. Instead, together with those things, one should do those things that follow. In any case, even the Apostle says that he frequently fasts [cf. [2 Cor 6:5](#); [11:27](#)]; moreover, the Lord teaches that when the bridegroom has been taken away from his disciples, they shall fast [cf. [Matt 9:15](#)]. And in the Psalms, the penitent man says, “I have eaten ashes as my bread, and mingled my drink with weeping” [[Ps 102:9](#)], and, “When they troubled me, I put on sackcloth (*cilicio*)” [[Ps 35:13](#)]. From this we learn that in the first place, those things that the Lord wills must be done, but the other things should not be neglected.

18. ([58:6–7](#)) *Is not this rather the fast that I have chosen? Loose the bands of impiety, undo the little bundles that oppress, let those who are broken go free, and break asunder every burden. (7) Break your bread with the hungry, and bring the needy and the homeless into a house. When you shall see one naked, cover him, and despise not your own flesh.* Septuagint: “I have not chosen such a fast, says the Lord; but loose every little band of iniquity, undo the knots of hard securities, let those who are broken go free in remission, and cancel every unjust account (*scripturam*). (7) Break your bread with the hungry, and bring the unsheltered poor into your house. If you see one naked, cover him, and despise not the household members of your own seed.”

After he has taught what sort of fasting he disapproves of, he shows what sort he gladly welcomes. He says, *Loose the bands of impiety, undo the little bundles that oppress*, or, as the Septuagint has translated more clearly, “the knots of hard securities,” which our own people, deceived by the ambiguity of the word, that is, συναλλαγμάτων, translated as “exchanges” instead of “handwritten documents.” But it means *little bundles* of papers in which are contained the false charges of moneylenders, and by which the poor are *oppressed* by debt. This indeed is the greatest reason for rebellion in all cities. And this is why the Roman people occupy the nearby mountains, and [there is] a cancellation of debts, which the Greeks call χρεων αποκοπας.<sup>118</sup> The prophet is not instructing, therefore, that no one demand back what is owed, especially what he has given justly and demanded back justly; otherwise he would be proclaiming rebellion against the tribune. But when there is an unjust “security,” when a poor man is oppressed by a malicious charge, there the *little bundles* of “securities” and all the bonds of “iniquity” must be shattered.

Or at any rate, one should say this: that the discourse is about fasting, and fasting brings affliction and humiliation to the soul, but affliction of body is a prayer for pardon of one’s sins. Holy Scripture teaches that we should forgive our debtors, so that the heavenly Father may also forgive us our debts [cf. [Matt 6:14](#)]. Ancient history narrates that in the seventh, or fiftieth year of remission, which is the true jubilee [cf. [Lev 25:4](#), [10](#)], all property reverts to the owners, and the original liberty is given back to slaves, and all accounts, which they commonly call

<sup>118</sup> Jerome seems to be reflecting on current events here.

“securities,” become null and void [cf. [Lev 25:13, 28](#)]. But if this is commanded under the law, how much more under the gospel, when all things that are good are doubled, and we are commanded not to gouge out an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth, but to offer our cheek to the one who slaps [cf. [Matt 5:38–39](#)]. And what is more, in order that we may know that what we have said above, “You extort from all your debtors,” is written about creditors, and it is joined more clearly concerning debtors, *Let those who are broken go free*, that is: those who are broken by poverty, whom want has afflicted, leave them free to beg, and *break asunder every burden* by which they are oppressed. The Septuagint has translated this more clearly: “And cancel every unjust account (*scripturam*),” which Symmachus translated, “And shatter every false security.”

But someone could possibly say, “I have no debtors. What should I do in order that my fasting is accepted?” It follows, *Break your bread with the hungry*. Not many loaves of bread, lest you should plead your poverty as an excuse, but one loaf of bread. Not even the whole thing, but a piece of bread that you would have eaten if you were not fasting, so that your fast does not fatten his wallet but satisfies his soul. And he has nicely added *your*, lest you should give your alms by stealing from others. “For the redemption of the soul is a man’s own wealth” [[Prov 13:8](#)]; and in another place, “Honor the Lord out of your just labors” [[Prov 3:9](#)]. Of course, if you do not have bread, and there is a very large number of hungry people, give from that which you will suffer no harm, in which there are no expenses. “Bring the unsheltered poor into your house,” or as the Hebrew reads, *into a house*, so that if you do not have your own, you may bring him to a little inn which is either rented for a fee, or which you possess for the purpose of showing kindness. “If you see one naked, cover him.” This is what the Lord also said in the Gospel: “He who has two tunics, let him give one to the one who does not have one” [[Luke 3:11](#)]. For he has not commanded that one of them be torn up and shared, which many do for the sake of popular favor, but that the second one not be kept, increasing the precepts of justice, so that he would say that even the cup of cold water that has been extended has its reward [cf. [Matt 10:42](#)].<sup>119</sup>

He says, *And despise not your own flesh*. For every human being is our flesh, and according to the parable in the Gospel about the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and was wounded by thieves, that man is called a neighbor who showed kindness [cf. [Luke 10:36–37](#)]. Or at the least, in accordance with the Septuagint, which said, “And despise not the household members of your own seed,” we should understand “household members of seed” as those of whom the Apostle also teaches that alms must be given to all, “but especially to the household members of faith” [[Gal 6:10](#)].<sup>220</sup> For they are our *flesh* and our “seed” who are born with us from one parent. And the Savior extended his hand to them, saying, “My mother and my brothers are those who do the will of my Father” [[Matt 12:49–50](#)]. And what is more, that we may know that there is one God of both the New and the Old Instrument, the Lord also says the same things in the Gospel about those who shall stand on his right on the day of judgment: “Come, you blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I

<sup>119</sup> This interesting remark recalls the story of St. Martin dividing his cloak with the beggar.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 47 (359, 13–6).

was sick and in prison, and you came to me; a stranger and you brought me into your home, and naked and you clothed me” [[Matt 25:34–36](#)]. And when they say out of humility that they had done nothing for the Lord and Savior [cf. [Matt 25:37–39](#)], he responded, “When you did it for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me” [[Matt 25:40](#)].

Tropologically we can say this. Let the one who fasts from all evils and wants his fasting to be accepted not merely turn away from evil, but let him also do good [cf. [Ps 37:27](#)]. Let him “loose every band of iniquity,” by which all simple believers are fastened by the deceits of the heretics, and the *στραγγαλιας*, that is, the “knots (*obligationes*) of hard” dealings. The prophet also points this out in the Psalm, when he says, “But those who turn aside to crooked ways (*obligationes*) the Lord will lead away with the workers of iniquity” [[Ps 125:5](#)]. For all who are bound by the “bands” of the heretics turn aside from the Lord and are led like an ox to the slaughter [cf. [Prov 7:22](#)], and they choose and exchange falsehood for truth. Therefore, may the man of the church let men of this sort, who are “broken” by the judgment, “go free” and be released, and may he “loose” and *break asunder* “every account (*scripturam*)” of the heretics, of whom this same prophet says, “Woe to those who write (*scribunt*) iniquity; for the scribes write evil, taking away judgment from the poor of my people” [[Isa 10:1–2](#)]. May they not hold on to any of the simple people who have been caught in their snares.

And when he has done this, let him *break* his own *bread* of church doctrine *with the hungry*, which the Lord also did, distributing the broken loaves to the apostles, which he left behind for them in seven plaited baskets and in twelve baskets [cf. [Matt 14:19–20](#); [15:36–37](#)], not intact, as they were kept under the law [cf. [1 Chr 16:3](#)], but crushed and broken under the gospel, so that they had what was given to the “poor.” May he “bring” them “into the house” of the church, those who do not have the warmth of the faith, but are shivering outside the church with the cold of unbelief and who are both without resources and strangers. And may he “cover” him with the garment of incorruption, so that having been clothed with the tunic of Christ, they may not remain among the tombs; for we read about one who was possessed by a legion of demons who dwelled “naked” among the monuments of the dead [cf. [Mark 5:2–9](#)]. And when you have done these things, he says, and your generosity has been set forth to all, in a special way “despise not the household members” of faith [cf. [Gal 6:10](#)].

19. ([58:8–9a](#)) *Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your healing shall speedily arise, and your justice shall go before your face, and the glory of the Lord shall gather you up.* (9) *Then shall you call, and the Lord shall hear; you shall cry, and he shall say, Behold, I am here.* Septuagint: “Then shall your morning light break forth, and your healings shall speedily arise, and your justice shall go before you, and the glory of God shall surround you. (9) Then shall you cry, and God shall hear you; while you are still speaking, he will say ‘Behold, I am here.’ ”

When you will have stopped doing those things that the previous discourse has described, and you do these things of which we have now spoken, then your fasting will be acceptable, and “your morning light will break forth,” namely the sun of justice of which Malachi the prophet speaks under the persona of God the Father: “The sun of justice shall arise for you who fear my name, and *healing* is in his wings” [[Mal 4:2](#)]. The one who is called “sun” there is called “light” here. For as the morning’s light dissipates the darkness, so the “light” of the knowledge of truth



puts to flight all errors.

He says, "And your healings shall speedily arise." Aquila expressed this word for word and recorded, "And the scar of your wound will speedily be covered," namely, so that the wounds of our sins would be closed by the rising of the sun of justice, when the scar has been "speedily" covered. In place of what the Septuagint translated as  $\tau\alpha\ \iota\alpha\mu\alpha\tau\alpha\ \sigma\omicron\upsilon$ , that is, "your healings," the Latin translators were led by the similarity of the term to record  $\iota\mu\alpha\tau\iota\alpha$ , that is, "clothing." This is why many have been deceived by this mistaken translation and use this testimony to prove the resurrection of the body, namely whereby they think that the body that rises on the day of resurrection is to be understood as the "clothing" of the soul.

"And your justice," he says, "shall go before you," in accordance with what is said to Jacob: "Tomorrow my justice shall hear me" [[Gen 30:33](#)], and what is written shall be fulfilled: "Behold the man, and his works." "And the glory of God shall surround you" like very beautiful clothing, so that you are glorified both before God and before men. *Then shall you call, and the Lord shall hear; you shall cry, and he shall say, Behold, I am here*, not with his voice, but with his action, not as a response, but by his acts of kindness. This is proven also literally in the Gospel, when the leper says to the Lord, "If you are willing, you can cleanse me" [[Matt 8:2](#)], and the Lord answered, saying, "I am willing, be cleansed" [[Matt 8:3](#)].

20. ([58:9b-10](#)) *If you will take away the chain out of your midst, and cease to stretch out the finger, and to speak that which does not profit; (10) when you shall pour out your soul to the hungry, and shall replenish the afflicted soul, then shall your light (lux) rise up in darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday.* Septuagint: "If you will take away from yourself the band, and the ordination (*ordinationem*), and murmuring speech, (10) and [if] you give your bread to the hungry from your heart, and satisfy the humbled soul, then shall your light (*lumen*) rise up in darkness, and your darkness shall be as noonday."

In the present section the Hebrew word *mota* occurs twice. It is translated in Jeremiah as "collar of iron" [cf. [Jer 28:13](#)]. For in the passage where above we have spoken in accordance with the Septuagint, "Undo the knots of the hard exchanges" [[Isa 58:6](#)], we should know that for the single word *mota* they recorded "hard securities," which Aquila translated as "error," Symmachus as "turning aside," Theodotion as  $\kappa\lambda\upsilon\sigma\omicron\nu$ , that is, "collar." On the other hand, in the present passage, where we have rendered, *If you will take away the chain out of your midst*, and the Septuagint translated *chain* as  $\sigma\upsilon\nu\delta\epsilon\sigma\mu\omicron\nu$ , that is, "band" or "fetter," Aquila translated it as "error," as he did above; Symmachus yielded to what was known from Theodotion and recorded "collar." Let this be said concerning the differences in the translations.

In any case, the meaning is thus joined with what comes above. A morning *light* shall rise for you, and your healings shall speedily arise, and your justice shall go before you [cf. [Isa 58:8](#)], and the glory of the Lord shall crown you; and at once he will hear the one who prays, and he shall reveal his presence, at least in this way, if you also add these works as well to the things above, that you remove from yourself the knot and the *chain* by which your soul is bound. Peter also spoke of this to Simon: "I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the knot of iniquity" [[Acts 8:23](#)]; and Paul was pained when he saw that the city of Athens was tied up by idolatry [cf. [Acts 17:16](#)]; for "each one is fastened with the cords of his sins" [[Prov 5:22](#)]. David also prayed in the Psalm about these chains of the soul, "Cleanse me from my secrets, O Lord, and spare

your servant from foreign things” [Ps 19:12–13]. It is difficult to find someone who is not held fast by these *chains*. Seldom is a soul found that does not have this very heavy collar wrapped around its neck, pressing him down to earthly works, so that he does not look up to heaven, but sees the earth. This is even reported about the woman in the Gospel whom Satan had kept bound for eighteen years so that she was bent down and did not see heavenly things [cf. [Luke 13:11, 16](#)].

Therefore, *if you will take away this chain from the midst of your heart*, and shatter chains of this sort, and the *chirotoniam* (stretching forth of the hands), which the three other translators rendered in unison as “extended finger,” so that not only do you not think about and do evils, but you do not even detract from your neighbor and point out individuals with your finger, as it were, and *speak what does not profit* your soul, taking into consideration not your evils, but the errors of others, you shall receive what the subsequent discourse below connects to this. Very many of our people thus understand  $\chi\epsilon\iota\rho\tau\omicron\nu\iota\alpha\nu$ , that is, ordination of clerics, which is carried out not merely by the calling down of the voice but by the laying on of hands, namely, as we have made fun of in respect to some, to prevent a secret imprecation from ordaining ignorant clerics; thus do they understand the testimony of Paul, when he wrote to Timothy, “Do not lay hands on anyone quickly, and do not share in the sins of strangers” [1 Tim 5:22]. For it is no trivial sin to cast pearls before swine and to give what is holy to dogs [cf. [Matt 7:6](#)], and to ordain to clerical office not holy persons and those who are most learned in the law of God, but to bestow ordination upon their own sycophants and to those who attend to worthless duties; and what is more disgraceful than this, to ordain at the request of little old women. In this, one should consider the wisdom of the Apostle of Christ speaking in himself [cf. [2 Cor 13:3](#)]. In order to show the danger involved in ordination, he joined to it the torments of those who sin: “Do not share in the sins of others” [1 Tim 5:22]. Therefore just as in the ordinations of evil men, he who has appointed such men is a sharer in their sins, so in the ordination of holy men, he who has chosen good men is a sharer in their justice.

Then follows, “and murmuring speech,” understand  $\alpha\pi\omicron\ \kappa\omicron\iota\nu\omicron\nu$  (from the context), “if you shall remove from yourself.” It is “murmuring speech” when God speaks in opposition to us, “Let the murmuring of this people cease from me, and they shall not die” [Num 17:10 (25)], and we refer our sins to God “to excuse the excuses for our sins” [Ps 141:4], and we say, “Bodily passion overcame me, the enticements of youth defeated me, I was created this way by God, poverty compelled me to steal.” And so, if we shall not do these things that have been said, and we shall do those things that must be said, so that, as above, we do not give our bread to the hungry, [cf. [Isa 58:7](#)], but our soul, so that we help him in whatever way we can; and we distribute not, as it were, out of grief and under compulsion, but from the heart, receiving rather than giving a benefit—“for God loves a cheerful giver” [2 Cor 9:7]; so that we do not partially revivify the “hungry” or *afflicted* soul, but “satisfy” it; and we grieve with those who grieve, and we mourn with those who mourn [cf. [Rom 12:5](#)]; then our *light shall rise in the darkness*, he who says, “I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not abide in darkness, but have the light of life” [John 12:46]. The eye is the lamp of our body [cf. [Matt 6:22](#)], which if it will be simple, our whole body will be lit; but if that which ought to be light is turned to darkness, then the whole body shall be dark, and it shall be said to

us, "If the light which is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" [[Matt 6:23](#)]. Let us consider by what great virtues we may attain to the *light* of God, so that our *darkness* may be turned to *midday*, and we may say with the bride, "Where are you tending the flock, where do you have them lie down at midday?" [[Song 1:7](#)].

21. ([58:11](#)) *And the Lord will give you rest always, and will fill your soul with splendors, and deliver your bones, and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a fountain of waters whose waters shall not fail.* Septuagint: "And your God shall be with you always, and you shall be filled just as your soul desires, and your bones shall be made fat, and shall be as an intoxicated garden, and as a fountain from which the water shall not fail." What was added to the Alexandrian copies at the beginning of this section is not found in the Hebrew: "And my praise shall still be among you always," and at the end: "and your bones shall rise like grass and shall be made fat and shall possess for an inheritance for all generations." Moreover, it is not even found in the corrected and authentic copies of the Septuagint; this is why it had to be marked in front with an obelus.

He says, When the darkness of your heart is dissipated by the risen light, and in place of palpable night the midday shall appear [cf. [Isa 58:10](#)], then you shall *always* have God indwelling, who would *fill your soul with splendors*, of which it is said in the Psalm, "With you is the beginning in the day of your power, in the splendors of the holy ones I have begotten you from the womb before the dawn (*Luciferum*)" [[Ps 110:3](#)]; or, you will be satisfied with everything that "your soul desires," since even you yourself have filled the hungry soul, and you will be able to say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, who fills your desire with good things" [[Ps 103:2, 5](#)]; and *your bones* shall be *delivered* from destruction and everlasting fire, or "they shall be made fat," so that they receive their original thickness, [bones] that had become thinner by the famine of the word of the Lord [cf. [Amos 8:11](#)]. We can indeed understand this both literally, of the resurrection of those bodies that will fall, and of the powers of the soul, which the saint signifies when he says in the Psalm, "All my bones shall say, 'Lord, who is like you?' " [[Ps 35:10](#)]. It is also written about them in the Proverbs, "A good report fattens the bones" [[Prov 15:30](#)], and to which rewards are promised, "There will be healing to your body, and a cure to your bones" [[Prov 3:8](#)]. Again, it is written of them, "The Lord guards all their bones; not one of them shall be broken" [[Ps 34:20](#)]. On the other hand, the one who is a sinner has both lost the strength of his soul, and laments his power, and says, "Our bones have been scattered near the underworld" [[Ps 141:7](#)]. For we cannot believe that the bones of sinners would not be *in* the underworld, but *near* the underworld, and that "a good report fattens the bones" [[Prov 15:30](#)], [a report] which does not pertain to the fat of the body.

Then follows, *And you shall be*, or "it shall be," that is, either you or your soul, *like a watered garden*, of which it is written, "A fountain came forth and watered the whole surface of paradise" [[Gen 2:6](#)], for which [word ("paradise")] the Hebrew reads "garden." We can say that this *fountain* is none other than him to whom it is said, "With you there is a fountain of life" [[Ps 36:9](#)], who waters his church unceasingly and the hearts of all believers.

22. ([58:12](#)) *And the deserts of the ages shall be built in you, you shall raise up the foundations of generation and generation, and you shall be called the repairer of the fences, turning the paths into rest.* Septuagint: "And the deserts from the age shall be built for you, and

your foundations shall be eternal for generations and generations, and you shall be called a repairer of the stone wall, and you shall cause your paths between to rest.”

He says, Not only “shall your light rise up in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday, and the Lord shall give rest to you always, and you shall be as a watered garden” [[Isa 58:10–11](#)] and so on, but those places that had been *deserts* for a long time *shall be built in you*, and “foundations” that shall continue for many “generations” shall be laid for your shrines. Consequently, either *you yourself shall be called the repairer of the fences* and of “stone walls,” or the one who would be *the repairer of the fences* arises in you and *turns aside the paths into rest*, or, according to the Septuagint, he “causes the rough footpaths between to rest.”

The Jews and the friends only of the killing letter [cf. [2 Cor 3:6](#)] apply these things to the restoration of the cities of Palestine, and claim either that they were accomplished under Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, or shall be done in the final time period, and that the deepest foundations must be laid for the restoration of Jerusalem and of the cities around it, and walls must be built so high that no enemy is able to enter, and the entrance of all enemies into them is prevented [cf. [Rev 21:27](#)].

But we are following the progression of the explanation that we have begun, and say that places that had been *deserts* among the Jews are *built in* the church, not for a brief period of time, but forever; and its *foundations* must *rise up* out of both peoples, that is, in two “generations”—this is why the Apostle said, “Like a wise builder I laid the foundation, someone else is building upon it, but each one should see to what he builds upon it” [[1 Cor 3:10](#)]; and in another passage, “We are God’s field, God’s building” [[1 Cor 3:9](#)], and again, “Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” [[Eph 2:20](#)]—and she, or he who is born in her, must be called *repairer of the fences*. We read about this in the Psalm, “A man was born in her, and the Most High himself has founded her” [[Ps 87:5](#)].

Scripture records that these *fences* or “stone walls”—for the Greek word φραγμους [hedges] signifies this—are put around a field and vineyards: “You have transplanted a vine out of Egypt, you have cast out nations and planted it” [[Ps 80:8](#)], and a little later: “Why did you break down its *stone wall* and all who pass by on the road pluck it?” [[Ps 80:12](#)]. And in this same prophet, it says, “The beloved had a vineyard” [[Isa 5:1](#)] which he described with beautiful language, and added, “I built a tower and put a *stone wall* around it” [[Isa 5:2](#)]. According to Ecclesiastes, a serpent shall bite the one who breaks down this wall [cf. [Eccl 10:8](#)]. The reason it has been placed around it is to prohibit access to God’s vineyard by all wild beasts. Now this is the “crooked serpent” [[Isa 27:1](#)] that deceived Eve in paradise [cf. [2 Cor 11:3](#); [1 Tim 2:14](#)], who, because she had destroyed the precepts of God, was for that reason exposed to its bites, and she hears from the Lord, “You shall watch for his head, and he shall watch for your heel” [[Gen 3:15](#)].

In this passage we have translated according to the Septuagint in order not to appear to be innovating, since the testimony is widespread, *and you shall be called the repairer of the fences*. The Hebrew reads, “And *goder feres* shall be called in you,” which Aquila translated ΠΕΡΙ ΦΡΑΚΤΗΣ ΔΙΑΚΟΠΗΣ, the sense of which we can express as, “one who sets himself in opposition to the fierce anger of God.” After all, Symmachus translated it as “a wall that is set against one who kills.” Moses was a man of that sort, as were Aaron and Samuel, who resisted

the Lord's anger and, as it were, set a limit to his indignation by building a wall. This is also said to Jeremiah, lest he meet the Lord, lest he should want to resist his anger and by his prayers to confine his indignation just as if he were some sort of wall [cf. [Jer 7:16](#)]; and it is said to Moses, as if the Lord were being held fast by him. The Lord says, "Let me be and I shall strike this people" [[Exod 32:10](#)]. Therefore this sort of "repairer of stone walls," and of walls, and of *fences* shall *turn the paths into rest*, so that the wrath of God does not rage furiously, but the Lord may be placated with them and all the "paths" of his indignation might "rest."

23. ([58:13](#)) *If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your own will (voluntatem) on my holy day, and call the Sabbath delightful, holy, of the Lord and glorious, and you glorify him, while you do not do your own ways, and your own will shall not be found, to speak words.* Septuagint: "If you turn away your foot on the Sabbaths, so as not to do your pleasures (*voluntates*) on the holy day, and shall call the Sabbaths delightful, holy to the Lord, you shall not lift up your foot to work, nor speak a word in anger out of your mouth."

To the one to whom he had said above, "Is not this rather the fasting that I have chosen, loose the bands of impiety, undo the little bundles that oppress" [[Isa 58:6](#)], and so on, even now he promises rewards, if he should be willing to do the things that follow, namely that he should keep his "foot" in check "on the Sabbaths," that he should not "do his own pleasures," and defile the Lord's holy day by his own will. In the law, it is commanded that we should not do servile work on the Sabbath, that we should not kindle a fire [cf. [Exod 35:3](#)], that we should stay in one place [cf. [Exod 16:29](#)], that we should do only works that pertain to the salvation of the soul. But if we take this literally, it simply cannot be fulfilled. For who could do this: stay still day and night and not leave from one place on the Sabbath, or rather, not even move oneself slightly, and if you do, you become a transgressor of the law?

Therefore, on the basis of a single command, which is impossible according to the letter, we are compelled to understand the others as well spiritually. Accordingly, let us do no servile work and lose the freedom of soul—"for he who commits sins is a slave of sin" [[John 8:34](#)]. Let us carry no burden on the Sabbath [cf. [Jer 17:21](#)], of the sort that he was carrying, who says, "My iniquities have risen over my head, as a heavy burden they have weighed down upon me" [[Ps 38:4](#)], lest iniquity that sits upon a talent of lead [cf. [Zech 5:7–8](#)] should have authority within us, lest bodily pleasure and lust should set us on fire. "For [they are] all adulterers, their hearts [are] like an oven" [[Hos 7:4](#)], and the devil's arrows have been ignited [cf. [Eph 6:14](#)], "so that they shoot in the dark at the upright in heart" [[Ps 11:2](#)].

We are also commanded not to look back after we have put our hand to the plow [cf. [Luke 9:62](#)], that we who have climbed up to the top of our houses should not want to go down to take the clothing of the world [cf. [Matt 24:17–18](#)], but that we should hear with Moses: "But you, stand here with me" [[Exod 34:2](#)]. And let us sit with the Lord upon the well [cf. [John 4:6](#)], we who are weary on the road of this world, thirsting for the conversion of the Samaritan woman and for the salvation of those who are astray, that we may listen to the Apostle as he gives the warning, "Stand firm and immovable" [[1 Cor 15:58](#)]. May we not experience what Judas the traitor experienced, who lost the place of his ministry [cf. [Acts 1:25](#)] and became a transgressor. May we always remember his pronouncement: "If the spirit of one having authority should rise up upon you, do not lose your place" [[Eccl 10:4](#)]. He who rests in this way

on the Sabbath and washes his own hands among the innocent [cf. [Ps 26:6](#)], and does not move his “foot” to “do his own pleasures,” that man celebrates the Lord’s “delightful Sabbaths.”

According to the epistle that is written to the Hebrews, this Sabbath rest is promised to us in the heavens [cf. [Heb 4:9–11](#)], and glory is being prepared [cf. [2 Cor 4:17](#)], provided that we do not *do* our ways on the Sabbath, and our *will is not found*, so that we *speak words*, namely that we sin neither in word nor in deed. In any case, if these things are being prohibited merely on the Sabbath, then freedom to transgress is granted to us on the other six days. But if it is foolish to believe such a thing, it follows that that Sabbath, which means “rest,” is for the faithful at all times, while they do not “do the pleasures” of the flesh but of the spirit. But what is joined according to the Septuagint, “in anger out of your mouth,” is not found in the Hebrew.

Moreover, in the Gospel the Savior challenges us to celebrate this Sabbath with all festivity, when he says, “Come to me, all who labor and are burdened down, and I shall give you rest” [[Matt 11:28](#)]; for this is what  $\alpha\nu\alpha\pi\upsilon\sigma\omega$   $\upsilon\mu\omicron\varsigma$  means, namely, that by laying aside the burdens of sins, we should keep the Sabbath in Christ and say, “He has set my *feet* upon the rock” [[Ps 40:2](#)]; and let us avoid what the saint says nearly happened: “But my *feet* were almost moved” [[Ps 73:2](#)].

24. ([58:14](#)) *Then shall you be delighted in the Lord, and I will lift you up above the high places of the earth, and will feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.* Septuagint: “And you shall trust in the Lord, and he shall raise you up to the good things of the earth, and he will feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

When you are called delightful Sabbaths and you do not move your foot on the Sabbath to do servile work [cf. [Isa 58:13](#)], and you do not speak a word, that is, when you are always silent and fulfill what is commanded, “Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit” [[Ps 34:13](#)], then *you shall be delighted in the Lord* and shall see that this has been fulfilled in you: “Take delight in the Lord, and he shall give you the requests of your heart” [[Ps 37:4](#)]; or “you shall trust in the Lord,” in accordance with what is written: “Blessed is he who trusts in the Lord” [[Prov 16:20](#)], and in Jeremiah: “Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and the Lord shall be his hope” [[Jer 17:7](#)], and elsewhere: “It is better (*bonum*) to trust in the Lord, than to trust in man” [[Ps 118:8](#)].

And the Lord *will lift* and “raise you up” *above the high places* and also “the good things” *of the earth*. For the *earth* of the meek [cf. [Matt 5:5](#)] and the *land* of the living [cf. [Ps 27:13](#)] is not down below but up above. After all, it is said to Lot, who was fleeing from the valley of Sodom and Gomorrah, “Save yourself on the mountain” [[Gen 19:17](#)]; after he reached it, the sun rose upon it in Zoar (*Segor*) [cf. [Gen 19:23](#)]. Of this *earth* the Lord was speaking, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth” [[Matt 5:5](#)], and many other passages that we have repeatedly employed, of which there is the following: “Honor your father and mother, and you shall live long upon the *earth* which the Lord your God shall give you” [[Exod 20:12](#)].

This simply cannot stand according to the letter; for many honor their parents, and die young, and others murder their parents and yet live for a long time. But that we may know more certainly that this *earth* is on high, we shall recall briefly the thirty-sixth Psalm, in which it is written, “The meek shall possess the *earth* and shall take delight in an abundance of peace”



[[Ps 37:11](#)]. After this, it is added, “Wait upon the Lord and keep his ways, and he will lift you up, so that you may possess the *earth*” [[Ps 37:34](#)]. It is sung of this in another passage, “The just shall possess the *earth* and shall dwell upon it forever” [[Ps 37:29](#)]. This too is quite impossible. For if heaven and *earth* shall pass away [cf. [Matt 24:35](#)], surely meaning this *earth* that we inhabit, how shall the just dwell upon it forever? From this we learn that there is another *earth* that located on high.

After this he adds, *And I will feed you*, or “the Lord will feed you” *with the inheritance of Jacob your father*. For just as the one who has faith is called a son of Abraham [cf. [Gal 3:7](#)], so the one who trips up (*supplantat*) his vices and sins is called a son of Jacob, and anyone who is an imitator of someone’s virtue is also called a son of that person. Now “the good places of the earth,” which is situated on high, where the son of Jacob is filled, must be interpreted as those places “that neither eye has seen nor ear heard, nor have they ascended into the heart of man” [[1 Cor 2:9](#)].<sup>221</sup> It is written about this in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “For those who say these things show that they seek a country, and truly if they had sought that one from whence they had come forth, they would have had time to return to it; but now they desire a better country, that is, the heavenly Jerusalem” [[Heb 11:14–16](#)].

From this we learn that the fable of the thousand years must be repudiated, in which marriage is again promised and food and involvement in the earthly life. For if “in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but they shall be like angels” [[Matt 22:30](#)], because they are sons of the resurrection [cf. [Luke 20:36](#)], and the Apostle says of the belly and food, “Food for the belly, and the belly for food, but God shall destroy them both” [[1 Cor 6:13](#)], how is it that we should seek in the incorruptible, spiritual, and immortal body the vices of our original mortal and corrupt flesh?<sup>222</sup> And we say this not to deny the substance of the glorified body, but in order to take away completely the former works in those who are like angels. In any case, even while we are still in this body, we imitate angelic virtues by means of fasting, self-control, and perpetual chastity, and yet we do not let go of the substance of the bodies.

Let us believe that all these things are coming; let us know that they have been promised by God, whose *mouth has spoken*. Consequently, just as his work is signified by hands, movement by feet, generation by belly, and hearing and sight by ears and eyes, so by *mouth* we should understand God’s speech.

25. ([59:1–2](#)) *Behold, the hand of the Lord has not been shortened that it cannot save, neither has his ear been made heavy that it cannot hear, (2) but your iniquities have divided between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he should not hear.* Septuagint: “Has the hand of the Lord no power to save, or has his ear been made heavy, so that he should not hear? (2) But your sins separate between you and God, and because of your sins he has turned away his face from you, so as not to have mercy.”

I was able to accomplish even previously the things that I have said that I shall now do: “You shall trust in the Lord, and he will lift you up to the good things of the earth and will feed you with the inheritance of Jacob your father” [[Isa 58:14](#)]. For my *hand has not been shortened* and contracted, so that I *cannot* extend it to deliver my people; nor do I have deaf ears, so that I

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (361, 14–5).

<sup>222</sup> Jerome distorts Christian millennial doctrine here. See n. at [15.7](#).

*cannot hear*. From this it is shown that the ears of the Lord, which listen to the just and do not listen to sinners, are not like our ears, which hear a voice that has gone forth equally, whether it be that of a just or unjust man.

“But your sins,” he says, like some sort of wall that has been set up in between, *divide you and God*.<sup>223</sup> This is why the Savior, in his passion, “made the two one, and breaking down the middle wall of the enclosure (*maceriae*), destroyed the enmity in his flesh” [Eph 2:14], so that the blood (*sanguis*) of Christ united those whom the wall of sins had divided. He opened the gates to paradise, which had been closed for a long time, and he extinguished the fiery sword [cf. Gen 3:24] with his own blood (*cruore*), so that the thief heard, “Today you shall be with me in paradise” [Luke 23:43].

And as for what follows, “and because of your sins,” I “have turned away my face from you,” that I *should not hear*, or that I “should not have mercy,” this shows that he could not bear the stench of their “sins” and *iniquities*, but he “turned away his face,” lest he should see their baseness and immediately be compelled to strike. This is why the sinner who longs to see the countenance of the Lord says in the Psalm, “How long, O Lord, do you forget me unto the end, how long do you turn away your face from me?” [Ps 13:1]; and elsewhere, “Show your face, and we shall be saved” [Ps 80:3].

26. (59:3–4b) *For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, and your tongue utters iniquity. (4) There is no one who calls upon justice, neither is there anyone who judges truly, but they trust in nothing and speak vanities.* Septuagint: “For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with sins; your lips are defiled with iniquity, and your tongue meditates upon injustice. (4) None speaks just things, neither is there a just judgment; they trust in vain things and they speak empty things.”

He now expounds in detail the iniquities and sins that he had identified in a general way up above. And one should notice that he does not bring up idolatry to them, by which they were held fast during the time of Isaiah, but the shedding of blood, of which he had already earlier said, “The just man perishes, and no one considers, and just men are taken away, and no one understands in his heart; for the just man has been removed out of the way of iniquity, his burial shall be in peace, he shall be removed out of the way” [Isa 57:1–2].<sup>224</sup> And although they did not set their hands on the Lord and Savior, nevertheless in unison they shouted with the voice of impiety, “His blood [be] upon us and upon our children” [Matt 27:25]. They are culpable for his death, and they have *defiled hands*. The same prophet testifies about this, “If you shall lift up your hands to me, I shall not hear; for your hands are full of blood” [Isa 1:15].

Their *lips*, too, and their *tongue speak iniquity and lies*, so that they promise themselves the antichrist instead of Christ, *neither is there any-one* among the people *who calls upon justice and judges truth*, or as is found in the Hebrew, “faith,” namely, that by which he would believe in Christ; *but they trust in nothing and speak vanities*. This is why the Apostle commands us not to pay attention to Jewish fables and the commandments of men who have turned themselves away from the truth [cf. Titus 1:14]. For he truly *trusts in nothing* and follows *vanities*, in whom the Lord’s prediction is fulfilled: “I have come in the name of my Father, and you have not

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 48 (361, 32–62, 5).

<sup>224</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (362, 16–0).

received me; if someone else comes in his own name, will you receive him?" [John 5:43].

27. (59:4c–6a) *They have conceived labor, and brought forth iniquity, (5) they have broken the eggs of asps, and have woven webs of a spider. The one who shall eat of their eggs shall die, and that which is warmed shall break out into a basilisk. (6) Their webs shall not be for clothing, neither shall they cover themselves with their works.* Septuagint: "For they conceive trouble, and bring forth iniquity, (5) they have broken the eggs of asps, and weave a spider's web, and the one who wants to eat of their eggs, when he breaks it he will find it rotten, and in it there is a basilisk. (6) Their web shall not be for clothing, nor shall they cover themselves with their works."

Those who are waiting for the coming of the antichrist, and are not able to say, "We have conceived, O Lord, because of your fear, and have been in pain, and have brought forth, we have made the breath<sup>225</sup> of your salvation upon the earth" [Isa 26:17–18], rightly "conceive trouble and bring forth iniquity." Thus do they receive in *iniquity* the one for whom they search carefully by much *labor*. Of their father it is written, "He has conceived trouble and brought forth iniquity" [Ps 7:14]. They break and smash the *eggs of asps*, so that they may receive their venom into their mind, to whom it is said in the Gospel, "Serpents, brood of vipers" [Matt 23:33]. He has nicely recorded *eggs of asps* and of serpents, which are said first to "bring forth" eggs. And because they not only hold in reserve the venom of malice in their hearts, but they meditate on the law of the Lord day and night [cf. Ps 1:2], muttering old wives' tales [cf. 1 Tim 4:7], on that account it is said, "They weave a spider's web," in which they catch flies, gnats, and tiny creatures.<sup>226</sup> When by chance anything comes into it, it flies on as if through empty space.

*The one who shall eat of their eggs shall die*, it says, that is, the one who shall have given assent to their plans shall be immediately killed, just as Abel gave assent to Cain when he said, "Let us go out into the plain" [Gen 4:8]. Or, as the Septuagint has translated, "And the one who wants to eat of their eggs, when he smashes it he will find it rotten, and in it there is a basilisk." For the one who has been deceived by the first appearance thinks that they are the eggs of chickens and of other birds, the eating of which is harmless. If he breaks them before eating, by the smell he will immediately recognize the foulest stench, and what was *warmed* he will find to be a "basilisk," or according to Symmachus and Theodotion, an "asp"; but Aquila recorded "viper," which reads in Hebrew as *efee*. Therefore the one who listens to Judaic traditions will "want" to prepare himself for food dishes lasting a thousand years and to extend his hand to the food. He has been caught in the net by the enticements of the promises. If before he eats, that is, before he assents to the deadly words, he shall "want" first to consider what is said, to discuss each of the words, to investigate the rational account of them, immediately he shall "find" that the antichrist is being prepared in them. Therefore, according to the Hebrew, *the one who shall eat of their eggs shall die*, but according to the Septuagint, the one who "wants" first to "break" them and to quite carefully examine them and see what lies concealed, he shall "find" the foulest stench and the prince of all serpents, the devil lying hidden in their traditions.

And since he had said above, "They weave spider's webs," he sets forth the means by which the fabric of these webs is conducive. He says, Their *labor*, and their entire doctrine does not

<sup>225</sup> Or "pirit."

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 48 (362, 29–63, 8).

make the *clothing* of Christ, neither a cloak by which the soul's nakedness may be covered, but they sweat with vain *labor*, since the same prophet says, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; but in vain do they worship me, teaching the doctrines and precepts of men" [[Isa 29:13](#)].<sup>227</sup> By following those, they neglect God's law. And that we may know that *works* are indicated in the *webs*, he added, *Neither shall they cover themselves with their works*.

Some have discussed this passage as follows. They have *broken* or torn *the eggs of asps*, that is, they have abandoned the biting words of the prophets and composed self-flattering utterances of the false prophets. The one who eats of these shall be struck by a serpent and shall understand that words of falsehood have done him no good.

28. ([59:6b–8](#)) *Their works are unprofitable works, and the work of iniquity is in their hands. (7) Their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed innocent blood. Their thoughts are unprofitable thoughts; wasting and destruction (contritio) are in their ways. (8) They have not known the way of peace, and there is no judgment in their steps. Their paths have become crooked to them; everyone who treads on them knows no peace.* Septuagint: "For their works are works of iniquity, (7) and their feet run to wickedness, swift to shed innocent blood, and their thoughts also are thoughts of fools. Destruction (*contritio*) and misery are in their ways; (8) and the way of peace they have not known, neither is there judgment in their ways. For their paths by which they go are crooked, and they know not peace."

The reason they do not cover themselves with works [cf. [Isa 59:6a](#)] is because "their works are of iniquity." The Apostle names these "unfruitful" [cf. [Eph 5:11](#)], that is, having no fruit. And *their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed innocent blood*. For they practiced this also by killing their prophets. Stephen said to them, "For which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?" [[Acts 7:52](#)]. And the Lord said in the Gospel, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who have been sent to you" [[Matt 23:37](#)]. And again, "All the just blood that has been shed on the earth shall come upon you, from the blood of just Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you killed between the temple and the altar" [[Matt 23:35](#)]. This is also why above it is said to them, "For your hands are defiled with blood, and your tongue speaks iniquity" [[Isa 59:3](#)].<sup>228</sup> And from this meditation upon cruelty and blasphemy they arrived at the killing of the Lord, just as also Judas went by means of the way of greed to murder, or rather, sacrilege united with greed [cf. [John 12:6](#)].

As for what follows, "And their thoughts also are thoughts of fools, destruction (*contritio*) and unhappiness<sup>229</sup> are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known," and higher up, "Their feet are swift to shed blood," the Apostle has recorded to the Romans [cf. [Rom 3:15–17](#)], which many in their ignorance think has been taken from the thirteenth Psalm, lines that have been added to the common version<sup>330</sup> and are not found in the Hebrew.<sup>331</sup> We have spoken

<sup>227</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (363, 27–3).

<sup>228</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (364, 9–2).

<sup>229</sup> The lemma has "isery."

<sup>330</sup> The Old Latin.

<sup>331</sup> Cf. n. at [16.1](#).

about this in more detail at the beginning of this book.<sup>332</sup> But rightly have those who refused to receive its author “not known the way of peace.” “For he himself is our peace” [[Eph 2:14](#)], who says to the apostles, “My peace I give you, my peace I leave with you” [[John 14:27](#)]. And to Jerusalem, “If you knew what things are for your peace, since days shall come upon you and your enemies shall surround you with a rampart, and they shall besiege you, and they shall dash your children to the earth” [[Luke 19:42–44](#)]. But it is consistent that those who had not received “peace” do not have “judgment in their ways,” that judgment of which it was said above, “Behold my servant (*puer*) whom I have chosen, my beloved whom my soul has loved, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles” [[Isa 42:1](#)].<sup>333</sup>

Then follows, “Their ways are crooked,” not by nature but by their own will. For whatever is crooked and bent is twisted into perverseness from being straight. The entire doctrine of the Pharisees undermines the truth. The one who walks by it not only does not find “peace” but does not even “know” it, so that he would know what he ought to seek.

29. ([59:9–11](#)) *Therefore is judgment far from us, and justice does not overtake us. We waited for light, and behold darkness, brightness, and we have walked in the dark.* (10) *We have felt for the wall like blind men, and we have groped as if we had no eyes. We have stumbled at noonday as in darkness, we are in dark places as dead men.* (11) *We shall roar all of us like bears, and shall groan as meditating doves. We have waited for judgment, and there shall be none, for salvation, and it shall be far from us.* Septuagint: “Therefore has judgment departed from them, and justice does not overtake them. While they waited for light, darkness came upon them. While they waited for it, they walked in darkness; (10) they shall feel for the wall as blind men, and shall grope for it as if they had no eyes. They shall fall at noonday as at midnight, they shall groan as dying men, (11) they shall walk together as a bear and as a dove. We have waited for judgment, and there is none; salvation has departed far from us.”

After accusing the Jewish people under the persona of them, the prophet answered what the penitent ought to say, but only if they want to receive healing after being wounded. And I am surprised at why the Septuagint composed the oration as if the prophet is speaking *about* them, and not they responding to the words of the prophet. For in what follows, when they were overcome by the truth, they did the same thing, saying, “We have waited for judgment, and there is none; salvation has departed far from us.” “For our iniquity is great in your sight, and our sins have stood against us” [[Isa 59:12](#)] and so on. Everything is fulfilled in the present time period, then, *judgment is far* from the Jews, because it was announced to the Gentiles, *and justice does not overtake* them, the justice that has been embraced by the nations. They have *waited for light*, saying, “Send forth your light and your truth” [[Ps 43:3](#)], which had been promised to them by the prophets, and they were occupied by the *darkness* of error. They endured the *brightness*, and *walked in the dark*, feeling the Holy Scriptures as *blind men feel a wall*, seeking solely their wording and foliage, not the meaning and fruit that is contained in the letters.

Finally, he goes on to say, *We have stumbled*, or “we shall fall” *at noonday as in darkness, we are in dark places as dead men*. For when the *brightness* of the sun of justice [cf. [Mal 4:2](#)]

<sup>332</sup> Cf. [16.1](#).

<sup>333</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 48 (364, 13–5).

glows red in the whole world, they linger in the darkness, namely as those who have died in sin.

He says, *We shall roar all of us like bears, and shall groan as meditating doves*, so that they are equally both cruel and wretched, fierce and threatening toward the lowly and those who are subdued, quaking with fear and terrified before those who are mightier, at whom they shudder greatly like hawks. We read also in another passage, “as a she-bear whose cubs have been taken” [[2 Sam 17:8](#)].<sup>334</sup> Moreover, in Daniel the cruel kingdom in which there are three rows of teeth is compared with a very fierce bear [cf. [Dan 7:5](#)]. *And we shall groan as doves meditating* without the meaning and understanding of the Scriptures, just *meditating* on the words, which they chant from memory. But just as the doves, of which it is written, “Ephraim [was] as a dove that has no sense” [[Hos 7:11](#)], and in the Gospel the simplicity of doves is contrasted with the malice of serpents [cf. [Matt 10:16](#)], so in the present passage simplicity without prudence, which is near to folly, is shown in the mere act of *meditating* upon the words.

They shall *wait for judgment, and there shall be none, for salvation*—understand “they shall wait”—*and there shall be none*, because it has moved “far” to the Gentiles. Here one should take note that everything is being said of a future time period, so that what the Jews are presently enduring is being disclosed.

30. ([59:12–15b](#)) *For our iniquities are multiplied before you, and our sins have replied for us, for our wicked doings are with us, and we have known our iniquities* (13) *in sinning and lying against the Lord, and we have turned away so that we went not after our God, so that we spoke calumny and conceived transgression and we spoke from the heart words of falsehood.* (14) *And judgment has been turned away backward, and justice has stood far off, because truth has fallen down in the street, and equity could not come in.* (15) *And truth has been forgotten, and the one who departed from evil lay open to be a prey.* Septuagint: “For our iniquity is great before you, and our sins have risen up against us. For our iniquities are in us, and we have known our injustices. (13) We have acted impiously, and dealt falsely, and departed from our God, we have spoken unjust [words] and have been disobedient; we have conceived and meditated from our heart unjust words. (14) And we have departed from judgment, and justice has stood afar off, for truth has been consumed in their ways, and they could not pass by a straight path. (15) And truth has been taken away, and they have turned aside their mind from understanding.”

He is giving the reasons why they roared like bears and meditated like doves, waited for judgment, and there was none, for salvation, which passed to the Gentiles [cf. [Isa 59:11](#)]. He says that it was because *our iniquities are multiplied* “before you,” from which you had turned away your face for a long time, lest you should see them, lest you should strike, *and our sins have replied for us*, so that we have received what we deserved, and *our wicked doings are with us, and we have known* the *iniquities* that we perpetrated for a long time, thinking they were justice.

But what are these *iniquities*? *Sinning and lying against God*, or, as Aquila translated it in accordance with the Hebrew, “denying God,” which relates to the Savior. And they say, We have abandoned *our God*, saying, “We know that God spoke to Moses, but this man we do not know

<sup>334</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (365, 12–5).



where he is from" [[John 9:29](#)], *so that we spoke calumny*. "If this man were from God, he would not break the Sabbath" [[John 9:16](#)], and: "By Beelzebub the prince of demons he expels demons" [[Luke 11:15](#)]; and *transgression*, which is expressed more meaningfully in Greek as ΑΠΟΣΤΑΣΙΣ, when someone denies God and is exposed as a transgressor. *We have conceived and spoken from the heart words of falsehood*, despising the law of God and following the traditions of men [cf. [Matt 15:3](#)], which they call ΔΕΥΤΕΡΩΣΕΙΣ,<sup>335</sup> and which we have feigned in our heart.

*And judgment has been turned away backward, and justice has stood far off*. "For what share has justice with iniquity? What agreement is there between Christ and Belial?" [[2 Cor 6:14–15](#)]. *Justice has stood* among the Gentiles, and it has "departed" from us, *because truth has fallen down in the street*. For broad and spacious is the way that leads to death, since they were unwilling to enter the narrow way [cf. [Matt 7:13–14](#)] on which truth lingers. *And truth has been forgotten*, of which it is written, "Truth has sprung up from the earth, and justice has looked down from heaven" [[Ps 85:11](#)]. In this one should notice that truth is named repeatedly in order that Christ's persona be indicated, truth that they have forsaken in order to follow falsehood.

*And the one who departed from evil lay open to be a prey*. Although this seems obscure, it can be explained as follows: While we were fabricating falsehood from our heart and forsaking the law of God, *justice stood far off*, and *truth fell down in the streets*, and *equity could not come in*, and the Son of God, who is *truth*, *has been forgotten*, to such an extent that whosoever should long to *depart* from the traditions of the Jews at once *lay open* to plots and persecution. Thus did they expel from their synagogues the man blind from birth who had received sight [cf. [John 9:34](#)]. Moreover, after the resurrection of the Lord and Savior, they persecuted and stripped bare all who believed in him, to whom the churches of the Gentiles from the entire world directed ministries that were distributed through the hands of the apostles [cf. [Acts 4:35](#)].

31. ([59:15c–18](#)) *And the Lord saw, and it appeared evil in his eyes, because there is no judgment*. (16) *And he saw that there is not a man, and he stood astonished, because there is none to oppose. And his own arm shall bring salvation by himself, and his own justice supported him*. (17) *He put on justice as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head. He put on the garments of vengeance, and was covered with zeal as with a cloak*. (18) *As unto revenge, as it were to repay wrath to his adversaries, and reciprocation to his enemies, he will repay the like to the islands*. Septuagint: "And the Lord saw, and it did not please him that there was no judgment. (16) And he saw, and there was no man, and he observed, and there was none to defend. And he avenged them with his arm, and established them with his mercy. (17) And he put on justice as a breastplate, and placed the helmet of salvation on his head. And he was surrounded with the garment of vengeance, and with his cloak, (18) as one who repays vengeance, reproach to his adversaries."

Up to this point the prophetic discourse has been composed under the persona of the people; now the prophet speaks in his own name. As they are saying these things, *the Lord saw* that they were vaunting repentance with their mouth, not acting on it with their heart, "and it

<sup>335</sup> See n. at [2.17](#).

did not please him.” For he sought in them the truth of the *judgment* that had been transferred to the Gentiles, and he did not find it. He longed for some just man, who could *oppose himself* in his anger, and he did not find one. He is the one who had also said above, “I came and there was no man, I called and there was none that heard” [[Isa 50:2](#)].<sup>336</sup>

And since, while they were continuing in wicked deeds, not even one just man was found, but “all have turned aside, together they have become useless, there is no one who does good, not even one” [[Ps 14:3](#)], “he established” him “with his arm” and also *justice* or “mercy.” Hence those who willed to be converted from error are saved not by their own merit, but by the clemency of God. Finally “he put on justice as a breastplate,” and “the helmet of salvation,” and the *garments of vengeance*, and he *was covered with zeal as with a cloak*, and so armed, he proceeded to war, that he should “repay vengeance” *to his enemies*, doubtless referring to the Jews who persevere in their blasphemies, *and reciprocation to his enemies*, when the Roman army encircled them. The Lord is shown to have fought with the victors. Paul has made use of this testimony when writing to the Ephesians and he wants us to put on the armor of Christ, with which we can withstand the fiery darts of the devil [cf. [Eph 6:11–17](#)].

As for what is not found in the Septuagint translators, *He will repay the like to the islands*, this signifies the cities of Judea, which the Roman army devastated. For above, as well, the Lord speaks through the prophet to the “dwellers in the island,” that is, Jerusalem [cf. [Isa 23:2](#)].

32. ([59:19–21](#)) *And they who are from the west shall fear the name of the Lord, and they from the rising of the sun his glory, when he shall come as a mighty river, which the spirit of the Lord drives on, (20) and there shall come a redeemer to Zion, and to those who return from iniquity in Jacob, says the Lord. (21) This is my covenant (foedus) with them, says the Lord: My Spirit that is in you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, said the Lord, from henceforth and forever.* Septuagint: “And they who [are] from the west shall fear the name of the Lord, and they from the rising of the sun his glorious name. For the wrath of the Lord shall come as a mighty river, it shall come with fury, (20) and the deliverer shall come from (*de*) Zion, and shall convert impieties from Jacob. (21) And this shall be a covenant (*testamentum*) from me with them, says the Lord: My Spirit which is in you, and my words which I have put in your mouth, shall not fail from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your seed, says the Lord, both now and forever.”

After the Lord shall have dressed for battle with justice as a breastplate and the helmet of salvation and the garments of vengeance and the cloak of zeal [cf. [Isa 59:17](#)], and shall have come for combat and vengeance, to recompense his enemies and to repay his foes, and to overthrow their islands [cf. [Isa 59:18](#)], that is, their cities and villages, at that time foreigners shall come *from the west* and the east [cf. [Matt 8:11](#)] to rest in the bosom of Abraham [cf. [Luke 16:23](#)], of whom it was also said above; “Behold, they shall come from afar, some from the west and others from the north, and others from the land of the Persians” [[Isa 49:12](#)].<sup>337</sup> They *shall fear* the Lord with that fear that is the beginning of wisdom [cf. [Ps 111:10](#)]. We read about this fear in many passages. Let us record a few of them: “Blessed is the man (*vir*) who fears the Lord” [[Ps 112:1](#)]; and: “Those who fear him have no want” [[Ps 34:9](#)]; and: “The fear of the Lord

<sup>336</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 48 (366, 26–7).

<sup>337</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 49 (367, 3–2).

is instruction and wisdom” [[Prov 15:33](#)]; and “Come, O sons, hear me, I shall teach you the fear of the Lord” [[Ps 34:11](#)]; and: “Blessed is the man (*homo*) who fears the Lord” [[Ps 128:4](#)]; and “The fear of the Lord adds days” [[Prov 10:27](#)]. But the prophet Malachi shows in greater detail that the throng of Gentiles succeeds once Israel has been rejected, when he says to the Jews, “I have no pleasure (*voluntas*) in you, says the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept a sacrifice from your hands” [[Mal 1:10](#)]. And on the other hand, he says of the multitude of nations, “For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, my name has been glorified among the Gentiles” [[Mal 1:11](#)].

The author of this blessedness is the one who *shall come as a mighty river, which the spirit of the Lord drives on*; or, as Aquila has translated, “As a narrow river, the seal of the Spirit of the Lord”; or as Theodotion rendered it, “The Spirit of the Lord has been sealed as a storming river.” Therefore, in that [part] of this testimony that the Septuagint translated as, “The wrath of the Lord shall come with fury as a mighty river,” the last part is not found in the Hebrew.<sup>338</sup> For God’s wrath and fury must not be recorded in the midst of promises, since among the other things that follow, there is blessedness of things to come, and not threats and punishment of sinners. But according to Aquila and Theodotion, the Spirit of the Lord, who has been sealed in Christ, confirms that testimony that we read in John the Evangelist: “For God the Father has sealed him” [[John 6:27](#)]. And it was already spoken of this earlier:

And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall come up from his root, and the Spirit of God shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness, and the spirit of the fear of God has filled him. [[Isa 11:1–3](#)]

This is also why we say, “The light of your countenance, O Lord, has been sealed upon us” [[Ps 4:6](#)], and in Ezekiel the foreheads of men who groan are sealed with the impression of the Hebrew letter *thau* [cf. [Ezek 9:4](#)], which among them is the last letter [of the alphabet].<sup>339</sup> But if we want to know how the Holy Spirit is a *mighty river*, we may reread the Acts of the Apostles, in which it is written,

But when they were gathered together in one place, suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a *mighty wind (spiritus)*, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. And there appeared to them tongues parted like fire, and it stayed upon every one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. [[Acts 2:2–3](#)]

Then follows, *And the redeemer of<sup>40</sup> Zion shall come, and of those who return from iniquity in Jacob, says the Lord.* The Septuagint translated this as “the deliverer shall come out of (*ex*) Zion, and shall turn away impieties from Jacob.” If therefore the one who “turns away impieties from Jacob” shall “come from (*de*) Zion,” we understand this, that he would be a man born in Zion, and that the Most High founded her [cf. [Ps 87:5](#)], he who “turns away” wicked deeds from

<sup>338</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (367, 17–9).

<sup>339</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (367, 27–2).

<sup>40</sup> The Hebrew lemma has “o Zion” and “o those who return.”

Jacob. But if the *redeemer shall come to Zion and to those who return from iniquity in Jacob, says the Lord*, this is the meaning: Christ will come, who shall redeem Zion by his own blood; or, according to the unique character of the Hebrew, he is one who is related to Zion and has been generated from the stock of Israel, for this is what *goel*, that is *αγχιστευς* means. And to keep us from thinking that all of Zion is redeemed, and that she who was stained with the Lord's blood is delivered from her wicked deeds, he has significantly added, *To those who return from iniquity*, if they are willing to repent. The Lord's prayer would be fulfilled in them: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" [[Luke 23:34](#)].

Therefore he is the redemption and kinsman of those in Zion who will have received him "from Jacob," and he makes promises to them and says: *This is my covenant (foedus) with them, or "agreement" (pactum), as all the others have translated it, or "covenant" (testamentum), as the Septuagint recorded. Now the subsequent verse shows what this foedus, pactum, and testamentum is: It says, My Spirit that is in you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed from henceforth and forever.* This is said either to Isaiah, as it seems to me, or to the Lord, as many think. Therefore the progression is linked to Isaiah as follows. This is the eternal agreement (*pactum*) of the Gospel, that *my Spirit that is in you, and my words that I have put in your mouth*, by means of which you shall proclaim the things that are coming, let them neither *depart from your mouth* nor from that of your sons, grandsons and seed of *your seed*. Thus the whole generation is shown by the succession, namely that the grace of the prophets would come into the apostles and those who will believe from Israel through the apostles. Now what he adds, *from henceforth and forever*, corresponds with the following: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" [[Matt 24:35](#)].<sup>441</sup>

Paul carefully explains this passage when he writes to the Romans that there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, but the same Lord of all is rich toward all who call upon him [cf. [Rom 10:12–13](#)], and that the Gentiles have not believed in such a manner that Israel has been completely banished. He says, "For I too am an Israelite from the seed of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin; God has not rejected his own people whom he foreknew" [[Rom 11:1–2](#)]. And after a little bit, when he had recorded the example of Elijah, who complained to the Lord that he alone was left, and heard from him that the Lord had left for himself seven thousand men who had not bent their knees to Baal [cf. [Rom 11:3–4](#)], he added,

So therefore, even at this time a remnant has been saved according to the election of grace. But if it is by grace, it is not now by works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. What then? That which Israel sought, he has not obtained. But the election has obtained it; but the rest have been blinded. [[Rom 11:5–7](#)]

Who, "if they shall not continue in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able," he says, "to graft them in again" [[Rom 11:23](#)], not contrary to nature, from a wild olive tree, as the multitude of the Gentiles were grafted in, but in accordance with nature, into the good, that is, into their own olive tree [cf. [Rom 11:24](#)]. And in order to reach the present section, he recorded at the very end,

<sup>441</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 49 (368, 24–6).

For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in a part of Israel has happened until the fullness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved, as it is written, “The deliverer shall come out of (*ex*) Zion, and shall turn away impieties from Jacob, and this is the covenant (*testamentum*) from me with them, when I shall take away their sins.”  
[\[Rom 11:25–27\]](#)

I have attended to these things in significant detail for the following reason. Whatever promises to Zion and to Jerusalem we both read and shall read, we should interpret these as spoken not universally to all the Jews, but particularly to those who were chosen out of Israel in the apostles and through the apostles.

## [THE SEVENTEENTH BOOK]

1. With a brief discourse, O Eustochium, virgin of Christ, I wanted to run quickly through all the mysteries that are contained in Sacred Scripture concerning the seventh number after the tenth. For that is the number that the books of my commentary on Isaiah have now reached. But since I am not able to say everything in all the passages, I briefly suggest this, that the psalm that is marked with this number in its title is “of David the servant Lord” [\[Ps 18:1\]](#), and he sang “the words of the canticle on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul, and he said, ‘I shall love you, O Lord, my strength’ ” [\[Ps 18:1\]](#), and the rest. But that one is the “servant of the Lord” to whom the Father speaks in Isaiah, “It is a great thing for you to be called my servant” [\[Isa 49:6\]](#), and in another place, “Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved one in whom my soul has delighted” [\[Isa 42:1\]](#).

That “servant,” which means “strong in hand,” “on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of Saul,” which in our language means, “sought” or “hell” (*infernum*), “and from all his enemies,” who shouted out against him, “Crucify him, crucify him” [\[Luke 23:21\]](#), when the victor ascended to the Father with the red garments from Bosra [cf. [Isa 63:1](#)], among other words of one who was triumphing, said, “Deliver me from the contradictions of the people, you will make me the head of the Gentiles; a people whom I have not known have served me, at the hearing of the ear they have obeyed me” [\[Ps 18:43–44\]](#). But on the other hand, he says of the Jewish people, “Strange sons have lied to me; strange sons have grown old and halted from their paths” [\[Ps 18:45\]](#). Elijah also had said to them, “How long do you halt on both feet?” [\[1 Kgs 18:21\]](#). Finally, there is something that is difficult to find in other psalms: this psalm is contained both in the history of Samuel and in the history of Days [cf. [2 Sam 22:2–51](#); [Ps 18:2–50](#)].

The one who advances incrementally from numbers one to seven comes to the twenty-eighth Psalm, which is itself also inscribed as “David’s” and “at the finishing of the tabernacle” [\[Ps 30:1\]](#), when angels are commanded, “Bring to the Lord, O sons of God, bring to the Lord the

offspring of rams” [Ps 29:1], and all the mysteries of saving baptism and of the church are sung together: “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of majesty has thundered, the Lord is upon many waters, the voice of the Lord is in power” [Ps 29:3–4]. And after a little, “The voice of the Lord preparing the stags, and he has revealed the thickets, and in his temple all shall speak [his] glory” [Ps 29:9]. And what is more, in order that he might point to the multitude of believers, he added, “The Lord inhabits the flood,<sup>11</sup> and the Lord shall sit as king forever” [Ps 29:10]. And on the other hand, when the mystery of the eighth is added, it comes to the learned thirty-sixth Psalm, which begins, “Be not envious of evildoers, nor jealous of those who work iniquity” [Ps 37:1]. The explanation of this is not for a preface, but belongs in its own book.

And that we may not at this time repeat many things, the one who grows by increments on down to the fifteenth number, which is the number of the Psalms of degrees [cf. Pss 120–134], and [the number of days] that the vessel of election [cf. Acts 9:15] stays with Peter in Jerusalem [cf. Gal 1:18], he comes to the number 120, which were believing first in Christ and they ascended with the apostles into the upper room of faith [cf. Acts 1:15], and the Holy Spirit descended upon them [cf. Acts 2:4]. And later, advancing in succession up to the seventeenth number and possessing of dignity of the Gospels, when the Lord commands about the right side, he captures the 153 great fish [cf. John 21:11], and places them in the church. And now the prophet Isaiah is speaking to it.

2. (60:1–3) *Arise, be enlightened, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. (2) For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people, but the Lord shall arise upon you, and his glory shall be seen in you. (3) And the Gentiles shall walk in your light, and kings in the brightness of your rising.* Septuagint: “Be enlightened, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. (2) Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist on the Gentiles; but the Lord shall appear upon you, and his glory shall be seen in you. (3) And the Gentiles shall walk in your light, and kings in your brightness.”

We have spoken more fully at the end of the previous book what occurred to us concerning the restoration of Zion and Jerusalem, and concerning all the things that are promised to it by the prophetic prediction, when we interpreted the meaning of the little line, “There shall come a redeemer to Zion, and to those who return from iniquity in Jacob” [Isa 59:20]. At this time we should briefly touch upon what very many people think about this passage, so that by carefully examining the error, we may more easily be able to accept the truth. The Jews and our half Jews, who await a golden Jerusalem that is adorned with jewels from heaven [cf. Rev 21:10–21], claim that these things will happen in a future kingdom that will last for a thousand years [cf. Rev 20:2–7], when all the Gentiles shall serve Israel, and the camels of Midian and Ephah (*Gepha*), coming from Sheba, bring gold and incense [cf. Isa 60:6], and all the sheep of Kedar shall be gathered, and the rams of Nebaioth shall come to be sacrificed upon the altar of the temple, which shall have been erected [cf. Isa 60:7]. Concerning the islands also, and especially the ships of Tarshish, they say that its daughters fly as doves, bringing riches of gold and silver [cf. Isa 60:8–9], and that the walls of Jerusalem shall be built by foreigners, over whom kings of the Gentiles shall preside [cf. Isa 60:10]. Moreover, the gates of the city shall be opened

1 Lit., “akes the flood to dwell.”



continually, so that day and night the riches of Jerusalem and the victims may be brought in [cf. [Isa 60:11](#); [Rev 21:25–26](#)]. And all that was desolate is to be constructed in Libanus out of planks of cypress, pine, and cedar, particularly the temple of the Lord, in which there would be perpetual joy [cf. [Isa 60:13](#)], so that it drinks the milk of the nations, and eats the wealth of kings [cf. [Isa 60:15–16](#)]; and there will be such great abundance of all things, that they shall have gold instead of brass, silver instead of iron, brass instead of wood, iron instead of stones [cf. [Isa 60:17](#)]. Her princes too shall enjoy everlasting peace, and the overseers (*episcopos*) shall rule the people in justice [cf. [Isa 60:17](#)]; moreover, her gates shall be sculptured work [cf. [Isa 60:18](#)], and what is greater than this, instead of the sun and the moon the Lord himself shall shine as the everlasting light [cf. [Isa 60:19–20](#); [Rev 21:23](#); [22:5](#)]. And instead of one man, she (Jerusalem) shall have a thousand of the strongest men [cf. [Isa 60:22](#)], and instead of an infant, she shall possess the strongest nations. They say these things, who desire earthly pleasures, and seek after the beauty of wives and also of a number of children, “whose god is the belly, and they glory in their shame” [[Phil 3:19](#)]. The one who follows their error under the name of Christian confesses that he is like the Jews.<sup>22</sup>

Others, however, claim that all these things have been promised to the Jews carnally, if they had received him who says in the gospel, “I am the light of the world that *enlightens* every man coming into the world” [[John 8:12](#); [1:9](#)]. Consequently just as sacrifices were conceded to the people of Israel, not that they were good in and of themselves, but to keep them from being offered to demons, so too to the gluttonous Jews. And the Lord promises these things to those who seek nothing else but the pleasures of the body, so that they might receive the Son of God at least for the sake of fleshly desires and an abundance of wealth. But because they did not receive him, the promises also became void. After all, he says to the Canaanite woman who was entreating for her daughter, “I have come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel” [[Matt 15:24](#)], and to his disciples, “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter into the cities of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” [[Matt 10:5–6](#)]. For this reason as well, the apostles were first announcing the Lord in the synagogues, and, when they did not receive the Gospel, they say to them, “It was necessary indeed that the word be proclaimed to you, but because you have not received salvation, behold, we turn to the Gentiles” [[Acts 13:46](#)]. For the light came into the world, but the Jews loved darkness more [cf. [John 3:19](#)]. And this is why when the Lord wept for Jerusalem, he added, “If you even knew the things that make for your peace” [[Luke 19:42](#)]. But because Jerusalem did not receive it, he added, “But now the days shall come upon you, and your enemies shall surround you with an embankment and hem you in, and lead you down to the ground with your children” [[Luke 19:43](#)].

But in accordance with the prior meaning, we should believe that all these things are being addressed to the church, which was first gathered together from the Jewish people, and that through the apostles he transferred the *light* that had *risen upon* it to *the Gentiles*. It is said to it, *Arise, be enlightened*, so that what fell among unbelievers may rise among the faithful [cf. [Matt 13:4–8](#)], that which fell in the synagogues, may rise in the churches; and after it has risen, let it be *enlightened*, so that it does not have the *darkness* of error. *For your light has come*, he

2 See introduction for a discussion of Jerome’s polemic against Christian chiliasm.

says, because all the prophets were promising to you what you were continually awaiting, *and the glory of the Lord*, which formerly was upon the tabernacle and his temple, *has risen upon you*, about which is said, “Glorious things have been spoken of you, O city of God” [[Ps 87:3](#)]. *For behold, darkness shall cover the earth*, [namely] those who think earthly things [cf. [Phil 3:19](#)], *and a mist the people*, or, as it reads in the Hebrew, “the tribes,” because it properly refers to the Jews, about whom in another Psalm it has been written, “For there the tribes went up, the tribes of the Lord, as a testimony for Israel” [[Ps 122:4](#)]. *But the Lord shall arise upon you*—the sun of justice [cf. [Mal 4:2](#)]*—and his glory shall be seen in you*, about which it has been written, “And we have *seen his glory, glory* as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” [[John 1:14](#)].<sup>33</sup> *And the Gentiles shall walk in your light*. We all have walked in the light of the apostles, who shine in the world, and the darkness has not apprehended it [cf. [John 1:5](#)]. *And kings in the brightness of your rising*, he says, when you were first born in Christ. This is fulfilled both spiritually and carnally, so that kings whose heart is in the hand of the Lord [cf. [Prov 21:1](#)], and those in whom sin does not reign in their mortal bodies [[Rom 6:12](#)], walk *in the brightness* of the young church; or, in the one who has *risen up* in the church, kings even truly submit their necks to the faith of Christ. We see this being fulfilled daily, when as the error of idolatry and the rage of persecution is removed, Roman rulers go over to the faith and tranquility of Christ.

There are those who are expecting that at a future time all these things which we speak of both as having been achieved partially and to be fulfilled completely after the first coming of the Savior up to the consummation of the world, when after the fullness of the Gentiles secretly enter in, all Israel is to be saved [[Rom 11:25–26](#)]. Their thought is not to be rejected, provided that we recognize that these things must be completed spiritually, not carnally.

On the other hand, the terms *Jerusalem* and *Gentiles* that are recorded here by the Septuagint, are not found in the Hebrew. They should be marked in front with an obelus. This contradicts those who claim that all that is said is being spoken to Jerusalem.

3. ([60:4](#)) *Lift up your eyes round about, and see; all these gathered together have come to you, your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall suck at your side*. Septuagint: “Lift up your eyes round about, and see your sons gathered together, all your sons have come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the shoulders.”

It is being said to the church, which has been gathered together in Zion first through the apostles, about which also in the Acts of the Apostles we read that there were devout men from all the world in Jerusalem [[Acts 2:5](#)], who had received the word of God and were either hearing others speaking in their own tongues and those of foreign nations, or they were themselves speaking to others [[Acts 2:8–11](#)]. And she is commanded to *lift up her eyes round about*, which the Lord also commanded the apostles, saying, “*Lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are already white for harvest*” [[John 4:35](#)]. For “from Zion,” and not from Mount Sinai, “the law shall go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” [[Isa 2:3](#)]. Moreover, once her eyes have been lifted up, she is commanded to *see her sons gathered together*, who are *coming from afar*. In another passage, as well, it is said to her, “Rejoice exceedingly, O daughter of Zion; proclaim, O daughter of Jerusalem” [[Zeph 3:14](#)]. “Behold, I am coming, and I will dwell in the midst of

3 Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 50 (369, 29–0).

you, says the Lord, and many nations shall come to the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I shall be their God” [[Zech 2:10–11](#)]. We, however, are the *sons* who *come from afar* to the Lord. Formerly we were strangers from the covenant of God and his promises, having no hope and being without God in the world [cf. [Eph 2:12](#)]. But what does the Apostle say? “You who once were *far off* have been brought near” [[Eph 2:13](#)].

And with respect to what follows, *And your daughters shall suck at your side*, this means that the souls that are suckling in Christ and in the baptism of infants should suck the milk of the apostles. The Apostle Peter also speaks about this: “As newborn babes, desire the rational milk without guile” [[1 Pet 2:2](#)]. And Paul spoke to these infants and suckling babies, “My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you” [[Gal 4:19](#)]. And in another passage, “Like a nurse taking care of her children, so with longing we desire to share with you not only the gospel of Christ, but also our own souls” [[1 Thess 2:7–8](#)].

But one should pay very careful attention to what is said in the Septuagint for this: “Your daughters shall be carried on the shoulders.” For “the sons” who are strong, *shall* themselves *come from afar* by themselves, and they are gathered together to the Lord’s faith. The “daughters,” however, who are weaker, and in view of the frailty of their sex, have not yet come to perfect manhood [cf. [Eph 4:13](#)], are “carried on the shoulders” of the apostles, so that they may be brought down to the bosom of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [cf. [Luke 16:22](#)].

4. ([60:5](#)) *Then you shall see and abound, and your heart shall wonder and be enlarged; when the multitude of the sea shall be converted to you, the strength of the Gentiles shall come to you.* Septuagint: “Then you shall see and fear, and be amazed in your heart; for the wealth of the sea shall be transferred to you, and of the Gentiles and peoples.”

When you shall have lifted up your eyes, and you shall have viewed your sons and daughters, either coming swiftly by themselves or being carried on the shoulders of the saints [cf. [Isa 60:4](#)], then you shall rejoice and you shall be inundated by sudden waters in the manner of rivers, and *your heart shall wonder and* “be amazed,” or rather, *be enlarged*, [the heart] of the one who hears the Apostle: “My mouth is open to you, O Corinthians” [[2 Cor 6:11](#)], and again: “*Enlarge yourselves also*” [[2 Cor 6:13](#)], lest you with narrowness of heart may not be able to have Christ as a guest, who says in the Gospel, “I and my Father will come and make our abiding place with him” [[John 14:23](#)].

But what is added in the Septuagint, “And you shall fear,” is not found in the Hebrew, unless perhaps fear stealthily brought in a great abundance of joy, so that it would not be without such a great good. Or is it not a joy to see the “wealth” and *multitude of the sea* being “transferred” and *converted* to itself, and the *strength of the Gentiles coming* to it, so that whatever belongs to the age and to the whole world becomes one’s own [cf. [1 Cor 3:21–22](#)]? And when the faith of the Gentiles has been strengthened, he would say, “I can do all things in him,” Jesus Christ, “who strengthens me” [[Phil 4:13](#)].<sup>44</sup>

5. ([60:6–7](#)) *A flood of camels shall cover you, the dromedaries of Midian (Madian) and Ephah. All they from Sheba (Saba) shall come, bringing gold and frankincense and announcing praise to the Lord. (7) All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto you, the rams of Nabaioth shall minister to you; they shall be offered upon my pleasing altar, and I will glorify the*

*house of my majesty*. Septuagint: “And herds of camels shall come to you, and the camels of Midian and Gephah shall cover you. All from Sheba (*Saba*) shall come bringing gold and frankincense, and they shall announce the salvation of the Lord. (7) All the sheep of Kedar shall be gathered together unto you, and the rams of Nabaioth shall come, and pleasing things shall be offered upon my altar, and the house of my prayer shall be glorified.”

After the wealth of the sea and the strength of the Gentiles [cf. [Isa 60:5](#)], “herds of camels” are also promised to Jerusalem, and *dromedaries of Midian and Ephah*. These shall all come from *Sheba*, carrying *gold and frankincense* and, what is greater than these, “announcing the salvation of the Lord.” Also “all the sheep of Kedar shall be gathered together,” the churches, and the “rams of Nabaioth shall come,” or, as is written in the Hebrew, *they shall minister and they shall be offered*, or they shall offer victims *upon the altar* of the Lord, so that his *house* becomes famous. “Midian and Gephah” are countries on the other side of Arabia, rich in camels, and the whole of the province is named *Sheba (Saba)*, where the queen lived who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon [cf. [1 Kgs 10:1–10](#); [Matt 12:42](#)]. Moreover, she herself brought gold and frankincense, and carried many things to the peace-loving king, and she received from him greater things [cf. [1 Kgs 10:2](#)]. Now *Kedar* is the country of the Saracens, who in Scripture are called Ishmaelites [cf. [Gen 37:25](#)]. And *Nabaioth* is one of the sons of Ishmael [cf. [Gen 25:13](#); [1 Chr 1:29](#)]. A desert is named after them, which is destitute of crops, and is full of *flocks*. The conversion of the entire world, therefore, is being proclaimed by names that are familiar to the barbarian nations, who are Israel’s neighbors. For in this passage, *Midian* means “iniquity”; *Ephah*, “released,” or “pouring out”; *Sheba*, “conversion,” or “captivity”; *Kedar*, “darkness”; *Nabaioth*, “prophecies.”

The “herds of camels,” therefore, having been “released” from the chains of “iniquity,” and “pouring out” their souls to God, *shall cover* Jerusalem with gifts, and all *shall come* from “captivity” and by “conversion,” *bringing the gold* of faith and the *frankincense* of sacrifice. And not content with their own salvation by means of these gifts, they shall go on to proclaim the “salvation” of God to others as well. That rich man in the gospel, who carried the burdens of his wealth like a camel, and he was a camel, was unwilling to listen to the counsels of the Lord and be disburdened [cf. [Matt 19:21–22](#)],<sup>55</sup> so that having cast off the burden, he could fly on the wings of a dove toward heaven [cf. [Ps 55:6](#)]. For this reason he went away sorrowful, and the Savior says of such a camel, “It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven” [[Mark 10:25](#)]. He has set forth the difficulty of the thing, not its impossibility. After all, your mother Paula of holy memory, and brother Pammachius, passed into the kingdom of heaven through the eye of a needle, that is, by the constricted and narrow way that leads to life [cf. [Matt 7:14](#)]. They left behind the broad way with its burdens, which leads to hell (*tartarum*) [cf. [Matt 7:13](#); [2 Pet 2:4](#)]. Or rather, whatever they had, they carried as gifts of the Lord, fulfilling what is written: “The ransom of a man’s soul is his own riches” [[Prov 13:8](#)].

For things that are impossible with men “are possible with God” [[Matt 19:26](#)]. Since they have the chief things in the gifts, the *gold* of the senses and *frankincense* of the finest aroma, and since they say, “Let my prayer be directed as incense in your sight [[Ps 141:2](#)], and, “We are

5 Cf. *ibid.* (372, 9–8).

the pleasant aroma of Christ in all places” [2 Cor 2:15], by the example of their virtue they daily “announce the salvation of the Lord,” so that “all the sheep of Kedar are gathered together” into the church, and from the darkness of error they cross over to the light, and the “rams” of the prophets, about whom in the twenty-eighth Psalm it is sung, “Bring to the Lord, sons of God, bring to the Lord the offspring of rams” [Ps 29:1], let them “come” and “be offered”; or, according to Theodotion, let them offer themselves as a sacrifice to God and become “pleasing” sacrifices, so that the church of Christ may be “glorified.”

The Savior spoke to his disciples about “sheep” of this sort: “Go to the lost *sheep* of the house of Israel” [Matt 10:6],<sup>66</sup> and again: “My *sheep* hear my voice” [John 10:27]; and in more detail in Ezekiel: “Behold, I shall seek my *sheep* and visit them, as the shepherd seeks his flock. Thus says the Lord: I shall seek the lost and lead back the stray one, and bind the broken, and strengthen the weak, and guard the strong, and feed them with judgment” [Ezek 34:11–12, 15–16]. And so that we might know which ones were the “sheep,” he records more clearly, “And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, and that they are my people, the house of Israel, says the Lord God, and you men are my sheep, and the sheep of my flock, and I am the Lord your God” [Ezek 34:30–31].

If anyone among the Gentiles is rich, therefore, he may be saved as a *camel*, not without gifts and presents, in order that he may be able to proclaim the word of the Lord. If anyone has the simplicity of “sheep” and the authority of “rams,” let him ascend or *be offered on the altar* of the Lord by those who are stronger, so that his “house may be glorified.” Now that which we have noted is written in the Hebrew, *The rams of Nabaioth shall minister to you and they shall offer*<sup>77</sup> upon my pleasing altar, is understood properly concerning these who are ministers of the Savior, having been chosen from the Gentiles for the priesthood.

If anyone, however, is contentious [cf. 1 Cor 11:16] and contends that these are promised carnally, let us respond to him, “We have no such practice, nor does the church of God” [1 Cor. 11:16]. Let us also say this, that even if they were promised carnally to the Jews, nevertheless they were promised conditionally, that if they would have received their light [cf. Isa 60:1] that had been sent to them, then those things would have followed as well; namely, in order that through the desire for gold and the abundance of wealth and of carnal things, of which that nation was always captured by enticements, they would have received the Son of God who was sent to them.<sup>88</sup> Since they did not receive him, all these things were taken away, and have been given spiritually to those who received him.

6. (60:8–9) *Who are these, that fly as clouds, and as doves to their windows? (9) For the islands wait for me, and the ships of the sea in the beginning, that I may bring your sons from afar, their silver and their gold with them, to the name of the Lord your God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he has glorified you.* Septuagint: “Who are these that fly as clouds, and as doves with young ones? (9) The islands have waited for me, and the ships of Tarshish among the first, to bring your sons from afar, and their silver and their gold with them, for the sake of the holy name of the Lord, and because the Holy One of Israel has been glorified.”

6 Cf. *ibid.* (373, 15–6).

7 The lemma has “hall be offered.”

8 Cf. *Eus Is.* 2.50 (373, 1–4).

Because the Lord has entered Egypt upon a swift cloud [cf. [Isa 19:1](#)], and he has commanded the clouds of the prophets not to rain upon Israel [cf. [Isa 5:6](#)], [clouds] to which the truth of the Lord has reached [cf. [Ps 36:5](#)], the church that has been gathered in the first place from the people of the circumcision marvels that throngs of Gentiles from the whole world *fly* to it. And having taken up the wings of the Holy Spirit, they hasten to its *windows*, according to Symmachus and Theodotion; according to Aquila to its “floodgates”; so that they may enter the church; or, teachers with their disciples, that is, “doves with their young ones,” fly to the church from the *islands* of the Gentiles, [islands] which “waited for” the Lord in accordance with the predictions of the prophets.

Also the “ships of Tarshish,” in other words, *of the sea*, about which we spoke in greater detail in the vision of Tyre,<sup>9</sup> shall *bring the sons* of the church *in the beginning* of faith, carrying *gold* and *silver*. “For with the heart it is believed unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” [[Rom 10:10](#)]. In the sixty-seventh Psalm it is written about this *gold* and *silver*, “The wings of a dove covered with *silver*, and her back parts in the brightness of *gold* [[Ps 68:13](#)]; and in the seventy-first Psalm, “The kings of Tarshish and the islands shall offer gifts, the kings of the Arabians and of Sheba (*Saba*) shall bring presents” [[Ps 72:10](#)]. These all are carried *to the name of the Lord God and to the Holy One of Israel*, who has *glorified* her [the church].

7. ([60:10–12](#)) *And the sons of strangers* (peregrinorum) *shall build your walls, and their kings shall minister to you. For in [my] indignation I struck you, and in my reconciliation I had mercy upon you.* (11) *And your gates shall be open continuously day and night, that the strength of the Gentiles may be brought to you, and their kings may be brought in.* (12) *For the nation and the kingdom that will not serve you shall perish, and the Gentiles shall be wasted with desolation.* Septuagint: “And foreigners (*alienigenae*) shall build your walls, and their kings shall wait upon you. For because of my anger I struck you, and because of mercy I loved you. (11) And your gates shall be opened always, they shall not be shut day and night, that they may bring in to you the strength of the Gentiles, and their kings who must be brought in. (12) For the Gentiles and the kings that will not serve you shall perish, and the Gentiles shall be made utterly desolate.”

Among the other things by which the church is enriched and the city of the Savior is being constructed, “foreigners” also and *the sons of strangers* are *building its walls*, so that the enemy cannot enter, so that treachery cannot find an occasion. Now the “foreigners” and the *strangers* properly signify the people of the nations, who truly have constructed the church of Christ, in so far as their kings and princes *minister to* or “wait upon” it. This is understood either carnally, or spiritually. If carnally, we see that the Roman Caesars submit their necks to the yoke of Christ, build churches at public expense, and deliberate upon legal statutes against the persecutions of the Gentiles and the snares of the heretics.<sup>10</sup> If spiritually, whoever are princes with regard to these things, self-control, eloquence, holiness, and whoever subjugates the flesh’s service to the command of the soul, they themselves *administer* and “wait upon,” or are helped by it, which often deserts it on account of negligence; or the rod of the persecutors “strikes,” so that it loves it again on account of his mercy.

9 Cf. 5.126; 7.43.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Eus Is.* 2.50 (375, 21–1)



Or surely this ought to be said, that in the calling of the Gentiles he reconciles to himself the formerly afflicted [nation] that had been handed over to captivity in the Jewish people, so that his “gates have been opened always,” and they are not “shut day nor night,” and they stand open *continually* to those who desire to be saved, in other words, so that entrance is not denied to those who are willing to believe, both in joy and in tribulation, and *the strength* or the wealth of the Gentiles is brought to her, and their *kings minister* or *are brought* to her as captives. You will understand this, when you see the most eloquent and wealthiest people of the world brought to faith in Christ, and the wisdom of the wise men becoming foolish, and also the prudence of the prudent men being rejected [cf. [1 Cor 1:19](#)]. Thus is the foolishness of God wiser than men [cf. [1 Cor 1:25](#)]. Now the “Gentiles and their kings,” who have refused to “serve” the good and useful servitude of the church, so that they may pass on to apostolic office, “shall perish” by that destruction that has been prepared for the wicked; and whatever was in them shall be reduced to “desolation,” they who refused to have God as their guest.

8. ([60:13](#)) *The glory of Libanus shall come to you, the fir, and the box, and the pine together, to adorn the place of my holiness, and I shall glorify the place of my feet.* ([14](#)) *And their crooked sons who have humiliated you shall come, and all who were disparaging to you shall worship the steps of your feet, and they shall call you the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.* Septuagint: “And the glory of the Lord shall come to you in the cypress and pine and cedar together, so that my holy place may be glorified, and I shall glorify the place of my feet, (14) and their sons who have humiliated you and provoked you shall go to you fearing, and all who have provoked you shall worship the steps of your feet, and you shall be called the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.”

Many things are lacking in the Septuagint, which I have recorded from the Hebrew under asterisks, and what they have added, I have marked in front with an obelus. Libanus is a mountain in Phoenicia, sown with tall trees, which the Psalmist describes by saying, “I saw the wicked exalted and lifted up like the cedars of Libanus [[Ps 37:35](#)], and in another passage, “The Lord shall crush the cedars of Libanus” [[Ps 29:5](#)]; and there are many other passages that I pass over in my eagerness for brevity. From this [mountain] Hiram, king of Tyre, at one time used to send to Solomon wood to Joppa to build the temple of God [cf. [2 Chr 2:16](#)]. Likewise, here the Scripture is promising from it the *fir tree, the box, and the pine*; or, according to the Septuagint, the “cypress, the pine, and the cedar”; or, according to Aquila, the “fir tree, the *thadaar* (elm) and the *thaassur* (box tree)”; or, according to Theodotion, the “*braty*, the *thadaar*, and the *thaasur*.” They are to be cut down together so that the temple of Zion may be built. But if this is so, where shall there be a golden Jerusalem adorned with jewels [cf. [Rev 21:10, 19–20](#)]? Where is the wife of the lamb [cf. [Rev 21:9](#)]? Where are the twelve gates distinguished by a variety of jewels [cf. [Rev 21:21](#)]? Unless perhaps it shall have walls and foundations adorned with jewels, and the temple, which ought to be more ornate, shall be built with wood.<sup>111</sup>

For this reason we are compelled by reason to understand everything spiritually, that the *fir*,

<sup>111</sup> This seems to be Jerome’s sarcastic polemic against Christian millennialism, which had interpreted the texts from Isaiah as both spiritually fulfilled in the church and literally to be fulfilled on earth after Christ’s second coming. On his own authority Jerome excludes the possibility of a literal earthly fulfillment of such passages.

*cyprus, pine,* and “cedar,” formerly having been lofty (*excelsae*) trees of Libanus, shall *glorify* the temple of God and shall make renowned *the place of his feet*. And lest I should prolong the interpretation by a lengthy discourse, does it not seem to you that Cyprian,<sup>112</sup> the holy man and most eloquent martyr, and Hilary,<sup>113</sup> a confessor of our time, have built up the church of God, being themselves trees that were formerly preeminent (*excelsae*) in the world?

Then follows, *And their crooked or returning sons shall come to you, who had humiliated you, and all who had disparaged you shall worship the steps of your feet*. We ought to understand this of those who are Christians not willingly, but by compulsion, and they change out of their fear of offending those who are ruling, having souls that are afraid; or at any rate they change because the former persecutors have afterward believed. And the Apostle Paul was the sort who was persecuting the church of God [cf. [1 Cor 15:9](#)], and afterward was named a vessel of election [cf. [Acts 9:15](#)]. When these things shall be completed thus, so that the fullness of the Gentiles enters in, then all Israel shall be saved [cf. [Rom 11:25–26](#)], and truly it shall be called *the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel*, which stands in the watchtower and has been gathered from both peoples.<sup>114</sup>

9. ([60:15–16](#)) *Because you were abandoned and hated, and there was none that passed through [you], I shall make you into the pride of the ages, a joy unto generation and generation, (16) and you shall suck the milk of the Gentiles, and you shall be nursed at the breast of kings, and you shall know that I am the Lord, the one who saves you, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob*. Septuagint: “Because you were abandoned and hated, and there was none that helped [you], I shall make you an eternal exultation, a joy of generations in generations, (16) and you shall suck the milk of the Gentiles, and you shall eat the wealth of kings, and you shall know that I am the Lord, who saved you and who rescued you, the God of Jacob.”

You who had previously been *abandoned and hated*, with the branches in you having been broken [cf. [Rom 11:17, 24](#)], because they did not bear fruit [cf. [John 15:2](#)], which were broken because *there was none who passed through* and supplied “help” to you, of whom in the Psalms it is said, “And they who were passing by have not said, ‘The blessing of the Lord be upon you’ ” [[Ps 129:8](#)]; therefore *I shall make you into the pride* everlasting, or into “exultation” and “joy” of two “generations,” for the sake of the original branches, with the others having been grafted on from the wild olive tree of the nations [cf. [Rom 11:17, 24](#)], who contrary to the nature of the illustration bear fruit, not of the former bitterness, but of the sweetness that they have received from the root.

Also, *you shall suck the milk of the Gentiles, and you shall be nursed at the breast of kings*. This passage has that meaning that we explained more fully above, when we were discussing that brief verse, “Your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall suck at your side” [[Isa 60:4](#)]; or, according to the Septuagint, “You shall eat the wealth of kings.” According to the Hebrew truth, this “wealth” refers to the breasts of kings and teachers, at which are educated and nourished the newborns of those who are born in Christ. When you have *sucked* from these

<sup>112</sup> St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, was beheaded in 258. See [Jerome, Vir III 67](#).

<sup>113</sup> St. Hilary, bishop of Poitiers (315–8), was a great opponent of Arianism whose life and scholarship Jerome greatly admired. See [Jerome, Vir III 100](#).

<sup>114</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 50 (376, 13–5).

and have attained to the solid food [cf. [1 Cor 3:2](#); [Heb 5:12](#)], so that you also eat kings' wealth of this sort, then *you shall know that I am your Savior, who has redeemed you with my blood* [cf. [Eph 1:7](#)], the "God" or the *Mighty One of Jacob*.

10. (60:17) *Instead of brass, I shall bring gold; instead of iron, I shall bring silver; and instead of wood, brass; and instead of stones, iron; and I shall make your visitation peace, and your overseers (praepositos) justice.* (18) *Iniquity shall no more be heard in your land, desolation nor grief (contritio) in your borders (terminis), and salvation shall occupy your walls, and praise [shall occupy] your gates.* Septuagint: "Instead of brass, I shall bring gold to you; and instead of iron, I shall grant silver to you; and instead of wood, I shall give brass to you; and instead of stones, iron; and I shall give your leaders in peace, and your bishops (*episcopos*) in justice, (18) and iniquity shall no more be heard in your land, and neither grief nor misery in your borders (*finibus*), but your walls shall be called salvation, and your gates [shall be called] sculptured work."

The same object is a kind of thing to one person, an outward form to someone else, according to the nature of the passages. And lest I should seem to be saying something from the rhetorical and dialectical arts, I shall record everyday illustrations, which would be able to instruct a simple reader. My son, who is an outward form to me and regards me as a kind of thing, is a kind of thing to his own son. And I shall say that one thing that is greater than another is lesser than something else. A centurion is greater than a common soldier, lesser than a tribune. Five is fewer than ten, more than one. Therefore, in regard to the restoration of a spiritual Jerusalem, *wood* shall be turned into *brass*, and *stones* shall be changed into *iron*, that is, formerly irrational and senseless human beings shall be changed into those materials that provide some benefit to the city. And *brass* itself and *iron* shall be changed into *gold* and *silver* by means of increases in the virtues, so that they do not have the outward form of usefulness, but they have value too, and also beauty. We have spoken quite often about gold and silver and what they signify in Sacred Scripture.

It says, *I shall make* "your leaders in peace, and your bishops (*episcopos*) in justice." In the Hebrew, this is written as, *I shall make your visitation peace, and your overseers (praepositos) justice.* Here the majesty of Sacred Scripture ought to be admired, because it has named the future "leaders" of the church "bishops" (*episcopos*), whose entire *visitation* is "in peace"; and it has designated their office as being "in justice," so that they should receive no person in judgment, nor should anything unjust be "heard in the land" of the church, nor should "grief" and misfortune be in its *borders*. For all these things shall follow whenever "iniquity" exists, *justice* is not safeguarded, and *peace* is lost.

But instead of all those things, he says, *salvation, or the Savior, has occupied<sup>15</sup> your walls.* In Hebrew this is read as *Jesus*, because it properly expresses the meaning of the Lord's name. For he himself is the strength of the walls of the church, which has *gates* in *praise* of the Lord, so that those who enter it first learn to praise the Lord and to confess his name. Now instead of *praise*, the Septuagint has translated this as γλυμμα, that is, "sculptured work." We can say this because the *gates* of the church ought to be carved with all the virtues, through which we enter into it.

<sup>15</sup> The lemma has "hall occupy."

11. (60:19–20) *You shall no more have the sun for your light by day, neither shall the brightness of the moon illuminate you, but the Lord shall be unto you for an everlasting light, and your God for your glory. (20) Your sun shall set no more, and your moon shall not decrease, for the Lord shall be for an everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be completed.* Septuagint: “And you shall no more have the sun for a light of day, nor shall the rising of the moon supply light for your night, but the Lord shall be unto you eternal light, and God your glory. (20) For the sun shall not set for you, nor shall the moon fail for you, for the Lord shall be to you everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be completed.”

Based upon this section, we are compelled to refer everything that has been said and that must be said to the final period, as the function of the sun and moon shall cease for us when heaven and earth pass away [cf. [Matt 24:35](#)], and the *Lord* himself shall be perpetual *light*. Thus, we believe that what the *χιλιασται* [chiliasts] claim must be fulfilled carnally shall be [fulfilled] spiritually. We disagree with them about the nature of the promises, not with regard to the time period. One should briefly respond to them that if the sun sets at noon on the false prophets and sinners [cf. [Amos 8:9](#); [Mic 3:6](#)] and, on the other hand, the sun of justice shall always rise on those who fear the Lord [cf. [Mal 4:2](#)], why should he not always shine on the saints, who says, “I am the light of the world” [[John 8:12](#)], who shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not comprehended it [cf. [John 1:5](#)]? For “the sun shall not burn” us “by day, neither the moon by night” [[Ps 121:6](#)], because we have the *Lord* as perpetual *light*, and the “days of our mourning shall be completed,” not by those who lament the destruction of Jerusalem, but by those who rejoice in the building up of the church. For “blessed are those who *mourn*, for they shall be comforted” [[Matt 5:4](#)]. “Blessed are those who weep, for they shall laugh” [[Luke 6:21](#)]. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied” [[Matt 5:6](#)].<sup>116</sup> Thus, after they shall have been satisfied on the flesh by the Lord, they utter forth the words of God and declare their works to the king [cf. [Ps 45:1](#)].

12. (60:21–22) *And your people [shall be] all just, they shall inherit the land continuously, the sprout of my planting, the work of my hand to glorify [me]. (22) The least shall be a thousand, and a little one a most strong nation. I the Lord will suddenly do this in its time.* Septuagint: “And all your just people shall possess the land always, guarding the planting, the works of their hands in glory. (22) He who is a little one shall be in the thousands, and he who is least a great nation. I the Lord shall gather them in time.”

With the days of grief ended and completed [cf. [Isa 60:20](#)], when sadness is turned into joy [cf. [John 16:20](#)], the *people* of Zion shall *all* be *just*, not for a brief time, but *continuously*, and because they are *just* they shall possess the land of the meek [cf. [Matt 5:5](#)].<sup>117</sup> And it is not surprising that they hold the *land* of the meek and of the living in order to receive the good things of the promise. This is the land for which the prophet sighs and says, “I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the *land* of the living” [[Ps 27:13](#)], since it is the *sprout* of God’s *planting*, and the *work* of his “hands” *to glorify* God. For he says, “Every *plant* that my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up” [[Matt 15:13](#)].<sup>118</sup> Or, according to the

<sup>116</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 50 (378, 3–).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (378, 5–).

<sup>118</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (378, 12–6).

Septuagint, the “people guarding the planting” of God and “the works of the hands” of the Lord, shall be saved “in the glory” of the Creator. God speaks through Jeremiah about the good “planting”: “I have planted you a good vine all true” [[Jer 2:21](#)]. In Isaiah, this is called “the vine of Sorech” [[Isa 5:2](#)]. And because Paul was conscious of the virtues of Christ who was speaking in himself [cf. [2 Cor 13:3](#)], he was able to say, “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” [[1 Cor 11:1](#)]; therefore he said to the Corinthians, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth” [[1 Cor 3:6](#)]. For those who have been planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in his courts [cf. [Ps 92:13](#)].

At that time, he who was a “little one” shall be “in the thousands” and shall hear from the Lord, “Have authority over five,” or “ten cities” [[Luke 19:17, 19](#)]. Thus he is called a *χιλιάρχος* [ruler of a thousand], and the one who had said with the Apostle, “This grace was given to me, the least of all the saints” [[Eph 3:8](#)], shall be a ruler “of a great nation” in heaven, when at the appointed time the Lord shall have sent his angels, and they shall have “gathered” to him all the saints from the summit of heaven all the way to its end, not only from Israel, but also from the people of the Gentiles, whom he was signifying when he said, “And I have other sheep who are not of this flock, and it is necessary for me to gather them, so that there may be one flock and one shepherd” [[John 10:16](#)]. But this shall be done *suddenly*, so that when everything is hopeless, at that time they are “gathered together” into a *most strong nation*. Although we see these things daily being fulfilled partially in the church, nevertheless they shall be completed more fully at the consummation of the world and at the second coming of the Savior.

13. ([61:1–3ab](#)) *The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to announce to the meek, that I should heal the contrite of heart, and preach a pardon to the captives, and an opening to them that are shut up. (2) And I should announce the appeasing year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance for God, that I should comfort all that mourn; (3) that I should appoint to the mourners of Zion, and give them a crown instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, a garment (pallium) of light instead of the spirit of grief.* Septuagint: “The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, for this reason he has anointed me: he has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart, to proclaim remission to the captives, and to the blind that they may see; (2) to call the acceptable year for the Lord and the day of retribution, to comfort all who mourn, (3) to give to those in Zion who mourn, to give to them glory instead of ashes, the anointing of gladness to the mourners, the garment (*habitum*) of glory for the spirit of grief.”

He who had said above, “I the Lord shall gather them in time,” or according to the Hebrew, “I the Lord will suddenly do this thing in its time” [[Isa 60:22](#)], says with logical coherence, *The Spirit of the Lord* God [is] *upon me*, not because the Lord God has a Lord God, but because according to the dispensation of his assumption of flesh, he says things that are humble. The Psalmist had already said to him, “You have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of exultation beyond your fellows” [[Ps 45:7](#)]. For when “fellows” are named, we should understand the nature of the flesh, since God does not have “fellows” of his substance. And because the anointing was spiritual, and not of the human body, as was the case with Jewish priests [cf. [Lev 21:10](#)], on that account it is mentioned that he was “anointed beyond his fellows,” that is, beyond the other saints. His anointing was carried out at

that time, when he was baptized in the Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove and remained in him [cf. [John 1:31](#)].<sup>119</sup> This same prophet also said of him, “And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall come up from the root, and the Spirit of God shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and piety” [[Isa 11:1–2](#)].

And this is why after the Savior was baptized in the Jordan, he went to Nazareth where he had been raised and according to custom entered their synagogue on the Sabbath day [cf. [Luke 4:16–17](#)]. And when he had risen to read, the book of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. Opening it he found the Scripture, “The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me, for this reason he has anointed me: he has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim remission to the captives and sight to the blind; to set at liberty those who are broken, to proclaim the accepted year of the Lord” [[Luke 4:18–19](#)]. When he had rolled up the book and returned it to the attendant, he sat down, and the eyes of all who were in the synagogue attended to him [cf. [Luke 4:20](#)]. He began to say to them, “Today in your hearing this scripture has been fulfilled. And all gave testimony to him and wondered at the words of grace that proceeded out of his mouth” [[Luke 4:21](#)]. If therefore the prophecy was fulfilled at that time, how is it that some refer it to the time of the consummation, unless perhaps we could say this, that it was partly fulfilled then, it is to be fulfilled more fully when all the people of God shall be just? For now “we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, that which is in part will be destroyed” [[1 Cor 13:9–10](#)].

Therefore, he was *anointed* by the Holy Spirit, to *announce* to the “poor” or to the *meeke*, saying to them in the Gospel, “Blessed are the *poor* in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” [[Matt 5:3](#)], and, “Blessed are the *meeke*, for they shall inherit the earth [[Matt 5:5](#)]. And he was *sent* to *heal* those who are *contrite of heart*, and who say, “God does not despise a contrite and humble heart” [[Ps 51:17](#)]; or according to Symmachus and Theodotion, “To bind up the wounds of sins, to preach release to the captives, and to the blind that they may see, or *an opening to them that are shut in*.” Symmachus translated this more clearly: “An unloosing of those who are in chains.” Above it is said about this one, or rather, to him, “Behold, I have set you as a light of the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind, to lead forth from their chains those who are bound up, and those who are sitting in darkness from their prison house” [[Isa 42:6–7](#)].

Now we should understand the “acceptable year” and the “day of retribution” as referring to the whole time of his preaching, when he lived in the flesh. For the Apostle Paul interprets this in respect to the first coming of the Savior, when he says, “Behold, now is the *acceptable* time; behold, now is the *day* of salvation” [[2 Cor 6:2](#)]. We have spoken more fully about this above.<sup>220</sup> But if the “retribution” is not understood in respect to the merits of the good, but in respect to the punishment of sinners, according to the fact that it is said to be a *day of vengeance*, then it must be understood of the Jewish people, against whom the wrath of God came immediately after his passion [cf. [1 Thess 2:16](#)].

And he *comforted* all those who *mourn*, when he said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” [[Matt 5:4](#)], so that he *appointed to the mourners of Zion* and *gave*

<sup>119</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 51 (379, 5–80, 31).

<sup>220</sup> Cf. *supra* [13.22](#).



them “glory” and a crown instead of ashes. It was concerning them also that the Apostle Paul was mourning for Zion, when he said, “For my sadness and sorrow are unceasing” [[Rom 9:2](#)]; and again, “For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites” [[Rom 9:3](#)]. And for this reason, *instead of ashes* those who mourn and wail have received *the oil of joy*, when they see that very many of the Jews have believed, and are receiving the purest gown (*stolam*) *instead of* the clothing of mourning.

14. ([61:3c–5](#)) *And they shall be called in it the mighty ones of justice, the planting of the Lord to glorify [him], (4) and they shall build the deserted places of old, and shall raise up ancient ruins, and shall repair the desolate cities that were destroyed for generation and generation. (5) And strangers shall stand and shall feed your flocks, and the sons of foreigners shall be your farmers and vinedressers.* Septuagint: “And they shall be called generations of justice, the planting of the Lord for glory, (4) and they shall build perpetual deserted places; they shall raise up those that were before made desolate, and shall renew the deserted cities, those that had been desolate for generations, (5) and strangers shall come feeding your sheep, and ploughmen and vinedressers of other nations.”

After the apostles and apostolic men receive instead of ashes and a spirit of grief the oil of joy and a garment (*pallium*) of glory and praise, or, according to the Septuagint, a gown (*stolam*) [cf. [Isa 61:3a–b](#)], then “they shall be called generations of justice,” the glorious “planting of the Lord”; or, according to the Hebrew word *hele*, when each syllable is lengthened, the *mighty ones of the justice* of God, or *the planting of the Lord to glorify*. Thus, when they are glorified, or when they themselves have glorified the Lord, they would *build the deserted cities of old* and *raise up the ancient ruins*, both of the Jewish people and of all “nations,” who shall have knowledge not only of building and restoring cities, but also they shall be the best shepherds. Consequently, when the ancient shepherds have been driven away, to whom God had said through Ezekiel, “O shepherds of Israel, do shepherds feed themselves, and not rather the sheep?” [[Ezek 34:2](#)], they would hear with the Apostle Peter, “Feed my *sheep*” [[John 21:17](#)].

And in a wonderful manner they shall pass from being stonecutters and shepherds into *farmers*, in other words, into “plowmen” and *vinedressers*, resulting in their ability to say with the Apostle, “We are God’s building, God’s field” [[1 Cor 3:9](#)]. After all, the Savior asks the scribes and Pharisees, the *vinedressers* and *farmers* of the Jews, what shall he do to the evil *vinedressers* and *farmers* [cf. [Matt 21:40](#)]. And when they answered, “He shall badly destroy those bad men, and he shall give the vineyard to other *farmers*” [[Matt 21:41](#)], he added, “The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation producing the fruits of it” [[Matt 21:43](#)]. This matter does not require interpretation. For how many leaders of our churches come from the Jews? Are they not from the “strangers” and men of foreign “nations”? They previously served idols and were *strangers* to the covenant of God and foreigners in respect to his promises, not having hope and without God in the world [cf. [Eph 2:12](#)].<sup>221</sup> But now they are in charge of churches, and by using the plow of faith they overcome the hard and previously untamed hearts of the Gentiles, so that they bear fruit and multiply the sowing of the doctrine of the Lord by an abundance of good works.

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 51 (381, 4–).

15. (61:6–8a) *But you shall be called the priests of the Lord; to you it shall be said, “ministers of our God.” You shall eat the strength of the Gentiles, and you shall pride yourselves in their glory. (7) For your double confusion and shame, they shall praise their portion. Because of this, they shall possess double in their land, everlasting gladness shall be theirs, (8a) because I am the Lord who loves judgment and hates robbery in a holocaust.* Septuagint: “But you shall be called the priests of the Lord, ministers of your God. You shall eat the strength of the Gentiles, and in their riches you shall be admirable. (7) Thus they shall possess the land a second time, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head. (8) For I am the Lord, who loves justice and hates the robberies from iniquity.”

The builders of the deserted cities and the shepherds of the flocks, who themselves are plowmen and vinedressers, that is, the sons of foreigners [cf. [Isa 61:5](#)], these ones are also the *priests* of God, to whom the prophet now says, *But you shall be called the priests of the Lord, and to you it shall be said, “ministers of our God.”* There is no doubt that he means the leaders of the churches. Or at any rate, it must be understood of the apostles, so that there is a progression: when the stonecutters, shepherds, plowmen, and vinedressers of the Gentiles will have been placed in charge of the churches, you about whom it was said, “A remnant shall be saved” [[Rom 9:27](#)], and, “If the Lord Sabaoth had not left us seed, we would have been like Sodom and been made similar to Gomorrah” [[Isa 1:9](#); [Rom 9:29](#)], *you shall be called priests and ministers of God.* The sons of David as well were men like this, about whom Scripture says, “But the sons of David were priests of God” [[2 Sam 8:18](#)].

They “shall eat the strength of the Gentiles and in their riches they shall be admirable.” For the *glory* of children is the crown of the fathers [cf. [Prov 17:6](#)], and the progress of the people are the banquets of “priests.” Paul wrote to the Corinthians about “riches” of this kind: “I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ, that in every way you have become *rich* in him, in all speech and in all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that in no respect are you lacking in any grace” [[1 Cor 1:4–7](#); [Rom 1:8](#)].<sup>222</sup> Now the “strength of the Gentiles” refers to the triumph of the martyrs. And we *pride ourselves in their glory*, not with that pride that is a vice, which God opposes, so that he may give grace to the humble [cf. [Jas 4:6](#)], but that pride that is understood as *glory* and power. This is why Moses’ face was “horned” [cf. [Exod 34:29](#)], who was able to say, “In you we shall butt our enemies with a horn” [[Ps 44:5](#)]. Moreover, Aquila translated *pride of glory* by και εν δοξη αυτων πορφυρωθησεσθε, that is, you shall be clothed in purple. He wanted to show the mark of royalty and elegance.

As for what follows, *For the double confusion and for the shame, they shall praise their portion*, which is not found in the Septuagint, it seems to me to require the following explanation. In view of the fact that you had a *double confusion*, both over the Jewish people, who had withdrawn from God, and over the nations, who were serving idols, you shall see them converted to the fear of God and *praising their portion*, which doubtless refers to the Lord, of whom the saint also said, “The Lord is my portion” [[Ps 73:26](#)]. But no one can say this except one who does not have another *portion*.

Since therefore you had a *double confusion* over them and *shame* for their sin, over which they themselves did not blush, for this reason *in their land*, in other words, in the land of the

<sup>222</sup> Cf *ibid.* (381, 17–1).

meek and of the living, *they shall possess double*, when they will have believed both the present things and the future things, and they shall have *everlasting gladness*. The Septuagint reads this as, “Thus they shall possess the land a second time, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head.” Hence those who had possessed the land in the narrowest confines of Judea, afterward would possess the whole world. The Father speaks to the Savior about this land: “Ask of me, and I will give you the Gentiles for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession” [Ps 2:8].<sup>223</sup>

But the Lord has exhibited this, who “loves” the truth of *judgment* and *hates robbery in a holocaust*. The Septuagint translated this as “robbery from iniquity,” as if there is some other robbery that is not based in “iniquity.” Therefore what he is saying is this: God loves the poverty of the just more than the gifts of the rich, which are from “robberies” and “iniquity.”

16. (61:8b–9) *And I shall give their work in truth, and I shall make (feriam) a perpetual covenant (foedus) with them, (9) and their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring in the midst of the peoples. All who shall see them shall recognize them, because these are the seed which the Lord has blessed.* Septuagint: “And I shall give their labor to the just, and shall make (*ponam*) an eternal covenant (*testamentum*) with them. (9) And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their grandsons in the midst of peoples. Every one that shall see them shall recognize them, because these are the seed blessed by God.”

God, who loves justice and judgment and who detests violent holocausts [cf. [Isa 61:8a](#)]<sup>223</sup>—for anything that comes from robberies he regards as the pay of a harlot and the price of a dog [cf. [Deut 23:18](#)]<sup>223</sup>—he himself “shall give to the just,” or, as is expressed better in the Hebrew, *in truth*, so that it is not a shadow of truth, as under the law, but the truth itself. He shall give them “the labor” of those who shall possess the land a second time, and whom he crowned with double gladness [cf. [Isa 61:7](#)]. And he shall *make* an everlasting covenant (*pactum*), not of the sort that he had given to Moses, which passed away, but the covenant (*pactum*) of the gospel, about which he says, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” [Matt 24:35].

And at that time the apostolic *seed shall be known among the Gentiles*, and all future generations shall receive the sowing of the doctrine of God. They will not say those words in which the former people of the circumcision erred when they said, “For what else does God seek but a seed?” [Mal 2:15]. *All who shall see them shall recognize* at first sight, that it is *the seed to which the Lord has blessed*. For who would not understand the people of God from the orderliness of their life, gentleness, self-control, hospitality, and all the virtues? And on the other hand, who would not detest the blood-stained hands of Israel, against whom the prophet utters curses, saying, “Fill their faces with shame, O Lord”? [Ps 83:16].

17. (61:10–11) *Rejoicing, I shall rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the vestments of salvation, and he has put around me the garments of justice, as a bridegroom decked with a crown, and as a bride adorned with her necklaces. (11) For as the earth brings forth her bud, and as the garden causes her seed to sprout, so shall the Lord God make justice sprout, and praise before all the Gentiles.* Septuagint: “With joy they shall be glad in the Lord, my soul shall exult in the Lord. For he has clothed me with the

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (381, 22–6).

vestment of salvation, and has put around me the tunic of gladness, as a miter on a bridegroom, and he has adorned me with ornaments (*mun-do*) as a bride, (11) and as the earth putting forth its flower; and as a garden sprouts its seeds, so does the Lord God cause justice to spring forth, and praise before all the Gentiles." According to the Septuagint, which said, "And with joy they shall be glad in the Lord," this is the beginning of a section that is linked to the end of the previous section. But according to the Hebrew, this is the introduction to another section, in which the church of Christ is introduced as responding with the words, *Rejoicing, I shall rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall exult in my God*, not in the fathers, as the Jews were boasting, when they said, "We are the seed of Abraham, and have never served any one" [[John 8:33](#)], but *in God*. For the Scripture says, "But the heart and soul of the multitude of believers was one" [[Acts 4:32](#)]. And he gives the reasons for their gladness, that "he has clothed me with the vestment of salvation," and "he has adorned" and *put around* [me] *the garment* or "tunic" of *justice* and "gladness." In Hebrew this is expressed as *mail*. For as many of us who have been baptized into Christ, have *put on* Christ and have a "tunic" of *justice* [cf. [Gal 3:27](#)]. He "has become for us sanctity, justice, and redemption" [[1 Cor 1:30](#)].

And he records a comparison to the two groups who are marching in procession in the church, the perfect and the beginners. He compares the perfect with the beauty of a *bridegroom*; the beginners he likens to the adornment of a *bride*. Paul was perfect [cf. [Phil 3:15](#)]. Having been adorned with a crown like a bridegroom, and about to be adorned, or, as Aquila has translated,  $\epsilon\rho\alpha\tau\epsilon\upsilon\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma\ \sigma\tau\epsilon\phi\alpha\nu\omega$ , which in our language is said as "wearing the crown of the priesthood," he said with the authority of Christ speaking in him, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of justice" [[2 Tim 4:7](#)]; and in another passage, "Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded" [[Phil 3:15](#)]. But he was a beginner in comparison with the fullness, when under the persona of beginners, he said, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child" [[1 Cor 13:11](#)]; and again, "We see in part and we know in part, until what is perfect comes" [[1 Cor 13:9–10](#)]. And for that reason, he is likened to the dress of a "bride," who is "adorned with" womanly "ornaments," or, as others have translated, "with vessels" or *with her necklaces*. And he records examples for another comparison, the first of which applies to the bridegroom, the second to the bride. *As the earth brings forth her bud* and is watered by the heavenly rain, *and as the garden causes its seed to sprout*, the garden that desires waters of springs and rivers, *so*, he says, *shall the Lord make justice sprout, and gladness before all the Gentiles*, not before Israel, so that he may cut off the arrogance of the Jews, but [before] "all the Gentiles," who are assembled in the church.

18. ([62:1–3](#)) *On account of Zion I shall not be silent, and on account of Jerusalem I shall not rest, until her just one comes forth as brightness, and her Savior is lit as a lamp. (2) And the Gentiles shall see your just one, and all kings your glorious one, and you shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord has named. (3) And you shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.* Septuagint: "On account of Zion I shall not be silent, and on account of Jerusalem I shall not leave, until her justice goes forth as light, and her salvation burns as a lamp. (2) And the Gentiles shall see your justice, and all kings your glory, and he shall call you by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. (3)

And you shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.”

The Lord and Savior had said, “The Spirit of the Lord [is] upon me; for this reason he has anointed me” [[Isa 61:1](#); cf. [Luke 4:18](#)], all the way to that passage where it is written, “All who shall see them shall recognize that they are the seed that the Lord has blessed” [[Isa 61:9](#)]. After this promise, the church answered, “Rejoicing, I shall rejoice in the Lord” [[Isa 61:10](#)], which she joyfully sang in the third Psalm of degrees under the persona of a penitent people: “I was glad when they said to me: We shall go into the house of the Lord” [[Ps 122:1](#)]. Now the persona of the prophet is introduced as saying, *On account of Zion I shall not be silent, and on account of Jerusalem I shall not rest.* Day and night, he says, I shall not close my mouth, nor shall my speech ever keep silent, but I shall shout and join prayers with prayers for so long a time, until he who was promised comes and illumines the whole world with his *brightness*.

He records quite clearly who it is whom he seeks, whom he desires to come: *Until her just one comes forth as brightness, and her Savior is lit as a lamp*; or according to the Septuagint, “Until her justice goes forth as light, and her salvation burns as a lamp.” This one said in the Gospel, “I am the *light* of the world” [[John 8:12](#)]; when it will have been *lit* in Zion and Jerusalem, it shall shine not only in Judea, but it will be said to it, “The light that has been lit in you, which came forth from the Father and is beginning to burn in your borders, shall illuminate all the Gentiles.”

*And all the kings shall see your glorious one, O Jerusalem and Zion*, he who was born from your race, who when he was lifted up for you on the gallows, he drew all men to himself [cf. [John 12:32](#)]. Thus did “the Gentiles see his justice,” by which the Creator of all had mercy on the Gentiles, and “the kings” [saw] his “glory,” with which he was glorified on the cross and subjected all *kingdoms* to his command. Finally, it shall not be called *Jerusalem and Zion*, but shall receive a *new name*, which the Lord shall put upon it, saying to the Apostle Peter, “You are Peter, and upon this rock I shall build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” [[Matt 16:18](#)]. He derived that designation from the name of the Lord, so that he is said to be “the Lord’s,” and his people are not called by that old name, Israel, but by a new one, that is, Christian. And he *shall be like a crown “of beauty” in the hand of the Lord*, and like a *royal diadem in the hand of his God*, when he has crowned her with a throng of believers. Moreover, a *diadem* of authority, which distinguished the martyrs by the variety of their jewels, shall be *in the hand* of God, so that he crowns his own Son with their victories. And this is why the Apostle Paul said to the saints, “My joy and crown” [[Phil 4:1](#)].

19. ([62:4](#)) *You shall no more be called “Forsaken,” and your land shall no more be called “Desolate,” but you shall be called “My Desire in her,” and your land “Inhabited,” because the Lord has been well pleased with you, and your land shall be inhabited.* Septuagint: “And you shall no more be called ‘Forsaken,’ and your land shall no more be called ‘Deserted’; for you shall be called ‘My Desire, and your land ‘Inhabited.’ ”

Instead of Zion and Jerusalem, you shall be called the church and the Lord’s; instead of Jews, they shall be called Christians. And you shall not be content with this goal of designations, but you who were previously called *Forsaken*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *azuba*, shall be called *ephziba*, which means, *My Desire in her*. Moreover *your land*, which was previously called



*semema*, *Desolate* or “Deserted,” afterward shall be called *bula*, which Aquila translated as *εσχημενη*, Symmachus and Theodotion, *συνωκεισμενη*, the Septuagint, *οικουμενη*, all of which words signify *inhabited* and “possessed.” Now this comes from Hebrew usage, for they always impose designations on the basis of realities. Just as when Abram, who previously was called “exalted father,” heard the promise, “And in your seed all nations shall be blessed” [[Gen 22:18](#); cf. [Gen 17:5](#)], he was called “father of many nations,” that is, *Abraham*. And up above a name is imposed upon the Lord and Savior: “Remove the spoils quickly, plunder swiftly” [[Isa 8:3](#)]. Also the sons of Zebedee were called *bane rehem*, which means “sons of thunder” [cf. [Mark 3:17](#)]. One of them was able to hurl a voice of thunder: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God” [[John 1:1](#)].

But what follows, *Because the Lord has been well pleased with you, and your land shall be inhabited*, was omitted by the Septuagint. And he gives the reasons why he is called *ephsi*, and why he is called *bula*, because *the Lord was well pleased with Zion*, and made her land inhabitable, which previously had been “deserted” by the Judaic error. Or we may apply this to the church, which, when it had been previously possessed by idols, was deserted by God.

20. ([62:5](#)) *For the young man shall dwell with the virgin, and your sons shall dwell in you, and the bridegroom shall rejoice over the bride; your God shall rejoice over you.* Septuagint: “And as a young man lives with a virgin, so shall your sons dwell, and it shall be as a bridegroom is glad over a bride, so will the Lord be glad over you.”

The Apostle says, “Husbands, love your wives, as also Christ [loves] the church” [[Eph 5:25](#)]. And in another passage, when he had recorded the example, “For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh” [[Eph 5:31](#)], he added, “This is a great mystery, but I am speaking of Christ and the church” [[Eph 5:32](#)]. If, therefore, on account of brevity of time, which is in short supply, husbands ought to have their wives in such a way as if they do not have them [cf. [1 Cor 7:29](#)], how much more shall the union between the bridegroom and his bride be holy?

This is the bridegroom of whom it is sung in the eighteenth Psalm, “And he comes forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber” [[Ps 19:5](#)]; and this bride is the one of whom it is quite frequently written in the Song of Songs, who has neither a wrinkle nor a spot [cf. [Eph 5:27](#)], which Paul desires to present as a pure virgin to one husband [cf. [2 Cor 11:2](#)], “so that she may be holy in body and spirit” [[1 Cor 7:34](#)]. And the forty-fourth Psalm sings of her under the name of the most beloved, “The queen stood by your right hand in clothing wrought with gold, arrayed in diverse colors” [[Ps 45:9](#)]. Therefore, just as there is a holy union in these examples, *the bridegroom rejoices in the bride*, and the *young man with the virgin*, so “the Lord shall be glad” about those things whose names shall have been changed [cf. [Isa 62:2](#)].

21. ([62:6–7](#)) *Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed guardians; all day and all night they shall never be silent. You that are mindful of the Lord, be not silent, (7) and give him no silence until he establish, and until he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.* Septuagint: “And upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed guardians, all day and all night, who shall never be silent, making mention of the Lord. (7) For there is none like yours, if he corrects, and he shall make Jerusalem a joy upon the earth.”

The prophet had said, “On account of Zion I shall not be silent, and on account of Jerusalem



I shall not rest” [[Isa 61:1](#)],<sup>224</sup> and the other things up to this passage where the section has now been terminated: “The bridegroom shall rejoice over the bride, and your God shall rejoice over you” [[Isa 62:5](#)]. And he had promised to ask day and night for the Savior and just one to come, who had been promised, and to illuminate the whole world like a lamp [cf. [Isa 62:1](#)]. After this, the persona of God is introduced speaking to Jerusalem, that is, the church of the firstborn ones [cf. [Heb 12:23](#)] and she who was built up in the apostles and through the apostles: *Upon your walls I have appointed guardians*. These we can understand either as angels or apostles and all of its leaders and teachers. They guard the *walls* of the church, to keep our adversary the devil from receiving an occasion to destroy the flock of the Lord. He goes about like a roaring lion seeking a means to enter [cf. [1 Pet 5:8](#)].

These *guardians* should not be silent either day or night, either in glad or sad times, but they should always pray for the Lord’s mercy, that his flock and the walls of Jerusalem may be guarded and fortified by his aid. And for this reason, he directs words to the same *guardians* and teachers. O you, who “make mention of the Lord” and pray constantly for his mercy day and night, be on guard lest the prayer in your mouth should ever grow silent. *Give him no silence*, understand “the Lord,” but always be a nuisance, in season and out of season, and imitate the woman who troubled the harsh judge [cf. [Luke 18:5](#)]. For if that man laid aside his ferocity of mind because of her incessant requests, how much more shall the heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him [cf. [Matt 7:11](#)]? But how long should you ask for this? Until Jerusalem, which collapsed among the Jews and is an example and a curse obtains the *praise* of the entire world.

I wonder what the Septuagint intended in place of what is found in the Hebrew: *Give him no silence until he establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth*. It is not consistent with what comes above to express the meaning of this as, “For there is none like you, if he corrects, and makes Jerusalem a joy upon the earth,” unless, perhaps, we adjust this by using creative eloquence, so that the guardians of the church are being told that no one will be like them, since by their preaching they will have “made Jerusalem” to be “corrected” and to become the “joy” of all the “earth.”

22. ([62:8–9](#)) *The Lord has sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength: Surely (si) I will no more give your wheat to be food for your enemies, and the sons of the strangers shall not drink your wine for which you have labored. (9) For they that gather it, shall eat it, and shall praise the Lord, and they that bring it together, shall drink it in my holy courts.* Septuagint: “The Lord has sworn by his right hand, and by the strength of his arm: Surely (*si*) I will no more give my wheat and food to your enemies; nor shall the sons of strangers any more drink your wine for which you have labored. (9) But they that have gathered [it] shall eat it, and they shall praise the Lord; and they that have gathered shall drink it in my holy courts.”

Almighty God had said to the church, “Upon your walls I have appointed guardians, who shall never be silent” [[Isa 62:6](#)]. And I shall warn them never to stop praying [cf. [Isa 62:7](#)], unless they have obtained what they are praying for. Now he *swears by his right hand* and the *arm of his strength*. We have repeatedly spoken about this, that it is our Lord and Savior, who according to the Apostle is the power (*virtus*) of God and the wisdom of God [cf. [1 Cor 1:24](#)]. Now he

<sup>224</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 52 (384, 12–4).

*swears* not to give over Jerusalem's *wheat* and *wine* as "food" of the "enemies," and that *strangers* will not enjoy to the full her *labor*, but whoever has sown in tears would reap in joy [cf. [Ps 126:5](#)],<sup>225</sup> and they who have reaped a pure grain, having cast away the chaff, and gathered it into the barns, they themselves would eat the labors of their own hands, and they would lift up the Lord with eternal praise, and *drink wine in his holy courts*. We understand this either of the many mansions with the Father [cf. [John 14:2](#)], if we take this as concerned with the future blessedness in the kingdom of heaven; or at any rate of the churches spread throughout the whole world. When we have been planted in them, we shall afterward flourish in the house of the Lord [cf. [Ps 92:13](#)].

But when it says, *I shall no longer give your wheat to your enemies, and strangers shall not drink your wine, for which you have labored*, he shows that the labor of the Jews previously and all of their works had been possessed by demons, when they were wavering between God and idols, when Elijah was saying to them, "How long shall you limp on both feet? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, follow him" [[1 Kgs 18:21](#)]. And according to their history, which became typical, and which is told in the Book of Judges, the Midianites came and destroyed their crops all the way down to Gaza [cf. [Judg 6:4](#)], so that human food was turned into the food of brute animals.

Now this is the *wheat* and this is the *wine* that they shall not *eat* except by *praising the Lord*, and they *shall not drink* except *in his holy courts*. In his passion, the Lord said of this wine, "Amen, amen, I say to you, I shall not drink from the fruit of this vine, until I shall drink it anew in the kingdom of my Father" [[Mark 14:25](#)]. These things are fulfilled partially in the church, when the Lord says to his disciples, "Drink, my friends, and be intoxicated, brothers" [[Song 5:1](#)], with the wine that "gladdens the hearts of men" [[Ps 104:15](#)]. And Joseph drinks it with his brothers in the full light and at midday [cf. [Gen 43:34](#)]. But it shall be fulfilled more completely when the earth is intoxicated with the blessings of the Lord. The *wheat* too, from which the bread of heaven is made, is that about which the Lord says, "My flesh is food indeed" [[John 6:56](#)]. And again about *wine*, "And my blood is drink indeed" [[John 6:56](#)].

23. ([62:10–12](#)) *Pass through, pass through the gates, prepare the way for the people, make the road level and pick out the stones, lift up the standard to the people. (11) Behold, the Lord has made it to be heard in the ends of the earth. Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your Savior comes, behold his reward is with him, and his work [is] before him," (12) and they shall call them a holy people, redeemed by the Lord. You, however, shall be called, "A city sought out, and not forsaken."* Septuagint: "Go through my gates, and make a way for my people, and throw out the stones from the way. Raise the standard among the Gentiles; (11) for behold, the Lord has made it to be heard up to the end of the earth. Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Behold your Savior comes, having his reward with him, and his work [is] before his face,' (12) and he shall call him a holy people, redeemed by the Lord. You, however, shall be called, 'A city asked for, and not forsaken.'"

He is commanding the guardians of the walls of Jerusalem, whom he had previously warned not to be silent [[Isa 62:6](#)] and not to stop praying at any time, to *pass through the gates* of Jerusalem and "make a way for the people." The half Jews claim that this will come to pass in

<sup>225</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (384, 33–70).

the end times, when after the fullness of the Gentiles, Israel must be saved and shall return to the Lord [cf. [Rom 11:25–26](#)]. Others in fact think that it is to be fulfilled in the kingdom of heaven, when there shall be true gladness, and each one shall receive according to his merit, so that they gaze upon the Lord not in his humility, but they experience him in his character as a judge, when he shall come upon the clouds [cf. [Matt 24:30](#)] with a multitude of angels to render to each one according to his work [cf. [Matt 16:27](#)]. But in accordance with the explanation we have commenced, we can also understand these things in respect to the first coming. Hence we could say that the apostles and apostolic men are being instructed to enter and *pass through the gates* against which hell does not prevail [cf. [Matt 16:18](#)], and to remove “from the way” all impediments, so that without any stumbling block, the “people” may enter the church of the “Savior.”

This is also why John was crying in the wilderness, “I am the voice of one crying in the desert, as Isaiah said: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths, every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be humbled’ ” [[John 1:23](#); [Isa 40:3–4](#)]. The same sense is now being expressed with different words. The man of the church who softens all the hardness from the heart of believers *picks out stones*. The same [John the] Baptist said of them, “God is able to raise up sons of Abraham from these *stones*” [[Matt 3:9](#)]. Or, according to the Septuagint, he “throws out the stones from the way,” who separates the unfaithful from believers. To keep the Jews from thinking that this was said about them,<sup>226</sup> he adds, “Raise the standard among the Gentiles” and to the *people* of the nations. Consequently, it is not the narrow places of the single land of Judea that is being summoned to salvation, but he *makes it to be heard to the ends of the earth*, so that the entire world may hear clearly the passion of the Creator of all things. *Say to the daughter of Zion*, he says. She is called the *daughter of Zion* either because at first she arose from the Jews, about whom it says in the Song of Songs, “Sons of my mother have fought against me” [[Song 1:5](#)]. Or surely [she is called] a daughter for this reason, because she received the name of adoption from God. “For as many as received him, he gave them the power to become sons of God” [[John 1:12](#)].

But what is it that the masters and teachers are ordered to announce to the *daughter of Zion*? *Behold, your Savior comes*. In Hebrew, this is expressed as *Jesus*. And this is why Gabriel says to Joseph, “And you shall call his name *Jesus*, for he shall save his people from their sins” [[Matt 1:21](#)]. He who is the *Savior* of believers is the judge of all, so that he renders to each one according to his works [cf. [Matt 16:27](#)]: rewards to the just, eternal punishment to sinners. He says, “And” the Lord and Savior himself “shall call them”; or, according to the Hebrew, the apostles and apostolic men *shall call them a holy people and redeemed by the Lord*, those who have been *redeemed* by the blood of Christ. Also, the *city* itself shall no longer be called *forsaken*, as it was previously called, either among the Jews on account of their refusal, or among the Gentiles on account of idolatry, but “asked for,” as is expressed by the Hebrew word *drusa*. Thus it is always receiving new names in view of its growth in the virtues and their variety.

24. ([63:1ab](#)) *Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra? This beautiful one in his robe, walking in the multitude of his strength*. Septuagint: “Who is this who

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (385, 13–9).

comes from Edom, with red garments from Bosor? Thus [he is] beautiful in his robe, violence with strength.”

Many of our people refer this entire passage to the end of the world, from that place where, according to the Septuagint, it says, “Be enlightened, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you” [Isa 60:1], all the way to the present section, where it says, *Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra*. They claim that these things are to be fulfilled then, whether carnally or spiritually—for there is a great diversity of opinion. But above, in this same chapter we read, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me; he has sent me to announce to the poor” [Isa 61:1]. When the Lord and Savior read the Book of Isaiah in the synagogue of the Jews, he indicated that this had been fulfilled in himself, saying, “Today, this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” [Luke 4:21]. Moreover, now he is talking about the same thing, that after the passion, the bloody one shall ascend to the Father. By necessity, therefore, we are compelled to interpret everything that is said with reference to the first coming of the Savior. For what the majority of our people are striving to do is impossible: to make a distinction in time for things that have been connected in the works.<sup>227</sup> We are not denying that very great effort is required to join together all these things to themselves, and thus to demonstrate that they must be fulfilled spiritually at the consummation. Accordingly, let us show that they have already been fulfilled in Christ, both according to the flesh and according to the spirit.

So then, the Savior of the daughter of Zion has come, whose reward is with him, and his work before him [cf. Isa 62:11]; and the just one has come forth as brightness, and the Savior has been lit as a lamp [cf. Isa 62:1]. Moreover, the bridegroom has rejoiced over his bride, or the church, or rather, his God has exulted over her [cf. Isa 62:5], he who himself is both bridegroom and Lord. For these reasons, it is said to him in accordance with his assumption of flesh and the passion of his cross, “that your foot may be dipped in blood” [Ps 68:23]. Moreover, it is prophesied in Genesis under the designation of Judah,

Judah, your brothers shall praise you, your hands [shall be] on the necks of your enemies, the sons of your father shall adore you; Judah is a lion’s whelp, you have gone up for the spoils, my son, resting you have lain down as a lion and as if a lioness; who has roused him? [Gen 49:8–9]

And again, “Tying his foal to the vineyard, and his ass, O my son, to the vine, he shall wash his robe in wine, and his garment in the blood of the grape” [Gen 49:11]. He is the one whom the angelic powers see ascending to the Father stained with blood. They command other angels, and from them they hear, “Lift up the gates, you princes, and be lifted up, eternal gates, and the king of glory shall enter. Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and powerful, the Lord strong in battle” [Ps 24:7–8]. And again, “The Lord of powers, he is the king of glory” [Ps 24:10]. We have said these things as a preface, in order to show that the present section agrees with these other testimonies. And this is why, in the Song of Songs, it says, “My kinsman is ruddy and bright” [Song 5:10], ruddy in the passion, bright in the resurrection.

<sup>227</sup> This statement is revealing in that it shows that Jerome recognizes that he is outnumbered and it is really he who is the innovator.

Therefore the angels, terrified by the novelty of the thing—for the mystery of the passion and resurrection of Christ was unknown to all past generations, according to the Apostle Paul [cf. [Eph 3:5](#); [Col 1:26](#)]*—ask, Who is this who is arriving from the earth stained with blood—for in our language Edom expresses both “earthly” and “stained with blood”—with dyed garments from Bosra?* Many who have lapsed into a pious error think that *Bosra* means the Lord’s flesh, that is *basar*, a word that, if it meant “flesh,” would have been written with the middle letter *sin*; but here it is written with *sade* and means “strong and fortified.” We understand it to refer either to Jerusalem, which was formerly surrounded by very *strong* walls, in which city the Lord suffered; or to hell, about which it is written in the fifty-ninth and [107th Psalms](#), “Who shall lead me down into the fortified city?” [[Ps 60:9](#); [108:10](#)]. The souls of the dead are shut in there and surrounded by the strongest guardians. One should know that according to history *Bosra* is not in *Edom*, but in Moab.

It follows, “Thus [he is] beautiful in his robe,” *walking in the multitude of his strength*. In the forty-fourth Psalm it is sung about him, “[You are] *beautiful* with elegance beyond the sons of men; gird your sword upon your thigh, O most powerful one, in your comeliness and in your beauty; and bend [your bow] and prosper and reign” [[Ps 45:2–4](#)]. The Septuagint translated this as, “violence with strength.” Let the intelligent reader inquire into the meaning that this may contain.

25. ([63:1c](#)) *I who speak of justice and I am a champion at saving*. Septuagint: “I who speak of justice and judgment of salvation.”

The Lord responded to the angels who were questioning him, “Are you asking who I am, who ascends to the heavens stained with blood? And how is it that the blood with which I am sprinkled confers not hideousness to me, but beauty? I am he to whom the Father has handed over all ‘judgment’ [cf. [John 5:22](#)], of whom the Psalmist also said, ‘O God, give your “judgment” to the king and your “justice” to the king’s son’ [[Ps 72:1](#)]. I am the one *who speaks of justice*, in order that I may render evil to the evil and good to the good; I who have come to fight against the hostile powers, and to proclaim release to captives, to set free from prison those who were chained up [cf. [Isa 61:1](#); [42:7](#)], so that the adversaries may experience punishment and the captives freedom.”

26. ([63:2](#)) *Why then is your garment red, and your vestments like theirs who tread in the winepress?* Septuagint: “Why are your vestments red, and your garments like his who treads the winepress full and trodden down?”

Where it says “red” here, the Hebrew reads *Edom*. Therefore above as well, where *Edom* is written, it is not the name of a place, but the term for “blood.” But once again, the angels ask and say, “We have learned that you are the one who speaks of justice [cf. [Isa 63:1](#)], and the salvation of all is established by your judgment. Now we wish to know why your ‘vestments’ have been dipped in grape juice, as it were; or what reason is there that you have bloodied your tunic, which was woven from above and cannot be torn [cf. [John 19:23–24](#)], and which from the virgin’s womb had a brightness so great that no fuller on earth could make it [cf. [Mark 9:2](#)]. Indeed, mercy befits you, rather than cruelty, whiteness rather than blood and gore.” The Lord has responded to them not with a single brief line, as before, but with many words, in order to teach everything to those who do not know, lest they be compelled to ask again.

27. ([63:3–6](#)) *I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with me. I have trampled on them in my fury, and have trodden them down in my wrath, and their blood was sprinkled upon my vestments, and I have defiled all my garments. (4) For the day of vengeance is in my heart, the year of my redemption has come. (5) I looked about, and there was no helper; I sought, and there was none to give aid, and my arm has saved for me, and my indignation itself has helped me. (6) And I have trodden down the people in my fury, and have made them drunk in my indignation, and have brought down their power to the earth.* What we expressed as, *I have trodden the winepress alone*, the Septuagint translated as, “full [and] trodden down,” which had to be joined to the previous section rather than become the beginning of the next one. They translated the rest as follows:

And of the Gentiles there is not a man with me; and I trampled on them in my fury, and dashed them to pieces as earth, and I brought down their blood to the earth, and I have defiled all my vestments. (4) For the day of recompense has come upon them, and the year of redemption is at hand. (5) I looked, and there was no helper; I observed, and none offered help; and my arm delivered them, and my fury arrived. (6) And I have trodden them down in my anger, and brought down their blood to the earth.

For *winepress*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *geth*, Theodotion recorded the Hebrew word itself, *fura*. But Symmachus is better in this passage, whom we also have followed. For the word *fura* is ambiguous, and frequently means both winepress and flask.

Consequently, one should say of *winepress*, that according to the usage of Holy Scripture sometimes it is recorded for the vengeance and punishment of sinners, sometimes in connection with the gathering of new crops. It is recorded for vengeance and torments when Jeremiah, in his lamentations, says as he is bewailing the overthrow of Jerusalem: “The Lord has trodden a winepress for the virgin daughter of Judah; therefore I weep” [[Lam 1:15–16](#)].<sup>228</sup> The eighth and eighty-third Psalms are written on behalf of winepresses in a good sense [cf. [Pss 9:1; 84:1](#)]. If by the Lord’s gift life shall stay with me as my fellow traveler, I will speak about them in their own passages. This *winepress*, in which both punishments for the evil and rewards for the good are trodden by the Savior, *he has trodden alone* and he *had no helper*. For neither angel nor archangel, thrones, dominions, or any of the heavenly powers assumed a human body, and suffered for us, and *trampled* upon and crushed the hostile powers, except he who says in the Psalm, “Save me, O Lord, for the saint has failed” [[Ps 12:1](#)], to such an extent that even the Apostle Peter, who was extremely confident and strong in the truth of the faith [cf. [Matt 26:33](#)], was terrified by fear and fled [cf. [Matt 26:56](#)], or rather, he denied the Lord three times [cf. [Matt 26:69–75](#)].

As for what follows, *And their blood was sprinkled upon my vestments, and I have defiled all my garments*, one should not interpret this to mean that we believe that demons and hostile powers have *blood*. On the contrary, all this should be taken tropologically, when the most merciful God is compelled to strike his enemies, in order to rescue his people and liberate them from the chains of captivity.

He says, *For the day of vengeance is in my heart, the year of my redemption has come.*

<sup>228</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 53 (387, 11–7).



Above, as well, we read about this in a good sense, that he proclaims the accepted year of the Lord and the “day of recompense” for our God [cf. [Isa 61:2](#)]; and here it is found both in a bad and a good sense: bad when it says, *For the day of vengeance is in my heart*; good when it says, *The year of my redemption has come*. Consequently, at that time when the adversaries are punished, God’s people are delivered, or rather, redeemed by the precious blood of the lamb [cf. [1 Pet 1:18–19](#)], who in the Apocalypse of John is said to have been slain [cf. [Rev 5:6](#)]. And by the Holy Spirit, Moses prophesied of this “day of recompense,” “And he shall *recompense* vengeance on his enemies, and shall pay back to those who hate him” [[Deut 32:43](#)].

*I looked about, and there was no helper; I sought, and there was none to give aid*. He had also said in the Psalm, “I waited for one to grieve with me, but there was none, and for one to comfort me, but I found none” [[Ps 69:20](#)]. For although he was in the form of God, he did not regard it robbery to be equal to God, but he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, and he was made obedient to the Father unto death, even death on the cross; and therefore he freely gave to him the name above every name [cf. [Phil 2:6–9](#)], in order to *save* by his right hand those who believe in him. Moreover, his *indignation*, which was against his adversaries, freed the people of God. Or, he “delivered” believers “by his arm,” and he postponed his “fury” no longer, “and he brought down their blood to the earth,” either tropologically, referring to the “blood” of demons, or at any rate the “blood” of the Jews. The other translators rendered this as “exertion,” meaning that they were striving with all zeal not to release the people who were in chains.

28. ([63:7](#)) *I will remember the tender mercies of the Lord, the praise of the Lord for all the things that the Lord has rendered to us, and for the multitude of his good things to the house of Israel, which he has given them according to his kindness, and according to the multitude of his mercies*. Septuagint: “I remembered the mercy of the Lord, the virtues of the Lord in all things that he has rendered to us. The Lord is a good judge to the house of Israel; he recompenses us according to his mercy, and according to the multitude of his justice.”

A ΠΕΡΙΚΟΠΗ (short section) has come to an end that, in our opinion, concerns the first advent—the majority think that it deals with the second advent—in which a bloody victor is described with the character of a judge, or rather, of a warrior slaying his own enemies and those of his people. Another section begins, in which the prophet speaks under the persona of the people. He describes the kindnesses of God toward himself and the hardness of his own heart, on account of which both Jerusalem was handed over to be burned and Israel to captivity. The Jews relate these things to the Babylonian times, but we have shown by the arrangement and by reason that they are spoken about the present time, when they are in service to the Romans and the throng of Gentiles has succeeded Israel, which has been excluded. Therefore, let us run through the individual sections of the speech and discuss them briefly, lest our exposition be overloaded.

Overwhelmed by the weight of evils, I hope in nothing else but the “mercy” of God, who shows mercy to thousands who love him [cf. [Exod 20:6](#)], and extends his mercy to those who acknowledge him. From this it is shown that the Lord’s “mercy” comes to the aid of those who love and acknowledge God. For it is not of him who wills and runs, but of God who shows mercy [cf. [Rom 9:16](#)]; and unless the Lord builds the house and guards the city, the one who builds and

guards it watches over it in vain [cf. [Ps 127:1](#)]. For he will give “virtue” [cf. [Deut 8:18](#)] that we may act with strength and be able to say, “My strength and help and my refuge on the day of my evils” [[Jer 16:19](#)]. In the present passage we should interpret this [evils] not of vices and sins but of tribulations.

It then follows, according to the Septuagint, “The virtues of the Lord in all things that he has rendered” to me. In Hebrew this is recorded as *praises of the Lord*. We should understand this to refer to signs and miracles, which are often recorded as “virtues,” as for example here: “I will not give my glory to another, nor my *virtues* to graven images” [[Isa 42:8](#)]; and elsewhere: “They shall declare his *virtues* to the islands” [[Isa 42:12](#)], or to the nations of the whole world, or to the churches that have been founded upon the firm mass and are struck rather than undermined. Sometimes “virtue” does not mean strength and miracles, but good manner of life, as for example the following statement of the apostles, of Peter: “Supply virtue to your knowledge” [[2 Pet 1:5](#)], and of Paul: “If there is any virtue and if any praise” [[Phil 4:8](#)]. In accordance with this it is said in another passage, “Sterility is better with virtue” [[Wis 4:1](#)]. The former understanding of virtue befits God, the second one corresponds to men.

Now as for what we translated as, *for all the things that the Lord has rendered to us*, which can be understood both in a good sense and in an evil sense, Symmachus recorded this more clearly, as the retribution for good things, when he said, “For all the things in which he has shown kindness to us, and for the multitude of goodness that he carried into effect upon the house of Israel.” The Septuagint translated this as, “The Lord, a good judge to the house of Israel, has recompensed us according to his mercy, and according to the multitude of his justice.” But no one can say this except the one who understands how to justly endure what he suffers. After all, in the seventy-second Psalm, which begins, “How good is God to Israel, to the upright in heart” [[Ps 73:1](#)], the prophet speaks under the persona of those who are troubled by the judgments of God: “But my feet had almost slipped, my steps nearly faltered, when I saw the peace of sinners” [[Ps 73:2–3](#)], and the rest down to the end of the Psalm. This is why the Apostle Paul, who knew the Lord as a “good” and just “judge,” says confidently, “A crown of *justice* has been laid up for me that *the just judge* will *render* to me, but not only to me, but also to everyone who loves the coming of our Lord and Savior” [[2 Tim 4:8](#)]. There is no distinction between good and just, as the heretics think, since the same [Apostle] writes, “Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good” [[Rom 7:12](#)], so that namely goodness is understood as the genus and justice as a species. This is why he writes to the Romans, “For hardly does anyone die for the just; for would anyone perhaps dare to die for the good?” [[Rom 5:7](#)].

29. ([63:8–10](#)) *And he said, “Surely they are my people, sons that will not deny,” and he became their Savior. (9) In all their trouble, he was not troubled, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love, and in his indulgence he redeemed them, and he carried them and lifted them up all the days of old. (10) But they provoked to wrath, and afflicted the spirit of his Holy One, and he was turned to be their enemy, and he waged war against them.* Septuagint: “And he said, ‘[They are] not my people, the sons surely will not be rebellious,’ and he became their salvation (9) out of all their trouble. Not an ambassador, nor an angel, but he himself saved them; because he loved them and spared them, he himself redeemed them, and took

them up, and lifted them up all the days of old. (10) But they did not believe, and they provoked his Holy Spirit, and he was turned to be their enemy, he himself fought against them.”

Where we have translated, *In all their trouble he was not troubled*, what is expressed in Hebrew as *lo*, and is an adverb of negation, can be read as *not* and as “he.” Thus the meaning may be, *In all their trouble he was troubled*, that is, God, so that he himself carried not only our sins but also our *troubles*. For he carries our infirmities and suffers pain for us [cf. [Isa 53:4](#)]. On the other hand, the Septuagint recorded something else that is not found in the Hebrew: “Not an ambassador, nor an angel, but he himself saved them.” We shall speak about this in its own passage.

Therefore God, who is a just judge to the house of Israel [cf. [Isa 63:7](#)] and who mitigates the severity of his justice by the clemency of one who is judging, said, “I have indeed begotten and exalted *sons*, and they have spurned me” [[Isa 1:2](#)].<sup>229</sup> But *surely*, since *they are my people* and once were named *sons*, they shall not perish forever; if they stop spurning and *denying* me, they will perceive the *Savior*. He who was himself *troubled in all their trouble*, or who *was not troubled*, so that for a little while he deserted them and compelled those who were bereft of his help to beg. Or at any rate he did not *trouble* them, but instead was a helper to the rest of the pursuers, and he sent his own *angel*, who freed them from danger; or according to the Septuagint, he wanted to save his people, “not by angels” and prophets and other holy men, but he himself came down to the lost sheep of the house of Israel [cf. [Matt 15:24](#)], in order to carry back the sickly sheep on his shoulders [cf. [Luke 15:5](#)], to find the drachma that was lost [cf. [Luke 15:8–9](#)], and joyously to meet the prodigal son when he was returning home [cf. [Luke 15:20](#)]. This is why the bride says in the Song of Songs, “Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth” [[Song 1:1](#)], not by the patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets, but let him take my body, live in my flesh; let the Word become flesh [cf. [John 1:14](#)], and in this way let the one who dwells in me kiss me, so that he may be Emmanuel [cf. [Isa 7:14](#); [8:9](#); [Matt 1:23](#)]. Therefore, not as an “ambassador,” nor as an “angel, but he himself saved” those who have received salvation, not by the merit of works, but by the love of God. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life” [[John 3:16](#)].

But suppose a wise reader should respond with the unspoken thought, If “he himself saved them” and “loved” them, and “spared” his sons, and “redeemed them” by his own blood, and “took up and lifted up” those whom he received, then why are many not saved? A clear reason is supplied: “But they did not believe, and they provoked his Holy Spirit,” or [*the spirit*] of his *Holy One*, which is expressed in Hebrew as *cados*. Consequently, God willed to save those who desire salvation, and he summoned them to salvation, so that their will would have its reward; but they refused to believe. For the rest, it is written about John, “There was a man sent by God whose name was John; this man came to bear witness to the light, in order that all would believe through him” [[John 1:6–7](#)]. And he is not immediately at fault if the majority refused to believe, but the will of the one who came was that everyone would believe and be saved.

But if he “provokes” God who “provokes” and *afflicts* “the “Holy Spirit,” or [*the Spirit*] of his *Holy One*, that is, [the spirit] of Christ, then the “Holy Spirit” shares the same nature with the

<sup>229</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 54 (389, 2–).

Father and the Son. This is why the Apostle commands, “Do not grieve the *Holy Spirit* by whom you were sealed” [[Eph 4:30](#)]. This “Holy Spirit” withdraws from a body that has surrendered itself to sins [cf. [Wis 1:5](#)], and wisdom will not enter into a perverse soul [cf. [Wis 1:4–5](#)]. This is also why David, aware of his sins, prayed not to lose the “Holy Spirit,” saying, “And take not your *Holy Spirit* from me” [[Ps 51:11](#)]. But that we may know that everyone who “provokes the Holy Spirit,” offends God and goes from being a friend into an enemy and an adversary, the Apostle Peter says quite significantly in the Acts of the Apostles, “Why have you agreed to lie to the *Holy Spirit*?... You have not lied to men but to God” [[Acts 5:9, 4](#)]. This is the “Holy Spirit,” of whom the Lord said in the Gospel, “If you love me, keep my commandments, and I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may be with you forever, the Spirit of truth” [[John 14:15–17](#)]. We have also found [it spoken] of him in the Wisdom that is inscribed with the name of Solomon: “For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and will withdraw from foolish thoughts” [[Wis 1:5](#)].

30. ([63:11–14](#)) *And he remembered the days of old, of Moses, of his people. Where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he that put in the midst of them the Spirit of his Holy One? (12) He who led Moses to the right hand, by the arm of his majesty, who divided the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name. (13) He who led them out through the depths, as a horse in the wilderness that does not stumble. (14) As a beast that goes down in the field, the spirit of the Lord was their guide (ductor), so did you lead your people to make yourself a glorious name.* Septuagint: “And he remembered the ancient days, he who brought up from the land the shepherd of the sheep. Where is he that put his Holy Spirit in them? (12) He who led Moses from the land with the arm of his glory, thus did he bring his people. Water prevailed before him to make himself an everlasting name. (13) He led them through the deep, as a horse through the wilderness, and they did not labor. (14) And as cattle through a plain, the Spirit came down from the Lord, and was their leader (*dux*). Thus you led your people, to make yourself a glorious name.”

From being the protector of the Jewish people, the Lord became their adversary. They provoked his Holy Spirit to wrath, and he waged war against them [cf. [Isa 63:10](#)]. He himself has “remembered the ancient days,” when *Moses* prayed for them in the desert, saying, “Either forgive them this wrong, or if you do not, blot me out of your book that you have written” [[Exod 32:31–32](#)]. Therefore Isaiah is remembering ancient history and says, Where is that *Moses who brought them up out of the Red Sea*? Where is the “shepherd of the sheep”? Where is he who “labored” *with the other shepherds of the Lord’s flock*? Who procured and “put the Spirit” of God “in” the Lord’s flock by his prayer and requests?

Or surely it should be understood as follows. Where is that clemency of the Lord by which he once had pity on his people, so that even *the Spirit of the Holy One* bestowed grace on them? He who *brought out* his servant Moses on *the right* side, not on the left, *by the arm of his majesty, who divided the waters before them, to make himself an everlasting name*, and his power is spoken of up to the present day? For *he led* his people *through the immense depths* of waters, “as a horse through the wilderness” and “cattle through a plain”; and *the spirit of the Lord was their guide*, that is, of the Lord’s flock. Now we should understand *spirit* here as the angel who was the *guide* of the people of Israel, in accordance with what is written: “Who

makes his angels *spirits* and his ministers burning fire” [Ps 104:4]. And in the Epistle to the Hebrews: “They are ministering *spirits* who are sent for ministry for the sake of those who will inherit salvation” [Heb 1:14]. Let us also consider what is written in the Acts of the Apostles: “The spirit of the Lord seized Philip and the eunuch did not see him further” [Acts 8:39], whether we should understand this as an angel. There are those who provide evidence that an angel did these things by the Holy Spirit. We are moving quickly through the things that are clear in order to spend time on what is more obscure.

31. (63:15–16) *Attend from heaven, and look from your holy habitation and [the place] of your glory. Where is your zeal<sup>30</sup> and your strength? The multitude of your bowels and of your mercies have held themselves back from me. (16) For you are our father, and Abraham has not known us, and Israel has been ignorant of us. You, O Lord, are our father, our redeemer, from everlasting is your name. Septuagint: “Turn from heaven, and look from your holy house and from your glory. Where is your zeal and your strength? Where is the multitude of your mercies and of your compassions, by which you have endured us? (16) For you are our Father, since Abraham did not know us, and Israel did not know us. But you, O Lord, our Father, deliver us; your name is upon us from the beginning.”*

You who have exhibited such great things to your people, which the discourse above has described, so that you have regarded us as worthy of fellowship with your Spirit too [cf. Isa 63:14], now *attend from heaven, and look* at our works, but only if they are worthy of you. Why do you turn your face away from us? Now heaven is called *holy habitation* and “house” of his *glory* in accordance with this: “Heaven is my throne, but the earth is my footstool” [Isa 66:1]. And in another passage: “He who dwells in heaven laughs at them” [Ps 2:4], and: “I have lifted up my eyes to you who dwell in heaven” [Ps 123:1]. It is not that the Almighty God who holds heaven in his palm and the earth in his fist [cf. Isa 40:12] is confined to any location, but that things that are holier may be said to be his *habitation* and place. After all, Solomon, who built God’s “house,” says to him in a prayer, “The heavens of the heavens and the earth shall not suffice for you” [1 Kgs 8:27]. And in the Lord’s Prayer, we say, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” [Matt 6:10]. Therefore, wherever the will of God is being done, that is his *habitation* and God’s “house.”

But we should explain what follows, *Where is your zeal and your strength?* by means of that testimony that God through Ezekiel says to Jerusalem, who had followed her own lovers: “I shall no longer be angry with you, and my *zeal* has withdrawn from you” [Ezek 16:42]. And the meaning is, Since we have sinned and you did not begin to hate us, your *zeal* has withdrawn from us, which does not withdraw when he says through Zechariah, “I was zealous for Zion and Jerusalem with great zeal” [Zech 1:14]. This is also why he says in what comes next, “And I shall be angry with the nations that have been gathered together against her in a circuit” [Zech 1:15]. But when *zeal* withdraws, the *strength* of God also withdraws, and the affection of the fatherly *bowels* is overcome, while the unbelievable clemency of God is conquered by the great extent of sins. Consequently, he *holds himself back from* helping me, he who was not able to see me overwhelmed.

*For you are our father*, he says, you who are the Creator of all. *Abraham does not know us*,

<sup>30</sup> Or “*ealousy*.”

and Israel is ignorant of us, because we have offended you, and they do not “know” their sons. They understand that they are not loved by their God. Instantly a question surfaces: Why did he record *Abraham* and *Israel*, that is, Jacob, but is silent about the name of Isaac? To this we shall say in response, that the things in between are named as well when the beginning and the end have been recorded. Or we shall answer this way: Abraham was called to faith from the Gentiles, and in view of the nature of his former and subsequent character, he was allotted a name change. Jacob too, in order to be named Israel, attained to it by great effort [cf. [Gen 32:22–28](#)]. Whence also Abraham had three wives [cf. [Gen 25:1](#)], and Jacob four [cf. [Gen 35:22–26](#)], but Isaac from the beginning to the end possessed the ancient name, and was content with one wife, thus pointing to the chastity of the church. Those therefore who pray for a change from worse things to a better situation are imitating those for whom glad things have succeeded grievous things. But all they ask is this, that since he is their “Father,” and has deemed them worthy of this “name,” may he not forget his own sons. Otherwise, through them God’s “name” will be blasphemed among the Gentiles [cf. [Rom 2:24](#)].

32. ([63:17–19](#)) *Why have you made us to err (errare) in your ways, why have you hardened our heart, that we should not fear you? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your inheritance. (18) They have possessed your holy people as nothing. Our enemies have trodden down your sanctification. (19) We have become as in the beginning, when you did not rule over us, and when your name was not invoked upon us.* Septuagint: “Why have you led us astray, O Lord, from your holy way? Have you hardened our hearts, that we should not fear you? Return for the sake of your servants, for the sake of the tribes of your inheritance, (18) that we may possess a small part of your holy mountain. Our adversaries have trodden down your sanctuary. (19) We have become as in the beginning, when you did not rule over us, and when your name had not been invoked upon us.”

Although the epistle that Paul writes to the Corinthians is written to the people of one city, in view of the diversity of its inhabitants, that is, it was comprised of both saints and sinners, sometimes he praises them [cf. [1 Cor 1:4–7](#)], sometimes he chastises them [cf. [1 Cor 4:14](#)], sometimes he teaches, sometimes he rebukes. He challenges them to continence [cf. [1 Cor 7:1](#)], he does not refuse marriage [[1 Cor 7:2](#)], he draws them away from idolatry [cf. [1 Cor 8](#)], he instructs on the resurrection [cf. [1 Cor 15](#)], he gives his support to marrying twice,<sup>331</sup> in order not to provide an occasion for fornication [cf. [1 Cor 7:9](#)]. We have said this in order to understand the present chapter as well. It is written entirely as a speech of people who are praying to God. They are comprised either of the just or of saints. Sometimes they praise the Lord, sometimes they incite the Lord with a question and refer to God what is their own fault.

This is why, after other things, they say this: *Why have you made us to err*, “O Lord, from” *your ways? “Why have you led us astray from your way?” “Why have you hardened our heart, that we should not fear you?”* It is not that God is the cause of error and hardness, but that the patience of him who waits for our salvation, appears to be the cause of error and hardness, so long as he does not correct transgressors. This is why, though he was very angry with certain ones, he keeps his hand from striking, and says, “I shall not visit upon your daughters when they shall commit fornication, and upon your spouses, when they shall commit adultery” [[Hos 4:14](#)].

<sup>331</sup> For another use of *digamia*, see [Tertullian, Monog. 6](#).



For “he scourges every son whom he receives” [[Prov 3:12](#)], and he strikes in order to correct. After all, he says of those who have not lost their designation as sons, but who are being drawn back to repentance by means of punishment, “I shall visit their iniquities with a rod, and their sins with scourges, but my mercy I shall not remove from them” [[Ps 89:32–33](#)]. For there is a sorrow that leads to life, and a sorrow that leads to death [cf. [2 Cor 7:10](#)]. This is why the sinner says in the Psalm, “You have *made* our paths to turn aside from *your way*, and you have laid us low in a place of affliction” [[Ps 44:18–19](#)]. Moreover, the people *wander (errant)* through the desert for forty years, in order that they might not find their former way and might not turn back to the Egyptians. In Hosea, too, the paths of Jerusalem are hedged in and enclosed with thorns, to keep her from following her own lovers. She is compelled by necessity not to return to her former husband [cf. [Hos 2:6–7](#)]. And God is said to have *hardened* Pharaoh’s heart, so that he would not let his people go, and would be afflicted by the ten plagues [cf. [Exod 4:21](#)]. Paul discusses this problem very carefully in the letter to the Romans [cf. [Rom 9:17–18](#)], and we have touched upon it in a certain work.<sup>332</sup>

He says, *Return, “O Lord,” or turn us for the sake of your servants*, Abraham and Israel, who have not recognized us [cf. [Isa 63:16](#)], or whom we believe are among the people. “Our adversaries” *have possessed your holy people as nothing*, or without any effort. Or “turn us,” so that, according to the Septuagint, “we may possess a small part of your holy mountain,” for we cannot possess your entire mountain. Thus when we have a part of it, we may come to the fullness of it, and contemplate the glory of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth [cf. [John 1:14](#)]. It is also spoken of this in this same prophet, “In the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest” [[Isa 2:2](#)].

Now Jeremiah teaches in greatest detail in what sense one should interpret what was recorded above: *Why have you made us to err?* “You have led me astray, O Lord, and I have been led astray, you have held fast and prevailed” [[Jer 20:7](#)]. For while you promise me mercy, and feign harshness, like a compassionate Father, and while you, skilled physician that you are, conceal the very sharp knife, lest you terrify the sick man before you cure him, you have made me negligent.<sup>333</sup> For this reason God says also of Jerusalem, “Behold, I shall lead her astray, and will make her as a desert, and I will establish her as a land without water, and I will speak to her heart and give her possessions from thence, and the valley of Achor to open her understanding” [[Hos 2:14–15](#)]. Let us consider the progression of each of these things. He “leads her astray” and makes her “deserted” and “without water,” in order that she may experience a thirst for the virtues. When she says, “My soul has thirsted for you, how often has my flesh [longed] for you” [[Ps 63:1–2](#)], at that time he will “speak to her heart” and comfort the one who is mourning; and

<sup>332</sup> Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 120.10](#). A translation of the relevant portions of this letter will be provided in an appendix.

<sup>333</sup> In his *Discussion of Free Will*, written against the doctrine of Martin Luther, Erasmus of Rotterdam refers to this passage in Jerome, noting that Jerome interprets [Isa 63:17](#) as Origen does: “od hardens the sinner’ heart when he does not punish him immediately, and has mercy on him when he urges him to swift repentance by means of affliction.” Desiderius Erasmus, [Controversies: De libero arbitrio, Hyperaspistes 1](#), ed. C. Trinkhaus, trans. P. Macardle and C. Miller, CWE 76 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 47.

he will “give her possession from thence,” that is, from repentance and from the grief that achieves salvation, and the humility of her troubled heart—for that is what “valley of Achor” means—shall “open up understanding” so that she is not unaware of her own Creator.

He says, *Our enemies have trodden down your “sanctuary,”* doubtless signifying the temple, which the victorious Romans trampled, and *we have become as in the beginning,* before we were called in Abraham, and while we were in Egypt, not having God, nor kings, nor rulers, nor prophets, nor the law of the commandments of God. All of these things were fulfilled after the Lord’s passion, and they are being fulfilled today.<sup>334</sup> For an eternal curse remains on those who say, “His blood be upon us and upon our sons” [[Matt 27:25](#)]; and God does not *rule* over them, nor is *his name invoked* upon them, so long as they are not called the people of God.

33. ([64:1–3](#)) *Would that you would rend the heavens and come down, the mountains would drain away at your presence! (2) They would vanish as at the burning of fire, and would burn with fire, that your name might be made known to your enemies, that the nations might be troubled at your presence. (3) When you shall do wonderful things, we shall not bear them; you have come down, and at your presence the mountains melted away.* Septuagint: “If you would open the heaven, trembling will take hold upon the mountains from you, they shall melt (2) as wax melts before the fire; and fire shall burn up the adversaries, and your name shall be manifest among the adversaries, at your presence the nations shall be troubled. (3) When you shall do glorious things, trembling from you shall take hold of the mountains.”

Since our enemies have trampled upon your sanctuary, and we have become as in the beginning, when your name was not being invoked upon us [cf. [Isa 63:18–19](#)], therefore we say in prayer, *Would that you would rend the heavens and come down,* and that you who always promise would at some time fulfill your promises. This was said at a time when the Savior had not yet come and had not assumed from the virgin’s womb the humanity of our nature and substance, the humanity that he saved. Thus we who have borne the image of the earthly [man] might bear the image of the superheavenly man [cf. [1 Cor 15:49](#)].

But if you would act, they say, and the *heavens*, or “heaven,” would be “opened,” the *mountains* would *drain away* at the coming of your majesty, or “trembling would take hold of the mountains,” and they would be consumed like “wax” that is consumed “before the fire.” The heavens were also “opened” for Ezekiel, and he saw great visions [cf. [Ezek 1:1](#)]. Moreover, in the blessings of Deuteronomy, Moses prays, “May the Lord *open* for you his good treasure, heaven, that he may give a blessing to you” [[Deut 28:12](#)]. Also, in the Gospel it is narrated that John the Baptist saw the heavens “opened” and the Holy Spirit descending upon the Lord in the form of a dove [cf. [Matt 3:16](#); [John 1:32](#)]. But the *mountains* are consumed and “melt” like “wax” at the coming of the Lord, of which it is written, “God is a consuming fire” [[Deut 4:24](#); [Heb 12:29](#)]. They are the adversarial powers and everything that raises itself up against the knowledge of God [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)].<sup>335</sup> It is also sung about them in the ninety-sixth Psalm, “The earth saw and trembled; the mountains *melted* like *wax* at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth” [[Ps 97:4–5](#)]. For if you were to *come down* and fulfill your promises, the waters of the sea would *vanish*, according to Symmachus, and that *fire* would consume all

<sup>334</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 54 (390, 31–91, 2).

<sup>335</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (391, 19–0).

their saltiness. It is written about this also in another Psalm, “As smoke vanishes, let them vanish; as wax is consumed before the fire, so let the sinners perish from before God” [cf. [Ps 68:2](#)].

One should also take note of this, that when the waters of the sea shall have been consumed by the divine fire, at that time the *name* of the Lord and Savior becomes *known to his enemies*, of whom it is said in the sixty-seventh Psalm, “The tongue of your dogs with that from your *enemies*” [[Ps 68:23](#)]. Thus the one whom they had not perceived from his benefits, they recognize in the overthrow of their city and in their own captivity. And “at his presence the nations shall be troubled,” or as it is expressed very meaningfully in the Hebrew, they shall be *moved*. Accordingly, things that were previously immoveable come to salvation. And when he does *wonderful things*, and shows in the Gospel the signs that he once showed in Egypt and in the wilderness, they confess that they cannot *bear* the glory of his advent, or that “trembling is taking hold of the mountains.”

And this is nicely expressed in Hebrew. It is as if they have been heard who had prayed above, *Would that you would rend the heavens and come down, the mountains would drain away at your presence!* Afterward they add, *you have come down, you the Word have become flesh and you, Emmanuel, which means God with us* [cf. [Isa 7:14](#); [Matt 1:23](#)] have truly dwelled among us [cf. [John 1:14](#)]. And for that reason, *At your presence the mountains drained away*, of which we spoke above.

The Hebrews explain this passage as follows. *Fire shall burn the wicked in just the same way as water boils from the heat of fire; for they think that amasim means “wicked ones,” not “consuming” and “melting” as the others have translated.*

34. ([64:4–5a](#)) *From of old they have not heard, nor perceived with the ears, the eye has not seen, O God, besides you, what things you have prepared for those who wait for you. (5) You have met him that rejoices, and does justice in your ways; they shall remember you.* Septuagint: “From of old we have not heard, neither shall our eyes see, O God, beside you, and your works that you shall do to those who wait for mercy. (5) For he meets those who do justice, and they shall remember your ways.”

In the epistle that he writes to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul, being as it were a “Hebrew of Hebrews” [[Phil 3:5](#)], paraphrases<sup>336</sup> this testimony from the authentic books. He does not render it word for word, something that he utterly disdains doing, but he expresses the truth of the meaning, which he uses to corroborate his intentions [cf. [1 Cor 2:9](#)]. Therefore let the delusions of the Apocrypha (*apocryphorum*) be silent, which are forced upon the churches of Christ by the occasion provided by this testimony.<sup>337</sup> It can truly be said of it that the devil sits in

<sup>336</sup> Greek.

<sup>337</sup> By explaining Paul’ quotation on the basis of the Hebrew version of [Isa 64:4](#) (LXX [64:3](#)), Jerome is apparently controverting Origen, who in his [Commentary on Matthew 5.29](#) ([35](#)) on [Matt 27:9](#), traces Paul’ quotation in [1 Cor 2:9](#) to the *Apocalypse of Elijah (in Secretis Eliae)*. However, the phrase “hich the eye has not seen nor the ear heard” is not found in surviving copies of this Apocalypse. See [The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha](#), ed. J. Charlesworth (Garden City: Doubleday, 1983–5), 1:721–4 (728). For discussions, see A. Feuillet, “[L’énigme de I Cor., II, 9](#),” *Revue Biblique* 70 (1963): 52–4 (digest in English in *Theology Digest* 14 (1966): 143–8; cited

ambush with the rich in secret places (*apocryphis*), in order to slay the innocent [cf. [Ps 10:8](#)]. And again, “He lies in wait in secret (*apocrypho*) as a lion in his den, he lies in wait to seize the poor” [[Ps 10:9](#)]. For the *Ascension of Isaiah* and the *Apocalypse of Elijah* contain this testimony.<sup>338</sup> And by means of this occasion, and by many things of this sort, weak little women of Spain and especially of Lusitania<sup>339</sup> have been deceived. They are loaded with sins, “who are led by various desires, always learning and never attaining to knowledge of the truth” [cf. [2 Tim 3:6](#)]. Consequently, that they have received the portents of Basilides,<sup>440</sup> Balsamus,<sup>441</sup> and Thesaurus,<sup>442</sup> of Barbelo<sup>443</sup> too, and of Leusiboras,<sup>444</sup> and of the remaining names. A very industrious apostolic man, Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons (*Lugdunum*) and martyr, writes about these things when he explicates the origins of the many heresies, and especially of the Gnostics.<sup>445</sup> Through Marcus the Egyptian, they first deceived noble women of Gaul around the Rhone river, then those of Spain.<sup>446</sup> They mixed pleasure in with their fables, laying claim to the reputation of knowledge by means of their own ignorance.<sup>447</sup>

But what the people say presently is this, that they never knew, either with their ears or eyes, what things God was preparing for his saints in the future, that “he meets those who do

in G. Fee, [The First Epistle to the Corinthians](#) [Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1987], 109).

<sup>338</sup> For the surviving texts of *Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah*, see Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2:143–6.

<sup>339</sup> This refers to the western part of Spain (modern Portugal).

<sup>440</sup> He was the founder of a Gnostic sect in the second century. Cf. [Irenaeus, Adv Haer 1.24](#).

<sup>441</sup> This is a mythological name among the Spanish Priscillianists; cf. [Jerome, Ep. 75.3](#) to Theodora. It possibly derives from Beel-Samin, “he Lord of Heaven,” a well-known divinity of the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, and Mesopotamians. Cf. *DCB* [1:240](#).

<sup>442</sup> The word means “reasure.” I have not found any information to explain Jerome’s use of this name.

<sup>443</sup> Barbelo was a mythological personage in several forms of Ophitic Gnosticism. It represented a supreme female principle, the single passive antecedent of creation in its manifoldness. Cf. [Irenaeus, Adv Haer 1.29](#). Several times Jerome includes Barbelo in lists of portentous names current in Spanish heresy, that is, among Priscillianists. He associates Balsamus and Leusibora with it in [Ep. 75.3](#) to Theodora; *Vigil.*; and *In Amos 3:9*. Cf. *DCB* [1:248–9](#).

<sup>444</sup> This name is mentioned only by Jerome, here and in [Ep. 75.3](#) to Theodora, as an unintelligible name in use among Gnostic sects.

<sup>445</sup> Cf. [Jerome, Vir III 35](#), where Jerome does not mention that Irenaeus was a martyr.

<sup>446</sup> Marcus was a Gnostic of the school of Valentinus who taught in the middle of the second century. See [Irenaeus, Adv Haer 1.13–1](#). Irenaeus reports that the Rhone district was much infested with his followers. According to George Salmon, “arcus (17),” *DCB* [3:829](#), the reasons for considering him to be an Egyptian, as Jerome clearly believes ([Ep. 75.3](#) to Theodora), are not necessarily sound. Sulpicius Severus gives the history of the origin of Priscillianism, and tells of a Marcus of Memphis who brought the Gnostic doctrines into Spain. Jerome identified this Marcus with the one of Irenaeus. But Priscillianism contains none of the points that distinguish Marcus from other Gnostics.

<sup>447</sup> Cf. [Irenaeus, Adv Haer 1.11–0](#).

justice, and remember his ways.” On the other hand, according to the Septuagint they say that they never knew another god “besides” him who truly is God, and from no other have they “seen” such great works, which “he shall do for those who wait for his mercy,” and “do justice” and “remember his ways.” And just as it is written, “No one has ever seen God” [[John 1:18](#)], and again, “No one sees my face and lives” [[Exod 33:20](#)], therefore God is not displayed by words, nor is he observable with the eyes, but he is seen by those of whom it is written, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” [[Matt 5:8](#)].

35. ([64:5b–6](#)) *Behold you are angry, and we have sinned, in them we have been always, and we shall be saved. (6) And we have all become as one unclean, and all our justices as the rag of a menstruating woman. And we have all fallen as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* Septuagint: “Behold, you are angry, and we have all sinned; therefore we have erred, (6) and we have all become as unclean ones, and all our justice as the rag of one sitting, and we have floated down as leaves because of our iniquities; thus the wind shall carry us away.”

The order is inverted. It is not because *you are angry, we have sinned*, but because *we have sinned, you are angry*; and since *you are angry* with us who sin, O Lord, therefore, “we have erred” and abandoned the right way. Or, according to the Hebrew, We who *have been always* in sins, *shall be saved* only by your mercy, we who by ourselves are “unclean ones,” and whatever justice we seem to have, is compared with the rag “of one sitting,” or *of a menstruating woman*. Theodotion recorded the Hebrew word itself here, *eddim*, which Symmachus translated as *κυησεων*, that is, “[the rag] of those giving birth.” Aquila rendered *μαρτυριων*, that is, “[the rag] of testimonies,” when the blood is confirmed from the virgin’s first act of marital intercourse [cf. [Deut 22:13–21](#)].

He says, “And we have floated down as leaves” from trees, which are scattered by the breezes of the winds “because of our iniquities.” Here one needs to consider that the “justice” that is in the law is named uncleanness in comparison with the purity of the gospel. For indeed, what was formerly glorified has not been glorified on account of the surpassing glory [cf. [2 Cor 3:10](#)]. And this is why the Apostle Paul, who had fulfilled everything in accordance with the justice that is in the law, says that he regarded all things as a loss because of the preeminent knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, for whose sake he regards all things as dung, that he might gain Christ, and be found in him not having his own justice, which is from the law, but the justice that is from God through faith in Christ [cf. [Phil 3:6–9](#)].

For there is a just man who perishes in his own justice [cf. [Eccl 7:16](#)], if after the truth of the gospel he wants to practice the shadows of the law, and not to justly pursue what is just [cf. [Deut 16:20](#)]. This is why, according to the very wise Solomon, “every man seems just to himself” [[Prov 21:2](#)], when he lives by the law. The Lord says to them in the Gospel, “You are those who justify yourselves before men” [[Luke 16:15](#)]. Paul flees from this and says, “I am not conscious of anything in myself, yet I am not justified in this” [[1 Cor 4:4](#)]; but I await the justice of God, of which Solomon says, “Understand true justice” [[Prov 1:3](#)]. Therefore there is another justice that lacks truth, and true justice is that one of which it is said once again in the Gospel, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice” [[Matt 5:6](#)]. Many prophets and just men longed to see it, and they did not see it [cf. [Matt 13:17](#)]. But Abraham saw that justice and rejoiced [cf.

[John 8:56](#)]. He did not follow the letter that kills, but the spirit that gives life [cf. [2 Cor 3:6](#)]. It is not surprising that they said this about human beings, since not even the stars are clean when compared with God's justice [cf. [Job 25:5](#)]; moreover, he has detected some perverseness in his own angels [cf. [Job 4:18](#)].

Therefore, if after the gospel of Christ and the coming of the Son of God, someone observes the ceremonies of the law, our pedagogue [cf. [Gal 3:24](#)], let him hear the people confessing that all that justice is compared with the filthiest rag, to which Esther too compares her diadem, which was the sign of royal authority, which she did not wear willingly, but by necessity: "You know my necessity, for I detest the symbol of my proud station, which is upon my head in the days of my manifestation; I abhor it as a menstrual rag, and I do not wear it in the days of my tranquility" [[Esth 14:16](#)].<sup>448</sup>

36. ([64:7](#)) *There is none that calls upon your name, who rises up, and holds you. You have hid your face from us, and have crushed us in the hand of our iniquity.* Septuagint: "And there is none that calls upon your name, and that remembers to take hold of you, for you have turned your face away from us, and have handed us over because of our iniquities."

Since we have flowed like leaves from trees [cf. [Isa 64:6](#)], which the wind scatters when they have been dried up, therefore no one has been found who *called upon your name*, and by rising up from the ruin of his "iniquities," *held* or "took hold of" *you*, and said with the bride, "I found him whom my soul sought, I shall *hold* him, and I shall not let him go" [[Song 3:4](#)]. In Scripture, wind is recorded in three ways: either for the greatness of temptations, or for the perverseness of doctrine, or for literal wind, by means of which clouds are gathered and air is forced into the clouds. These words in the Gospel concern temptations: "The rivers came, the winds blew, and they struck against that house, and they were not able to destroy it, for it had been founded with a stable structure upon the rock" [[Matt 7:25](#)]. Concerning the perversity of doctrine there is this: "That we may not be driven along by every wind of doctrine by the malice of men" [[Eph 4:14](#)]. Of literal wind there is this: "And they were not able to sail, for the wind was contrary" [[Mark 6:48](#)]. I am not saying that this latter verse too cannot be understood tropologically, but merely that it offers an illustration for the present understanding.

For when the Lord "turns his face away from us," we are *crushed in the hand of our iniquity*, or we are "handed over" to temptations "because of our" sins. From this, we learn that even *iniquity* has *hands*, and all sins desire to *hold* us strongly and tightly. And this is why "life and death are in the hand of the tongue" [[Prov 18:21](#)], and the saint prays, "Let not the foot of pride come to me" [[Ps 36:11](#)]. But since the Lord has "turned his face away from us," let us *call upon his name*, we who know that this is written: "Everyone who *calls upon the name* of the Lord shall be saved" [[Joel 2:32](#)]. And let us say, "I made known my sin and did not cover my iniquity; I said, 'I will declare my iniquity to the Lord against myself, and you forgive the ungodliness of my heart'" [[Ps 32:5](#)]. And at once, we shall have the Lord responding, "I have blotted out your iniquities as a mist, and your sins as a cloud" [[Isa 44:22](#)]. And we shall also say, "Show your face, and we shall be saved" [[Ps 80:3](#)], so that we are not servants of sin, but your servants. For "everyone who commits sin is its servant" [[John 8:34](#)].

37. ([64:8-12](#)) *And now, O Lord, you are our Father, but we are clay, and you are our maker,*

<sup>448</sup> Notice this quote from the LXX additions to Esther.



*and we all are the works of your hands. (9) Be not very angry, O Lord, and remember iniquity no longer. Behold, see we are all your people. (10) The city of your sanctuary has become a desert, Zion has become a desert, Jerusalem is desolate. (11) The house of our sanctification and of our glory, where our fathers praised you, has been burnt with fire, and all our lovely things have been turned into ruins. (12) Will you contain yourself, O Lord, for these things, will you be silent, and afflict us vehemently?* Septuagint: “And now, O Lord, you are our Father, but we are clay, we are all the work of your hands. (9) Be not excessively angry with us, and remember not our sins forever. Even now look, for we are all your people. (10) The city of your sanctuary has become a desert, Zion [has become] as a wilderness, Jerusalem a curse. (11) The house of our sanctuary, and of the glory that our fathers had blessed, has been burnt with fire, and all our glorious things have collapsed. (12) And for all these things you, O Lord, have held back, and been silent, and have brought us very low.”

If we should consider our merits, one would have to despair. If we consider your mercy, you who scourge every son whom you receive [[Prov 3:12](#)], we dare to pour out prayers. For *you are our Father*, who have deigned to say, “Israel is my firstborn son” [[Exod 4:22](#)]. And although *we are clay, and the works of your hands, and you are our maker*, and the vessel cannot say to the potter, why was it made thus and so [cf. [Rom 9:20](#)], nevertheless, knowing that we are sons, we dare to say, *Be not very angry, O Lord*. We do not escape your anger, nor do we seek your patience any longer by which we are treasuring up for ourselves wrath on the day of wrath [cf. [Rom 2:5](#)]; but this is what we seek: that you *not be very angry* with us, that you *not remember* our *iniquity* at the time of vengeance and satisfaction. Instead, may you *see your people*, who once were called *your people*, and may you have pity on the *city of your sanctuary* in which your name has been invoked. This city is called *Zion* and *Jerusalem*, which the flow of the river gladdens [cf. [Ps 46:4](#)], and in which there was once a watchtower of virtues and the contemplation of peace.

Your *house*, too, that is, the temple of *our sanctification and glory*, where *our fathers praised you*, has “collapsed” *into ruins* and ashes and has been destroyed by a devastating fire. Consequently, sacrificial victims are not offered in it, the Passover is not celebrated, nor are any of the ceremonies taking place that you commanded to be done. Instead, *all our lovely things have been turned into ruins*. Since therefore these things are so, *will you contain* your mercy, *O Lord, for these things*, and *will you be silent* before the blaspheming adversaries? *Will you afflict us* and “bring us low,” not in your customary manner, but “excessively”?

The Jews think that all of this was fulfilled at the time of the Assyrians and Babylonians. But we refer everything to the time of the Roman victory, in accordance with those things that follow from the persona of the Savior: “I appeared to those who were not asking; I was found by those who were not seeking me” [[Isa 65:1](#); [Rom 10:20](#)]. Josephus, the writer of Jewish history, explains this in seven books, to which he has given the title, *Of the Jewish Captivity*, that is, *αλωσεως*. It is superfluous to discuss with words things that are plain to see. For *all their lovely things have been turned into ruins*, and their temple that was celebrated throughout the whole world has been turned into a dung heap for a new city, which is named Aelia after its founder.<sup>449</sup> It has become a dwelling place of owls [cf. [Isa 34:15](#)], and in vain do they say daily in

<sup>449</sup> Cf. n. 47 at [1.9 \(1:6a–\)](#).

their synagogues, *Will you* “hold back, O Lord, for all these things,” and *will you afflict us*, and “lay us low” *vehemently*?

We can also refer these things to the church, or to the soul of the holy man, which can rightly be called a “watchtower” and “vision of peace” when the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit dwell in it. But if a Zion of this sort will have been abandoned by the Lord, either by our fault or that of the people, at once it will lie exposed to burning by the devil’s fiery arrows [cf. [Eph 6:16](#)]. For “[they are] all adulterers, their hearts like an oven” [cf. [Hos 7:4, 6](#)], and when the coldness of chastity has been pushed out, the flame of lust will run riot in the temple of God. Consequently, anything in us that used to be “glorious” and renowned collapses, is destroyed and perishes, and that which is spoken in the Psalms is fulfilled: “They have burned your sanctuary with fire; they have profaned to the ground the tabernacle of your name” [[Ps 74:7](#)]. He alone can extinguish it from whose belly flows rivers of living water [cf. [John 7:38](#)].

## [THE EIGHTEENTH BOOK]

1. The eighteenth, or rather, the last book on Isaiah, is dedicated to your name, daughter Eustochium, and to that of your holy mother, Paula, so that I may now call to mind with equal remembrance those whom I have held in equal honor, especially since even when she was alive, quite frequently she, along with you, requested this work; as did your brother<sup>11</sup> Pammachius, a very educated man, both then and afterwards, who did not cease compelling me with frequent letters; and to me, the same religious duty applies to friends who are both present and absent, both men and women, who are now sleeping in Christ, that is, the love of souls, not of bodies.

I am not unaware of how great is the diversity of opinions among human beings, I do not say concerning the mystery of the Trinity, the correct confession of which is the ignorance of knowledge, but concerning other ecclesiastical dogmas, namely, about the resurrection and the state of souls and of human flesh, concerning how the promises of future things ought to be interpreted, and in what manner the Apocalypse of John should be understood, which if we interpret it literally, one would have to Judaize.<sup>22</sup> If we explain it spiritually, as it was written, we shall seem to go against the views of many: of the Latins, Tertullian,<sup>33</sup> Victorinus,<sup>44</sup> Lactantius;<sup>55</sup> of the Greeks, to pass over the others, I shall mention only Irenaeus, Bishop of Lugdunum,<sup>66</sup> against whom the very eloquent Dionysius, pontiff of the Church of Alexandria, writes a fine book,<sup>77</sup> mocking the fable of thousand years [cf. [Rev 20:1–7](#)] and the golden and bejeweled

1 I.e., brother-in-law.

2 For Jerome' polemic against Christian chiliasm, see introduction.

3 Tertullian advocates millenarism in *Adv Marc* 3.25, referring there to his book, *De spe fidelium, On the Hope of the Faithful*, which is not extant but to which Jerome refers in *Comm in Ezek* 36. Tertullian insists on the abundance of spiritual goods above all.

4 For St. Victorinus, bishop of Petovium, see [Jerome, Vir III 74](#). He was a martyr of the Diocletian persecution (d. 304) and forerunner of Latin biblical exegesis. See [Latin Commentaries on Revelation: Victorinus of Petovium, Caesarius of Arles, Apringius of Beja and Bede the Venerable](#), trans. W. Weinrich (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2011).

5 Lactantius describes the millennium in [Inst 7.24](#).

6 Irenaeus' millennialism is described in [Adv Haer 5.33–5](#).

7 The book in question was written against the Egyptian bishop Nepos, not Irenaeus, according to Jerome himself in [Vir III 69](#) and [Eusebius HE 7.24–6](#). For the life of Dionysius bishop of Alexandria (248), see [Eusebius HE 6](#) and [7](#). Eusebius maintains that Dionysius was the most distinguished pupil of Origen and was in charge of the catechetical school under Heraclas (from ca. 233); [HE 6.29.47](#); that his work, *On the Promises* which does not survive, was written against a beloved brother bishop named Nepos, who asserted a thousand-year reign of Christ on earth;

Jerusalem on earth [cf. [Rev 21:10–11](#), [18–21](#)], the restoration of the temple [[Rev 21:22](#)], the blood of the sacrificial victims, Sabbath rest, the injury of the circumcision, marriage, births, children, upbringing, splendid banquets, the servitude of all the Gentiles; and on the other hand, wars, armies, and also triumphs, the killing of the vanquished, death of the hundred-year-old sinner [cf. [Isa 65:20](#)]. Apollinaris has answered him [Dionysius] with two volumes,<sup>88</sup> whom men follow, not only of his own sect, but also a very large multitude of ours, at least in this respect. Consequently, my mind is filled with foreboding, and I already perceive how much raging anger will be stirred against me.<sup>99</sup>

I do not envy these people, if they love only the world, so that they have desired earthly things even in the kingdom of Christ, and in addition to the abundance of foods and the gluttony of the throat and the belly, they look for those things which are below the belly. The Apostle Paul says of them, “Food is for the belly and belly for food, but God will destroy them both” [[1 Cor 6:13](#)], and, “The kingdom of God is not food and drink” [[Rom 14:17](#)]; and the Lord and Savior says, “You are in error, knowing neither the Scriptures nor the power of God; for in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but they will be like the angels” [[Matt 22:29–30](#)]. In saying these things, I do not take away the reality of bodies, which I confess will be resurrected immortal and incorrupt, so that they change in glory, not in substance. And thus, we must travel down the right path, so that we turn aside neither to the left nor to the right [cf. [Num 20:17](#)], that is, we follow neither the Judaic error nor that of the heretics. Some of them, who are of the flesh [cf. [1 Cor 3:3](#)], love the flesh alone; others who are ungrateful of the benefits of God, refuse to have what Christ had, both in his birth and in his resurrection.

For when the apostles thought that he was a spirit, or according to the Gospel of the Hebrews that the Nazarenes read repeatedly, an incorporeal demon, he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts rise up in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, because it is I myself; touch and see, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones, just as you see that I have; and when he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet” [[Luke 24:38–40](#)]. And again to Thomas, who was in doubt, he said, “Put your finger here, and see my hands, and stretch out your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but faithful” [[John 20:27](#)]. Finally, it is written that in order to prove the truth of his body, he took food [cf. [Luke 24:43](#)], which he had also ordered to be given to the daughter of the chief synagogue ruler, whom he raised from the dead [cf. [Mark 5:43](#)]. Moreover, Lazarus is said to have engaged in a banquet with the Savior, lest his resurrection might be believed to be ghostly [cf. [John 12:2](#)]. It is

that on the grounds of style, Dionysius himself rejected apostolic authorship of John’s Apocalypse by John the son of Zebedee, author of the Fourth Gospel and the general epistle, though he admitted it was written by a holy and inspired writer ([Eusebius, HE 7.24–6; 3.28.3–](#)). See St. Dionysius of Alexandria, [Letters and Treatises](#), ed. Charles Lett Feltoe (London: Macmillan, 1918).

<sup>8</sup> According to M. Simonetti, “illennarism,” *EEC* 1:560, we know “ext to nothing” about the millenarism of Apollinaris of Laodicea.

<sup>9</sup> Jerome predicts that his extreme antichiliasm stance will be criticized by churchmen, who will say that the names listed above deserve to be treated with greater respect. Some of Jerome’s other writings, such as *Against Jovinianus*, were criticized for being excessively harsh.

not that we eat and drink after the resurrection, as our millenarians want, and that bodies that are immortal and incorrupt need to be sustained with earthly nourishment—otherwise, where there is food, there follows sickness; where there is sickness, a doctor must be summoned; where there are doctors, frequently there is death, and, on the other hand, resurrection, and a wholly new manner of life—but that the reception of food fully proves the reliability of his resurrection.

We are taking great care to guard against these things in advance, and we are speaking quite concisely, knowing that there is need for us to walk among serpents and scorpions [cf. [Luke 10:19](#)], who bite and strike in concealment.<sup>110</sup> Even Ecclesiastes says of them, “If the serpent bites in silence, it is nothing less than one who detracts secretly” [[Eccl 10:11](#)]. And this one’s<sup>111</sup> father David says, “You sat and spoke against your brother, and you set a stumbling block against your mother’s son; you did these things, and I was silent; you have esteemed iniquity, because I will be like you; I will accuse you and I will put it against your face” [[Ps 50:20–21](#)]. Thus you yourself are shown to have what you accuse in others.

But if the length of the commentary on the prophets is displeasing to anyone, he should hear openly that I have said much less than what the obscurity of content demands, and that each one can make brief little commentaries for himself from the things that we have treated in depth, which in any case shall not be sufficient for a complete understanding. For the history narrated by the prophets and the progression of events is not simply literal, but they are all filled with enigmas, and one thing is expressed in the words, something else is contained in the meanings, so that those things that you thought were flowing along by a full reading that contained no stumbling blocks are in fact wrapped in the obscurities of what follows next. But it is time that I bring the prophetic book to an end. If I have been more prolix than usual in this exposition, attribute that to the final sections, which I did not want to divide again, lest the number of books be increased.<sup>112</sup>

2. ([65:1](#)) *They have sought me, who before were not asking for me, they have found me who did not seek me. I said, “Behold me, behold me,” to a nation that did not call upon my name.* Septuagint: “I became manifest to those who were not seeking me; I was found by those who were not asking for me. I said, ‘Behold me,’ to a nation that did not call upon my name.”

To the prayer of the people mixed with complaints, in which they had said, “Why have you caused us to err, O Lord, from your way, have you hardened our hearts that we should not fear you?” [[Isa 63:17](#)],<sup>113</sup> he answered, as the Jews think, God the Father, as we prove, the Lord and Savior, To such an extent am I not hard and cruel, I who prefer the penitence of the sinner to his death [cf. [Ezek 18:23](#)], and I do not drive away my penitent children, who have still preserved the dignity of their name, that I should wish to save even foreigners; for *they who were not seeking me*, and who were unable to say, “The one of whom Moses and the prophets wrote in the law, we have found, Jesus” [[John 1:45](#)], “I became manifest to them.” Elsewhere the prophet

<sup>110</sup> This may be a reference to Jerome’s orthodox nemesis, Rufinus of Aquileia, whom elsewhere he calls a scorpion.

<sup>111</sup> That is, Solomon, the traditional author of Ecclesiastes.

<sup>112</sup> This eighteenth book is the lengthiest in the entire commentary.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 55 (392, 27–6).

testified about them, “To whom it has not been announced about him, they shall hear, and those who have not heard will understand” [[Isa 52:15](#)]. But you who meditate on the law of God day and night [cf. [Ps 1:2](#)], in vain do you boast of penitence, since you do not produce its works [cf. [Matt 3:8](#)].

This is why the evangelists and apostles, in their desire to corroborate the coming of the Lord with citations from the Old Testament, were always saying, “In order that what was written through the prophet would be fulfilled” [cf. [Matt 1:22](#); [2:15](#); [2:23](#); [3:3](#); [4:14](#), etc.]. The centurion *was not seeking* the Lord [cf. [Luke 7:6–7](#)], and he heard from the Lord, “Not even in Israel I have not found such faith” [[Luke 7:9](#)]. The Syrophenician woman did not know the utterances of the prophets, and she is praised by the voice of the Lord: “Oh woman, great is your faith” [[Matt 15:28](#)]. The royal official (*regulus*)<sup>114</sup> which is expressed in Greek as βασιλικός, which we can translate more accurately as “imperial,” from the royal court, found healing not only for his son, but for his entire household [cf. [John 4:46–53](#)].

Now that which is expressed in Hebrew as, *They sought me, who before were not asking*, is applied to the same sense, that those who previously did not have the knowledge of God later on *seek* the Lord and recognize him by revelation. He who was revealed both to Paul, while he is persecuting the church of believers [cf. [Acts 9:1–7](#)], and to the Apostle Peter, says, “You are blessed, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven” [[Matt 16:17](#)]. And Moses was *seeking* him, when he said to God, “If I have found favor with you, show yourself to me plainly, so that I may see you” [[Exod 33:13](#)]. He was expecting the reproach of Christ as greater riches than the treasures of Egypt [cf. [Heb 11:26–27](#)], while he desires repayment in the future. And with his mind, he was contemplating the invisible God, as if he were seeing him. Even in the Psalms we read about this, “The hope of all the ends of the earth, and on the sea far off” [[Ps 65:5](#)]; and in Genesis, “He himself will be the hope of the Gentiles” [[Gen 49:10](#)].

And what follows, *I said, “Behold I am,” to a nation that did not call upon my name*, agrees with this meaning: “He who is, sent me to you” [[Exod 3:14](#)]. He who “though he was in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal to God” [[Phil 2:6](#)], and the rest; but calling forth the Gentiles of the whole world, he made out of his own *name* the single *nation* of the Christians.

3. ([65:2](#)) *I have stretched out my hands all day to an unbelieving people, who walk on a way that is not good, after their own thoughts*. Septuagint: “I have stretched out my hands all day to an unbelieving and contradicting people, who have not walked on the good way, but after their own sins.”

The Apostle Paul recorded this testimony with respect to the persona of the Gentiles, while writing to the Romans. To what was said above, “I became manifest to those who were not asking for me; I was found by those who were not seeking me” [[Isa 65:1](#)], he added, “But to Israel, he says, ‘I stretched out my hands to an unbelieving and contradicting people’ ” [[Rom 10:21](#)]. When they were overcome by the Lord’s acts of kindness and saw signs that were beyond human, they said, “He does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the prince of the demons” [[Matt 12:24](#)]; and again, “You are a Samaritan and you have a demon” [[John 8:48](#)];

<sup>114</sup> This is the diminutive form of *rex*, “ing,” and means petty king, prince.



and again, “Although you are a man, you make yourself God” [John 10:33]; and elsewhere, “This man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath” [John 9:16]; and many other things, which it would take too long to write.

Finally, when he extended his *hands* on the cross *to a people* who did not believe, and said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” [Luke 23:34], those from the country said to him, “Ha! He who destroys the temple and within three days builds it, let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him; he saved others, he is not able to save himself” [Matt 27:40, 42]. Also, Simeon prophesied about this while holding the infant in his arms: “Behold this one is appointed for the ruin and resurrection of many, and for a sign that will be *contradicted*” [Luke 2:28, 34]. Moreover, the Jews of Rome say to Paul, “We know about this sect, which is *contradicted* everywhere” [Acts 28:22].

We can also interpret the *hands stretched out* of him who gave generously, because he did not refuse anything to those who were asking, but immediately restored health even to the leper who begged him [cf. Matt 8:2–3]. Moreover the man blind from birth received his sight [cf. John 9:1, 7], and thousands (not counting women and children) of hungry people in the desert were satisfied [cf. Matt 14:21]. The *hands stretched out* also signify the clemency of a parent who is eager to receive his own children into his bosom.

On the other hand, they have *walked on a way that is not good* and have followed *their own thoughts*. The Lord says to them through the prophet, “Turn away your foot from a rough way” [Prov 4:27]. For they had loved foreigners [cf. Jer 2:25], and like a harlot they had said, “I will go after my lovers” [Hos 2:5]; and abandoning the *good way*, which says in the Gospel, “I am the way” [John 14:6], they “walked” by a wide and spacious *way* that leads to death [cf. Matt 7:13]; and they have followed *their own thoughts*, which the prophet shuns and prays to the Lord, “From my hidden things cleanse me, O Lord, and spare your servant from those of others; if they shall have no dominion over me, then I shall be without spot” [Ps 19:12–13]. Moreover, the Apostle teaches that those who did not have the knowledge of God are handed over to a reprobate mind and to the evil works, so that they do those things that they ought not to do [cf. Rom 1:28]. Instead let us say, in the words of the Psalmist, “Lead me on the right path” [Ps 139:24].

4. (65:3) *A people who provoke me to wrath, always before my face, they who immolate in gardens and sacrifice upon bricks.* Septuagint: “This is the people who exasperates me in my own presence, they themselves always immolate in gardens and burn incense upon brick to the demons who are not.”

The Lord says, “You shall not make an idol for yourself, nor a likeness of anything that is in heaven or that is upon the earth” [Exod 20:4]; and through Moses he rebukes those who make them: “They irritated me by their strange [gods], and by their abominations they have provoked me to bitterness; they have *immolated* to demons, and not to God” [Deut 32:16–17]. Yet by their zeal for transgression, they were, as it were, irritating and provoking God. Not only did they do what was not allowed, but they did so continually and at all times, sinning “in the presence” of the Lord, before whose eyes all things stand exposed; or *immolating* sacrifices to idols in his temple. And what is more, lest anything be lacking to the sacrilege, they were *immolating in gardens* and “burning incense” *upon the bricks*, joining luxury to idolatry and

pleasure to the sacrifices; and in place of the one altar, which had been constructed by the law of God with unpolished stones [cf. [Exod 20:25](#); [Deut 27:5–6](#)], they were staining with the blood of sacrificial victims the baked *bricks* and the turf of the fields. Let this be said according to the letter.

In another respect, according to the spiritual understanding, every heretic *provokes* the Lord *to wrath* and offers unclean sacrifices in the falsity of his own dogmas, not those that will remain firm forever, but like gardens that provide herbage for a time in the delights of the flesh. It is said to him, “All flesh is grass and all its glory as the flower of grass; the grass has withered, and the flower has fallen, but the word of the Lord,” which is preached in the churches, “endures forever” [[Isa 40:6–8](#)]. Naboth was unwilling to have his own vineyard made into these gardens, and shed his blood at the hands of a very wicked king [cf. [1 Kgs 21:13](#)]. For it was not fitting that his paternal inheritance should perish, and with his vines cut off, which produce the fruit that gladdens the heart of man [[Ps 104:15](#)], in place of virtues, the vegetables of delights and vices should have arisen. There is report of the deservedly celebrated and praised opinion of the wisest man among the Greeks, who call all the swiftly passing pleasures of the age and the pomp and excess of the world the “gardens of Adonis.”<sup>115</sup> Also the heretics *sacrifice* upon stones, when they strive to firm up their own errors and carefully considered falsehoods by dialectical skill, and to construct them into a proper arrangement, and to corroborate them  $\gamma\rho\alpha\mu\mu\kappa\alpha\iota\varsigma$   $\alpha\nu\alpha\gamma\kappa\alpha\iota\varsigma$  (with forced lines), as they say, that is, with lines they have been cut and inscribed on the dust of a “brick.”

Now as for what is read in the Septuagint, but not found in Hebrew, “demons who are not,” one should interpret it in this sense, that both according to the letter and according to the spirit, demons do not subsist, which have fallen away from God who truly is, nor do the heretical sects, which do not hold on to any truth, but pass away and disappear like shadows. And this is why Esther says to the Lord, “Do not hand over your inheritance to those who are not” [[Esth 14:11](#)];<sup>116</sup> and the saint prays in the Psalm, “Forgive me, that I may be refreshed, before I depart and subsist no longer” [[Ps 39:13](#)]. For he who, while he lives in this body, has not received pardon for his sins and departs from life in this way, perishes before God and he stops being, although he subsists to himself in respect to the punishments.

5. ([65:4–5a](#)) *They who dwell in sepulchers and sleep in the shrines of idols, they who eat swine’s flesh, and there is profane broth in their vessels.* (5a) *They who say, “Depart from me, do not approach me, because you are unclean.”* Septuagint: “They sleep in sepulchers and caves on account of dreams, they eat the swine’s flesh and the broth of [their] sacrifices, all their vessels are profane; (5) who say, ‘Go far away from me; do not approach me, for I am clean.’ ”

There was no sacrilege that the people of Israel overlooked. Not only were they immolating in gardens and burning incense on bricks [cf. [Isa 65:3](#)], but they also sat or *dwelled in sepulchers* and *slept in the shrines of the idols*, where they were accustomed to lie down on the outspread

<sup>115</sup> Cf. [Plato, Phaedrus 276b](#). Adonis was a beautiful youth of Cyprus, born of incest between father and daughter, and loved by Aphrodite. In a legend told by Ovid, he was killed by a wild boar while out hunting. Later identified with a vegetation god, in Athens the midsummer festival of Adonis made use of pots of short-lived flowers and herbs (the Gardens of Adonis).

<sup>116</sup> This quote is found in the Septuagint additions to Esther.

hides of the “sacrifices,” in order that they might know the future in their “dreams.” For all the way up to today, pagans and many others erroneously celebrate in the temple of Aesculapius things that are nothing but burial mounds of the dead.<sup>117</sup> Neither were they content with the goal of impiety, but they fed on pigs’ *flesh*, which was prohibited by the Law [cf. [Lev 11:7](#); [Deut 14:8](#)], and they were devouring with ravenous jaws yesterday’s *broth*, which the Greeks call εολον.

This is why both they themselves and their *vessels* were *unclean*, and daily they were increasing their brashness and pride to such an extent that whoever was not led by similar error, they judged him *unclean* and fled from contact with him. The Samaritans and the Jews do this to us, and all the heretics of the sort who recently have sprouted up in Gaul under a harebrained teacher.<sup>118</sup> They turn us away from the basilicas of martyrs, we who customarily celebrate there with prayers, as if they are fleeing from those who are *unclean*. But it is not so much they who do this as the demons dwelling in them, who cannot endure the courage and scourging of the holy ashes.

But which of the heretics is not resting in the memories, is not “sleeping in the caves” of his teachers? Such were Marcion, Valentinus, and recently Eunomius, calling to witness the *uncleanness* of their mind by their leprous flesh. By forsaking the light of the Holy Spirit and the upper room, where the apostles were staying [cf. [Acts 1:13](#)], they linger in the darkness of the devil [cf. [John 13:30](#)], and they love the “caves” that Jeremiah condemns in mystical speech: “My inheritance has become like a cave υενης (of a hyena)” [[Jer 12:8–9](#)], which our people refer to as “bestial”; for that animal always hunts for corpses and lives off the juices and pus of the bodies of the dead. And Habakkuk, with a mournful voice, spoke against those who dwell in “caves,” “Woe to the one who gives his neighbor a drink of intoxicating potion and inebriates him in order to look upon his *caves*” [[Hab 2:15](#)].

The Lord too spoke of these “caves”: “It is written, ‘The house of my Father shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a *cave* of bandits’ ” [[Matt 21:13](#)], in which you kill the souls of the deceived, so that you do not see in them the visions of which the Savior likewise said, “I have multiplied visions and I was represented by means of the prophets” [[Hos 12:10](#)];

<sup>117</sup> Aesculapius (Greek: Asclepius) was god of healing, later said to be son of Apollo, and associated with Apollo in healing. One of his main sanctuaries was at Epidauris. Plato quotes the final words of Socrates, that he owed a cock to Asclepius—he traditional sacrifice for a cure, which to Socrates meant death as the ultimate cure. Asclepius was brought to Rome after a plague in 293 BC by order of the Sibylline Books. According to Livy and Ovid, the sacred snake that embodied the god chose the present Isola Tiberina for its home. There a temple and sanctuary were set up and the cult was modeled on that of Epidauris.

<sup>118</sup> This must refer to Vigilantius, a priest who had stayed with Jerome at Bethlehem ca. 395, but upon returning to Gaul was accused of condemning the cult of martyrs, some liturgical customs, ecclesiastical celibacy, monastic life, and alms sent to the Holy Land. Although Vigilantius’ criticisms of superstition were recognized as valid by some bishops, Jerome wrote a violent pamphlet against him (NPNF2 [6:417–3](#)), described by Fremantle as having “ess of reason and more of abuse than any other which Jerome wrote.” Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, [Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies](#) (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 286–0.

and someone else says to him, “You have spoken in a vision to your sons” [[Ps 89:19](#)]; but so that you believe in “dreams” and phantasms, which the Lord warned that they must not be believed [cf. [Deut 13:1–5](#)]. They feed on the “flesh of pigs,” about which it is said, “Do not cast your pearls before the pigs” [[Matt 7:6](#)]. Moreover they “eat profane broth,” which was seasoned with heretical craft in their books. Their “vessels” are all unclean, namely both their bodies and their doctrines, and they reach such a pitch of insanity that whoever will not be like them, they detest him as though he were lost.

6. ([65:5b–7](#)) *These shall be smoke in my fury, a fire burning all day. (6) Behold, it is written before me, I shall not be silent, but I will render and repay in their bosom (7) your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together, says the Lord; those who have sacrificed upon mountains and upon the hills, they have reproached me, and I shall measure back their first work in their bosom.* Septuagint: “This is the smoke of my fury, a fire burns with it for all the days. Behold it is written in my sight, I shall not be silent, until I render and repay their sins in their bosom (7) and those of their fathers, says the Lord. They who were burning incense upon the mountains and upon the hills, they have reproached me; I will render their works in their bosom.”

On account of your “works” and the arrogance of your mind that surpasses belief, that you who are unclean should regard those who are clean as unclean [cf. [Isa 65:5a](#)], you *shall be smoke of a burning fire*, which was kindled by *my fury*. Now with respect to God, we ought to interpret *fury*, forgetfulness, wrath, and repentance in the same way that we understand his feet, hands, eyes, ears, and other members. The incorporeal and invisible God is said to have these, not that he stands exposed to these perturbations, he who extinguishes them in us by the gift of his own grace, but in order that we may understand God’s affection for us by means of our words. For wrath, which is the desire for revenge, is defined in God in such a way as among men. It has its material in our vices, not in the will of the Lord. We are the ones who treasure up wrath for ourselves on the day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God [cf. [Rom 2:5](#)], as our thistles, thorns, and darnels [cf. [Gen 3:18](#)] that we have produced instead of the seed of God [cf. [Matt 13:23–24](#)]. Let the wise flame consume the wood as well, the grass and stubble, which we have built upon the foundation of Paul [cf. [1 Cor 3:12](#)].

We even read about this perpetual *fire* in the song of Moses: “A fire has been kindled from my *fury* and it will burn to hell below; it will devour the earth and its fruits, it will set on fire the foundations of the mountains, and my arrows will consume them” [[Deut 32:22–23](#)]. The meaning of this testimony is this, that the fire and vengeance of God burns sinners always and pursues them down to hell. That rich man in the Gospel who was clothed in purple was one of this sort. He was tormented by eternal flames, while Lazarus was resting in Abraham’s bosom [cf. [Luke 16:19, 20, 24](#)]. The same flame will also set the “earth” on fire, that is our flesh, and its “fruits,” that is, the desires of the flesh, and the “foundation of the mountains,” which raise themselves up against the knowledge of God [cf. [2 Cor 10:5](#)]; and the darts of God will destroy those very mountains, so that those who have been humbled by punishments cease being mountains.

*Behold*, he says, *it is written before me*. For all our sins are exposed to the eyes of God, and they have been recorded in those books about which we read in Daniel, “Thrones were set in place, and the books were opened” [[Dan 7:10](#)]. In another place, it is said of them, “Let them be

written upon the ground” [[Jer 17:13](#)]. And he will keep *silent* no longer, who had previously said, “I have been silent; shall I always be silent, says the Lord?” [[Isa 42:14](#)]; but he will *render* to each one that which he has worked *in his bosom*, that is, in the secret place of his heart, in order to torment them in their own conscience. Even Hosea the prophet makes a prediction about this: “Their princes shall fall by the sword on account of the undisciplined nature of their tongue” [[Hos 7:16](#)]. This refers to the detraction of those ones that is in their bosom, which proceeds from the heart of everyone [cf. [Matt 15:18](#)].

And something similar is written in Proverbs: “All things are rendered to the unjust ones in their own *bosom*” [[Prov 16:33](#)]. This *bosom* is called by another name, the head, on account of the principal part of the soul: “I gave their ways upon their heads” [[Ezek 9:10](#)], and elsewhere: “His pain shall return on his head, and upon that one’s crown will descend his iniquity” [[Ps 7:16](#)]. Now there is also a good *bosom*, which enjoys the holy conscience, of which the Psalmist spoke, “And my prayer shall return to my bosom” [[Ps 35:13](#)]. Moreover, someone’s affection and love is understood as his *bosom*, when words are directed to a husband: “The wife who is in your *bosom*” [[Deut 13:6](#)], and to a parent: “They shall bring your sons into your *bosom*” [[Isa 49:22](#)]. This is why all who have Abraham as their father, and have merited to be like him in his virtues, rest in his bosom [cf. [Luke 16:22](#)].

For we are not to understand the *fathers* whose *iniquities* and “sins” are now being *rendered* to us as those from whose seed our bodies were born. In any case, even Moses himself, who had said that for those who hate God the sins of the *fathers* must be rendered to their sons to the third and fourth generation [cf. [Exod 20:5](#)], interprets his own pronouncement, when he says, “The sons shall not die for the sin of their *fathers*, but each one will die for his own sin” [[Deut 24:16](#)]. Ezekiel approves this same thought, that this parable is not said: “The *fathers* have eaten unripe grapes, and the children’s teeth have been set on edge” [[Ezek 18:2](#)], but only the teeth of the one who eats are set on edge, and that the soul that sins perishes, and that does not wash away outward sins [cf. [Ezek 18:4](#)]. Therefore we understand that the *fathers* must either be understood in a good sense or in the opposite sense, as those to whom each one is appointed, when he has departed from this life.

Now Israel *sacrificed upon mountains and hills*, when he placed golden calves in Bethel and Dan [cf. [1 Kgs 12:28–29](#)], and he *reproached* God *upon* his own commands, while he neglected his ceremonies and offered the worship of God to demons, whose “works” must be “rendered in their bosom.” Moreover, every heretic who despises ecclesiastical simplicity *sacrifices on mountains* and *reproaches* God, so long as he shows contempt for his precepts.

7. ([65:8](#)) *Thus says the Lord: As if a grain be found in a cluster, and it be said, “Do not destroy it, because it is a blessing,” so will I do for the sake of my servants, that I may not destroy the whole.* Septuagint: “Thus says the Lord: As if a grape stone be found in a cluster, and it be said, ‘Do not touch it, because there is a blessing in it,’ so shall I do for the sake of my servant, that I may not destroy all.”

The Lord had said that Israel would perish, and that all his sins were open to his sight, and that he would render the works of each one in their bosom [cf. [Isa 65:7](#)]. After this, he brings in the simile and example of a comparison, by which he shows that everyone perishes for his own sin, and even if there is a very large number of sinners, one just man does not perish for the sin

of all. He says, if someone finds one unharmed *grain in a cluster*, and in a “grape” that was unable to reach maturity, and it has produced sour fruit, or it is corrupted by some defect in the air and soil, because it has hope of becoming still greater and of attaining to its accustomed maturity, he says to the other, “Do not touch it, but let it go so that it may grow, because *it is a blessing* of the Lord, that in such a large number of seeds, one alone escaped the drought. So, he says, from the countless multitude of Jews, who have offended God, if I shall find a few just ones, I shall deliver them from the ruin of the majority. And this *I shall do for the sake of my servants* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the promise was made; or for the sake of those who serve me among very many sinners.

We also read something like this in Genesis, when from fifty, gradually, all the way down to ten, just men are sought who would deliver the city from sin [cf. [Gen 18:24–32](#)]; and Lot the sole just man is rescued from Sodom along with his daughters [cf. [Gen 19:16](#)]. It is written about this in the catholic epistle, that his soul was tortured<sup>119</sup> when he saw the unspeakable things that were being committed [cf. [2 Pet 2:8](#)], and he manifested the judgment of his mind by the condition of his body. Enoch, too, alone was taken to God from among a very great multitude of sinners [cf. [Gen 5:24](#); [Sir 44:16](#)]. And Noah, together with his children, could not blot out the flood, because of the falling away of all flesh from serving the Lord. Moreover, Abraham was saved from the fire of the Chaldeans by the integrity of his faith.

The things spoken by Jeremiah under the persona of the Lord coincide with this meaning: “I found Israel as it were warm in the desert, with those who had been slain by the sword” [[Jer 31\(38\):2](#)]. For when the whole world, he says, lay lifeless and wounded by the swords of idolatry, I found that Israel had the heat of faith in Abraham. I was like a doctor, who after a battle among the corpses of the dead, when he has sensed that someone has signs of life in his pulsing veins, treats the wounds in order to restore health. In place of what is written as  $\omega\zeta$   $\theta\epsilon\rho\mu\omicron\nu$ , that is, “as it were warm,” the Latin translator was deceived by the ambiguity of the word and interpreted it as “wolfish,” at which point even many of the Greeks err. And nevertheless it should be known that in Hebrew for “heat,” *thoda* is written, which means “grace,” which of course refers to the fact that Israel is saved by the grace of God, and not by the merit of his own works.<sup>220</sup>

8. ([65:9–10](#)) *And I will lead forth the seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah a possessor of my mountains, and my elect ones shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. (10) And the plains shall be folds of flocks and the Valley of Achor a bed for the herds, for my people, who have sought me.* Septuagint: “And I will lead forth the seed out of Jacob and out of Judah, and they shall inherit my holy mountain, and my elect ones shall inherit, and my servants shall dwell there. (10) And there shall be in the forest folds of flocks, and the Valley of Achor [shall be] for a resting place of herds, for my people, who have sought me.”

That which above he called the grain of the cluster, or the grape stone, or as many think, cluster [cf. [Isa 65:8](#)], he now calls the *seed of Jacob and Judah*, who may *possess the mountains*

<sup>119</sup> Lit., “rucified.”

<sup>220</sup> Jerome has wrongly guessed that the Hebrew word at [Jer 31:2](#) was *thoda*, when in fact it is *hen*. He corrects this mistake in his *Commentary on Jeremiah* 31:2. Cf. M. Graves, [Jerome’ Hebrew Philology: A Study Based on His Commentary on Jeremiah](#) (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 59.



or his “mountain.” Many understand Christ as the *seed of Jacob and Judah*, of whom it is said in Genesis, “Judah, your brothers will praise you” [[Gen 49:8](#)], and so on. No one doubts that the Savior was born of the lineage of *Judah*. But others think that the apostles are to be understood, about whom we often have said, “A remnant shall be saved” [[Isa 10:22](#)], and, “And if the Lord Sabaoth had not left us a *seed*, we would have been as Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah” [[Isa 1:9](#)].<sup>221</sup> They *possessed* the “mountain” of the Lord by their consciousness that Christ was dwelling in them, and they said, “We have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” [[Heb 12:22](#)]; or his *mountains*, of which it is sung in the Psalms, “The *mountains* are round about her, and the Lord is round about his people” [[Ps 125:2](#)], and, “His foundations are in the holy mountains” [[Ps 87:1](#)].

But the Lord’s *elect ones* will *possess* Zion, and *his servants shall dwell* in it, of whom it is written in the same book, “The seed of Abraham [are] his *servants*, the sons of Jacob his *elect ones*” [[Ps 105:6](#)]. Therefore, whoever is still *seed* and has not been formed into a son, that one is a servant of the Lord, to whom it is said in the Gospel, “I know that you are *seed of Abraham*” [[John 8:37](#)], but they are not yet sons. For if they were Abraham’s seed, certainly they would have done Abraham’s works [cf. [John 8:38–39](#)]. However, he who is a son is also the Lord’s *elect*. This is why the *elect* possesses Jerusalem, and the *servants dwell* in her. Moreover, the difference between sons and servants is expressed in this way: “You did not receive the spirit of servitude again in fear, but the spirit of adoption” [[Rom 8:15](#)].

He says, *And the plains, or “forests,” shall be folds of flocks*. In Hebrew, *plains* is recorded as *Saron*—the whole region around Lydda, Joppa and Jamnia—which is suited for pasturing *flocks*. It is also written about this in the Acts of the Apostles [cf. [Acts 9:35](#)]. Now the “forests shall be turned into folds” in accordance with what is sung in the Psalm, “The voice of the Lord strengthening deer and will uncover the *forests*” [[Ps 29:8](#)], or the “dense woods.” Hence bandits cease hiding there, and the beasts and venomous animals and places formerly used for ambushes and bloodshed are turned into churches of the Lord; and there the “flocks” are fed by him who laid down his life for the sake of his own “sheep” [cf. [John 10:11](#)], and of whom it has been written, “He himself will feed us forever” [[Ps 48:14](#)]. That voice of the Lord strengthening deer and uncovering the dense woods [cf. [Ps 29:8](#)] was shouting in the desert through John, “Now the ax is placed at the root of the trees; every tree that does not produce good fruit shall be cut out and thrown into the fire” [[Matt 3:10](#)]. And again, “Every valley will be filled” [[Luke 3:5](#)].

Moreover, it is now said of this valley, *And the Valley of Achor [shall be] a bed*, and a “resting place” *for the herds, for my people, who have sought me*. We read about this also in the Book of Joshua (*Hiesu*) the son of Nun (*Nave*), that Achan was killed there, who stole from the ban and from the spoils of Jericho [cf. [Josh 7:24–26](#)],<sup>222</sup> and he was killed together with all his household; and from the fact that he had troubled the people, the place itself in which this happened was named *Achor*, that is “[place] of disturbance” and “tumult.” The *valley*, therefore, in which once there was a curse and a punishment, will be turned into a “resting place of herds.” Paul explains this more fully and says, “Does God care about oxen? Is he not

<sup>221</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 55 (394, 11–5).

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (394, 23–8).

surely saying this about us, that he who plows and he who threshes a field ought to plow in the hope that he may share in it?" [[1 Cor 9:9–10](#)]. Moreover, in Hosea it has been written mystically about this valley, "I shall speak to his heart—doubtless Jerusalem's—"and I shall give her possessors from thence, and the *Valley of Achor* to open her understanding" [[Hos 2:14–15](#)]. For the reason, the *Valley of Achor* is handed over as a possession of the "herds" of the "people" of God, and that the "forests" are turned into *folds of flocks*, is to open up understanding and to make known the truth of the Lord.

9. ([65:11–12a](#)) *And you, who have forsaken the Lord and have forgotten my holy mountain, who set a table for fortune, and offer libations upon it, (12a) I shall number you in the sword, and you shall all fall by slaughter.* Septuagint: "But you who have forsaken me and have forgotten my holy mountain, and prepare a table for fortune and fill up a drink for a demon, (12) I will hand you over to the sword; you shall all fall by slaughter."

In places that were formerly woody, and in locations of throngs of Gentiles, there shall be folds of sheep [cf. [Isa 65:10](#)], that is, churches of believers from the whole world. But *you*, O people of Israel, *who have forsaken the Lord* and have provoked to wrath the *Holy One* of Israel [cf. [Isa 1:4](#)], you who have *forgotten* his *holy mountain*, which as we have frequently said refers either to the Lord and Savior, who is the mountain of mountains and the holy of all the holy ones, or to Mount Zion and the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem [cf. [Heb 12:22](#)], you who do these things, "I shall hand over to the sword," that together you may "all fall by slaughter." Later on, we shall tell what the *sword* refers to.

He says, *You set a table for fortune and offer libations upon it*; or, according to the Septuagint, "You prepare a table for fortune and for a demon you fill up a drink," or a  $\kappa\epsilon\rho\alpha\sigma\mu\alpha$ , which all translated similarly as "mixed drink." But this refers to the ancient custom of idolatry in all the cities, and especially in Egypt and in Alexandria, so that on the last day of the year and of the month that is their last one, they *set a table* stuffed with various kinds of foods, and a "cup" mixed with honey wine, portending the fertility either of the past year or of the coming one. Now the Israelites as well used to do this, venerating the portents of all their images, and pouring out not sacrifices on the altar, but *libations* on a *table* of this sort. As for what the Septuagint translated as "for a demon," the Hebrew has *menni*, which Symmachus interpreted as "without me." Thus the sense is, "You who prepare a table for fortune and fill a drink without me." Consequently he is showing that this is not being done for himself, but for a demon.

Now the "sword" by which they are "slaughtered" means punishment. For not all the people of Israel were "handed over to the sword." We see how many thousands of them have been dispersed in the whole world, but to punishments and tortures, to captivity and final servitude, according to what is said elsewhere, "All the sinners of my people shall die by the *sword*" [[Amos 9:10](#)]; and in the song of Deuteronomy, "I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my *sword* shall devour the flesh of the wounded" [[Deut 32:42](#)]. Or can one believe that the Lord's arrows are made drunk with blood, and that his *sword* is glutted on the flesh of the wounded? Job speaks of these arrows that were piercing him at every moment of every hour: "The arrows of the Lord are in my body, their fury drinks up my blood; for whenever I am going to speak, they pierce me" [[Job 6:4](#)].

Now according to tropology, the following needs to be said, that all who desert the church and *forget the holy mountain* of God, and “hand themselves over” to the spirits of error [cf. [1 John 4:6](#)] and to the doctrines of the demons [cf. [1 Tim 4:1](#)], these ones would “prepare a table for fortune,” since they believe that God is not concerned about anything, but rather that all things are controlled either by the course of the stars or by the fickleness of “fortune.” Paul rebukes them, when he says, “You are not able to be partakers of the *table* of the Lord and of the *table* of *demons*, nor are you able to drink the chalice of the Lord and the chalice of the demons” [[1 Cor 10:20–21](#)]. For they will be “handed over” to eternal punishment [cf. [Matt 25:46](#)], so that none of them can escape the slaughter and ruin.

10. (65:12b–c) *Because I called, and you did not answer; I spoke, and you did not hear, but you did evil in my eyes, and you chose the things that I did not want.* Septuagint: “For I called you, and you did not hear; I spoke, and you showed contempt and did evil in my sight, and you chose the things that I was not wanting.”

You have been handed over to the sword, he says, not only because you abandoned me, forgot me, and mixed a cup to fortune [cf. [Isa 65:11](#)], but though I was Emmanuel, that is God with you [cf. [Isa 7:14](#); [Matt 1:23](#)], about whom even John writes, “The Word was made flesh and dwelled among us” [[John 1:14](#)], while present “I called you”: “Turn back to me, sons who have turned back” [[Jer 3:14](#)], and: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened down” [[Matt 11:28](#)], but you did not want to *answer. I spoke* in parables, and did all that I was obligated to do [cf. [Isa 5:4](#)], and *you did not hear* me, or rather, you even “showed contempt.” For I am he who even above, said, “I came, and there was no man; I called, and there was no one who would obey” [[Isa 50:2](#)].<sup>223</sup>

And this impiety is insufficient for you, that you “showed contempt” toward me when I was present, and you killed the heir who was sent to you [cf. [Matt 21:38](#)]; but “you did evil in my sight” and “you chose the things that I was not wanting.” Hence you blasphemed the Son of God and asked for yourselves the robber Barabbas, the instigator of a murder and of sedition [cf. [Luke 23:19](#)]. And still you dare to say, “Why have you made us err from your way?” [[Isa 63:17](#)]. For if they who did not know me have found me, and they who were not calling upon me received me [cf. [Isa 65:1](#)],<sup>224</sup> what torments do you deserve, who *have not willed* to receive the one sent to you, who said, “I have come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel”? [[Matt 15:24](#)]. Instead, over and above this, you nailed him to a cross.

We should reflect upon the meaning of the words, “And you chose the things that I was not wanting,” or that which is the will of the Son of God, who says in the Gospel, “Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the *will* of my Father who is in heaven” [[Matt 7:21](#)]. And God himself says of this, “I have *willed* to do your will” [[Ps 40:8](#)]. This is the will about which even the Lord himself was speaking: “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who does my whole *will*” [[Acts 13:22](#)]. And this is why the saint prays, and says, “Teach me to do your *will*, because you are my God” [[Ps 143:10](#)]. For “all things are lawful, but not all things are expedient” [[1 Cor 6:12](#)]. And about virgins, the Apostle says that he does not have a precept of the Lord [cf. [1 Cor 7:25](#)], yet he *wills*

<sup>223</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (395, 7–).

<sup>224</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (395, 12–6).

that we be as himself [cf. [1 Cor 7:7](#)]. By this he shows that it is not the concession of the teacher that must be followed, but his *will*; and we ought to choose those things that are expedient, not those that are lawful, as for example the following concerning marrying twice: “I *will* that young girls should marry, bear children, be mothers of families” [[1 Tim 5:14](#)]. And he sets forth the reasons why he concedes this: “For some have already turned back after Satan” [[1 Tim 5:15](#)]. Therefore, it is not the mere *will* for a second marriage that becomes vile in comparison to fornication.

11. ([65:13–14](#)) *Therefore thus says the Lord God: Behold, my servants shall eat, and you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, and you shall be thirsty. (14) Behold, my servants shall be glad, and you shall be confounded; behold, my servants shall praise for exultation of heart, and you shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for contrition of spirit.* Septuagint: “Therefore thus says the Lord: Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be confounded; (14) behold, my servants shall exult with joy, but you shall cry on account of the sorrow of your heart, and shall howl because of the contrition of your spirit.”

Not only will you fall to the sword, you who have forsaken the Lord and done evil in his sight, and you did not want to hear him when he was present [cf. [Isa 65:11–12](#)], but you see many things as the difference between you and the multitude of Gentiles. For those who have served me *will eat and drink*, they will *be glad* and they *will praise for exultation of heart*. But you, on the other hand, will be *hungry* and *thirsty*, you will be *confounded* and *will howl for sorrow of heart* and *contrition of spirit*. The χιλιασται (chiliasts) think that all these things are to be fulfilled during the thousand years. They believe that the kingdom of God consists in food and drink [cf. [Rom 14:17](#)]. They do not understand what is written: “Work for the food that does not perish” [[John 6:27](#)]. They do not desire to eat the bread of life and of truth, and of the flesh of Christ and the fruit of the tree of life, about which the Savior speaks, “I am the bread who has descended from heaven” [[John 6:41](#)];<sup>225</sup> and Ecclesiastes says, “Open your eyes and be filled with bread” [[Prov 20:13](#)]; and the Psalmist says, “I was once young and now I am old, and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor his seed begging bread; he is merciful and lends all day, and his seed shall be a blessing” [[Ps 37:25–26](#)].

He instructed the disciples about this bread and spiritual feasting, “You who have persevered with me in my temptations, you will eat at the table of my Father in the kingdom of heaven” [[Luke 22:28–30](#)]. But if we interpret this of literal (*simplici*) bread, how will we be able to explain the following: “The Lord will not kill a just soul by famine”? [[Prov 10:3](#)]; and again: “The Lord knows the ways of the spotless, and their inheritance will be for eternity; they shall not be *confounded* in the evil time, and on the days of famine, they will be satisfied”? [[Ps 37:18–19](#)]. For how many saints die by famine during persecution and are finished off by want! How many just ones go hungry, and how many wicked are bloated with indigestion!

But that drink must be received that is drawn from the fountains of Israel [cf. [Ps 68:26](#)]. The one who drinks it shall have a fountain of water in himself welling up to eternal life [cf. [John](#)

<sup>225</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 56 (395, 28–0).

[4:14](#)],<sup>226</sup> a drink that even the Savior promises he shall drink with the apostles in the kingdom of his Father [cf. [Matt 26:29](#)], which *gladdens* the heart of man [cf. [Ps 104:15](#)], so that those who drink are able to say, “You have put *gladness* in my heart” [[Ps 4:7](#)]. He speaks about this food and drink in the midst of the eight beatitudes, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice” [[Matt 5:6](#)]; and the mother of the Lord prophesied, while filled with the Holy Spirit, “He has filled the hungry with good things” [[Luke 1:53](#)], those who before were not having the food of the Lord, “and the rich he sent away empty” [[Luke 1:53](#)], those who were granted for his burial [cf. [Isa 53:9](#); [Mark 15:45](#)], and they repudiated the one whom the prophets had promised. The Psalmist chants about this in another place, as well, “The rich suffered need and hunger” [[Ps 34:10](#)], that is Jewish people, “but those who seek the Lord,” that is, the multitude of Gentiles, “will not be in need of any good thing” [[Ps 34:10](#)].

And when those who serve Christ and who believe in him will have been made *glad* and will have *praised* God *for exultation* and “joy” *of heart*, then they will be *confounded*, upon seeing that others have succeeded in their own place; and they will *cry for the sorrow of heart*, fulfilling that which is written: “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” [[Matt 13:50](#)], when the lambs of the Gentiles and of the just shall stand on the right, and the goats of the Jews and of the impious on the left, with the former receiving everlasting rewards, and the latter eternal punishment [cf. [Matt 25:33](#)]. But the *contrition of spirit for the sorrow of the heart* must be understood in respect to their consciousness of sins, according to what is written: “They that err in *spirit* shall know understanding” [[Isa 29:24](#)]; and: “God shall not despise a contrite (*contritum*) and humiliated *heart*” [[Ps 51:17](#)]. The *spirit* is crushed (*conteritur*) when it will have been lifted up. This is what is written about the king who was hostile to Israel: “The Lord hardened his *spirit*” [[Deut 2:30](#)], and about the prince of the Babylonians, when his *heart* was lifted up, and his *spirit* was hardened, so that he said in his pride, “This is Babylon, and I have made her” [[Dan 4:27](#)].

12. ([65:15–16b](#)) *And you shall leave your name for an oath to my chosen ones, and the Lord God shall slay you, and call his servants by another name, (16) in which he that is blessed upon the earth shall be blessed in God, Amen; and he that swears on earth shall swear by God, Amen.* Septuagint: “For you shall forsake your name for an overabundance to my chosen ones. But the Lord shall slay you; but my servants shall be called by a new name, (16) which shall be blessed on the earth. For they shall bless the true God, and they that swear upon the earth shall swear by the true God.”

For “overabundance,” which is expressed in Hebrew as *sabaa*, the rest translated as *oath*. This word has many meanings that depend upon the various ways it is accented. For it means *oath*, “overabundance,” “sufficiency,” “more,” and “seven.” We have spoken about this in our book on Genesis,<sup>227</sup> and in this volume, where seven women will take hold of one man [cf. [Isa 4:1](#)].<sup>228</sup> On the other hand, what the Septuagint translated as “true,” and in Hebrew is expressed as *Amen*, Aquila rendered it ΠΕΠΙΣΤΟΜΕΝΟΣ, that is, “faithfully.”

Now what he is saying is this: When others succeed in your place, *your name* will be *for an*

<sup>226</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (395, 32–5).

<sup>227</sup> Cf. *HQG* q 41.29.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. 2.29.

*oath to my chosen ones*, so that they would regard you as an example of evils, and they would shrink back from tolerating such things, and they would swear thus: I will not suffer these things which the Jewish people have suffered. Or, “your name” will be “for” sufficiency, because this is customary to say in respect to those for whom the recollection and memory is hateful, and who reached the point of “overabundance” and nausea. Or at least this must be said, that they shall “forsake” their “name to the chosen ones” of the Lord, in order that the multitude of the Gentiles may succeed in their place, and they may be called sons of Abraham and Israel. Paul speaks about them, “Peace be upon them and upon the Israel of God” [[Gal 6:16](#)]. For it is not those who are from Israel who are Israel, nor are they who are the seed of Abraham all sons [cf. [Rom 9:6–7](#)], to whom it is said, “If you were the sons of Abraham, you would do the works of Abraham” [[John 8:39](#)]. And because they are Abraham’s seed, and not his sons, the difference between which we have spoken about above, for this reason John the Baptist rebukes them, saying, “And do not wish to say, ‘We have Abraham for a father’; for God is able to raise up sons of Abraham from these stones” [[Matt 3:9](#)]. For how can they be his sons, who said to the wood and the stone, “You have begotten me,” when on the contrary those who are of faith are called sons of Abraham [[Gal 3:7](#)]?

But *the Lord shall slay you*, he says, so that you would not be called circumcision, but mutilation [cf. [Phil 3:2](#)], that you might be lacking eternal life, that you might not have him who says, “I am the life” [[John 14:6](#)]. But he says, He *shall call his servants by another*, or “new” name, which will be celebrated in the whole world, and it *will be blessed*, inasmuch as the one who will have been called by that name is *blessed in God*, and he receives the sign of true blessing, the *Amen*. Frequently in the Gospel, the Lord uses this term in affirmation of what has been said: “*Amen, amen* I say to you” [[John 5:19](#)]. But the “new” or *other name* is none other than what is derived from the name of Christ. Consequently, God’s people is not *called* Jacob, Judah, Israel, Ephraim, and Joseph, but Christian. For whoever shall *swear on earth* will not swear by idols and false gods, but *by God*. This pronouncement is again confirmed by the seal *Amen*.

On the other hand, in the Septuagint this is translated as “true God,” instead of *Amen*, in order that the “true God” may be blessed and those who “swear upon the earth” may “swear by the true God.” We do not commit the error of the Arians and apply this solely to the person of God the Father, about whom it is written, “That they may know you, the only *true God*, and he whom you have sent, Jesus Christ” [[John 17:3](#)].<sup>229</sup> But we also refer it to the Son, who is himself also “true God.” For John the Evangelist says, “The Son of God came and gave us understanding that we may know the true, and may be in his true Son, Jesus Christ; he is the true God and eternal life” [[1 John 5:20](#)]. For if the Savior says of himself, “I am the truth” [[John 14:6](#)], then the true God will take his name from truth, so that he is not called “a god” after the manner of the false gods, but he too is true God after the manner of the true God the Father. Otherwise, if he is not “true,” he will be like idols, which would overflow onto the heads of those who deny that Christ is true God. But this “new name” is what likewise in the Apocalypse is written on a pebble, which is blessed in the whole world [cf. [Rev 2:17](#)].

13. ([65:16c–18a](#)) *Because the former distresses have been handed over to oblivion, and*

<sup>229</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 56 (396, 39–97, 2).



*because they are hid from our eyes. (17) For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth, and the former things shall not be in remembrance, and they shall not ascend upon the heart. (18a) But you shall rejoice and exult forever in these things, which I create.* Septuagint: “For they shall forget the former affliction, it shall not ascend upon their heart. (17) For there shall be a new heaven and a new earth, and they shall not remember the former, neither shall it come upon their heart, (18) but they shall find in her joy and exultation.”

The reason for gladness and for confession of the true God [cf. [Isa 65:16a](#)] is because an eternal *oblivion* shall succeed the *former distresses*, so that they shall not remember the idols and the former error; but they would transfer from darkness to the light and would thoroughly experience eternal blessedness. For “they shall forget their former” evils, not by the obliteration of memory, but by the succession of good things. This accords with what is written: “On the good day there is *oblivion* of evils” [[Sir 11:27](#)]; and elsewhere: “The affliction of an hour causes an *oblivion* of delights” [[Sir 11:29](#)]. For when we are beset by *distresses*, we do not experience in our spirit the former pleasures in accordance with the error of Epicurus—although this can indeed be said, that *in the new heaven and new earth*, all memory of our earlier manner of life is erased, lest the very act of remembering the former *distress* be a part of the evils.

Now those who think that everything that we see perishes interpret the *new heaven and the new earth* by means of the testimony of the Gospel: “The heaven and the earth shall pass away” [[Matt 24:35](#)], and of the Apostle Paul: “For the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal” [[2 Cor 4:18](#)]. On the other hand, those who judge that the newness is a change for the better, and not a destruction of the elements, make use of this testimony: “From the beginning, O Lord, you established the earth, and the heavens are the works of your own hands; they shall perish, but you remain, and everything just as clothing will grow old, and you shall fold them as a garment, and they shall be changed” [[Ps 102:25–26](#)]. In this, it is clearly shown that ruin and destruction do not signify annihilation into nothingness, but change for the better. For that which is written in another passage, “The moon shall shine as the sun, and the sun shall receive a sevenfold light” [[Isa 30:26](#)] does not signify the destruction of earlier things, but change for the better.<sup>330</sup>

Let us offer examples from our condition to make this more comprehensible. When a baby grows into a child, and a child into an adolescent, and an adolescent into a man, and a man into an old man, he does not perish as he passes through each of the periods of life. For he is the same one who was before, but gradually he is changed, and is said to have lost his former age. Even the Apostle Paul understood this, and said, “For the form of this world is passing away” [[1 Cor 7:31](#)]. Let us consider what he has said, “The form is passing away,” not the substance. Moreover, Peter indicates this same thing:

For they are willfully ignorant of this, that the heavens existed from the beginning, and the earth out of water, and through water it subsists by the word of God; through which

<sup>330</sup> Jerome’ discussion here seems quite similar to Origen’ doctrine of resurrection. See M. Demura, “[The Resurrection of the Body and Soul in Origen’ Contra Celsum](#)” *Studia Patristica* 18, 3: Papers of the 1983 Oxford Patristics Conference, ed. E. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1989), 385–1.

the world that then was perished during the flood. But by the same account the heavens and the earth which now exist are being reserved for fire. [[2 Pet 3:5–7](#)]

He teaches later on in what sense this must be understood: “But we shall see new heavens and a new earth, and his promise” [[2 Pet 3:13](#)]. He did not say “other heavens” and “another earth,” but rather that the old and ancient ones are changed into something better.

We can also say that those who have converted from idolatry and who have abandoned their former error may see a *new heaven and a new earth*, by not judging the elements to be gods, and the things that are born from the earth.<sup>331</sup> At present, we admit that the heaven and earth are the works of the hands of God; but at that time, we worshiped the servants and the creation with the allegiance due to God. Even David perceives this when he sings in the Psalm, “I shall see the heavens, the works of your fingers” [[Ps 8:3](#)], not that he did not see the heavens at that time, when he was saying these things, but that by means of every increase in the virtues and by means of the knowledge of things to come, he sees the new ones, which he already saw when they were old.

Now as for what is said at the end of this citation, *which I create*, this was overlooked by the Septuagint.

14. ([65:18b–19a](#)) *For behold, I create Jerusalem an exultation, and its people a joy. (19a) And I shall exult in Jerusalem, and I shall rejoice in my people.* Septuagint: “For behold, I make Jerusalem an exultation, and my people gladness; (19) and I shall exult over Jerusalem, and I shall be glad over my people.”

You ought to *rejoice* and *exult*, he says, with eternal “gladness” in the creation of the new heavens and the new earth [cf. [Isa 65:17–18](#)], and you ought not remember at all the former things, lest sadness over the old memory should arise in you. For I shall *create* in *exultation* not only a new heavens and new earth, but *Jerusalem* also, and *its people* in *joy*. Doubtless, this refers to the entire earth. Hence what was an old *joy* to one nation is a new “gladness” to all nations. But the *exultation* of everyone and the *gladness* over the city and the *people* of God will be so great that I too, her Creator, shall *exult* and *rejoice* “over Jerusalem,” and “over my people” who will eat and drink and “be glad,” and they will *exult in* her, and they who will have been called by a new name [cf. [Isa 65:13–15](#)].

15. ([65:19b–20](#)) *And the voice of weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying. (20) There shall no more be an infant of days there, nor an old man who does not fill up his days; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner being a hundred years old shall be accursed.* Septuagint: “And the voice of weeping and the voice of crying shall no more be heard in her, (20) neither shall there be there any more a premature one and an old man who does not fill up his time; for the infant shall be a hundred years old, and the sinner who dies at a hundred years shall be accursed.”

For it will not be fitting that *the voice of weeping and crying should be heard any more* in the city of Jerusalem and from the people of God, who will receive an eternal creation of exultation and joy, when sorrow, mourning, and groaning will have departed [cf. [Isa 35:10](#)]. For opposite things cannot exist at the same time, and where there is exultation and joy, which is

<sup>331</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 56 (397, 8–1).

the fruit of the Holy Spirit [cf. [Gal 5:22](#)], there *weeping* and wailing cannot stay, which befits those who lament and mourn, and especially *crying*, which Paul banishes from the church of believers [cf. [Eph 4:31](#)], lest like the Jews we bring forth a cry for judgment [cf. [Isa 5:7](#)].

In such a city, there will be no difference of age, *infant* and *old man*, little and big, he who does not *fill up his days*, but as sons of the resurrection [cf. [Luke 20:36](#)] they will all arrive at the perfect man, in the measure of the fullness of the age of Christ [cf. [Eph 4:13](#)],<sup>332</sup> so that no one lacks length of years, nor do they have too many; and while one does not yet have firm strength, another ceases to be that which he was, and he withers away in a decrepit old age, but they all will reach the *hundredth* number.<sup>333</sup> Abraham was like this, who received the promise of his son Isaac at that age [cf. [Gen 21:5](#)]. About the praises of this number it is not necessary to call more to mind, lest there be a superfluous discussion. We say only this much, that ten decades may have equal sides and they may possess the firmness of a square shape. In respect to the promises, too, the Lord promises to multiply to us a hundredfold those things for which we have shown contempt [cf. [Matt 19:29](#)]. Moreover, the seed falling on the good earth first has the hundredth number of a most abundant crop [cf. [Matt 19:29](#)]. And finally, Isaac scattered a single sowing of seed by faith, and received the works of his labor multiplied by this number [cf. [Gen 26:12](#)].

Therefore at that time, when there will be one age for all, both the saint and the sinner will be perfected by a similar resurrection, and they will not vary among themselves in time, but one will be dragged off to punishment, another to rewards, and the sinner will be *accursed* in this respect, that with an incorruptible body he will endure eternal suffering. Moreover, what we read in the Apocalypse of John, that after the resurrection the small and the great are presented before the judge in person [cf. [Rev 20:12](#)], signifies a distinction not in their age but in their merits. For he who is small according to the pronouncement of Solomon is worthy of mercy [cf. [Wis 6:6](#)]; “but the mighty ones will suffer torments mightily” [[Wis 6:6](#)]. Even the words of the Lord are in agreement with this sense: “The servant who knows the will of his master and does not do it, will be beaten much; but he who does not know it and does things worthy of blows shall be beaten with a few strokes” [[Luke 12:47–48](#)].

When the blessed Apostle Paul explains in detail the Old Scripture, with Christ speaking in him [cf. [2 Cor 13:3](#)], he asserts that the patriarch Abraham is the father not only of the circumcision but also of the uncircumcision [cf. [Rom 4:11–12](#)]; that is, that two peoples were generated from him, and that the one who according to the flesh had been born of a one-hundred-year-old, lay under an eternal curse on account of Christ, who was generated from Abraham’s race, against whom he laid his hands [cf. [Gal 3:10](#)]. The Gospels teach this figuratively, when it is reported that the hemorrhaging woman began to be sick at that time

<sup>332</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (397, 25–7).

<sup>333</sup> Jerome seems to be saying that the common age of all in the resurrection will be one hundred years old. O’onnell points out that it is difficult to reconcile this statement with what he says in [Ep. 113.24](#) (PL 22:902), that the resurrection age will be that at which the Jews suppose Adam to have been created and at which the Lord and Savior rose again. Cf. J. P. O’onnell, *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, *Dissertationes ad Lauream* 16, Pontificia Facultas Theologica Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum (Mundelein, IL, 1948), 54.

when the daughter of the synagogue ruler was born [cf. [Mark 5:25, 42](#)]; and when the former was healed, immediately the latter died [cf. [Luke 8:42–43](#)]. The new people continue in their youth by one and the same length of years, and the old one dies in unbelief and has been “accursed.” We have said this according to the Septuagint translators, whose version is spread all over the world, lest on a very well-known passage we should seem to be taking refuge in the citadel of the Hebrew language. Whether you understand this [as fulfilled] after the resurrection at the second coming of the Savior, or after baptism in the first resurrection of believers, it is not at variance with the faith of the church.

The Hebrews contend that these things will come to pass on earth before the resurrection, during the kingdom of a thousand years, and that such long length of life is guaranteed, that a hundred years are thought of as infancy, but the sinner will die in the hundredth year of his life, namely, to keep him from thoroughly enjoying the wealth he has prepared, but he will know that he is *accursed* on account of the sin. But if this is so, where will perfect beatitude be, which is violated and corrupted by sin, and sin is punished with “premature” death?

16. ([65:21–22b](#)) *And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruits of them. (22) They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat.* Septuagint: similarly.

A prophetic discourse in the sixty-eighth Psalm as well makes a promise about these *houses*, when it says, “For God will save Zion, and the cities of Judea will be built up, and they will dwell there, and they will inherit her, and the seed of his servants will possess her, and those who love her name will dwell in her” [[Ps 69:35–36](#)]. The Jews understand all these things carnally, that Jerusalem and the cities of Judea would be restored to their original condition. But if we concede this to them, let them hear that this is promised not only of Jerusalem but also of Sodom, since Ezekiel says, “Sodom will be restored to its ancient state” [[Ezek 16:55](#)]. Therefore, the *houses*, which those who build them are to *inhabit*, must be understood either as the virtues, or diverse dwellings with the Father [cf. [John 14:2](#)]. The one who will have built them shall possess them forever, such as the kind that the midwives in Exodus are said to have built for themselves, for they feared God [cf. [Exod 1:21](#)]<sup>—</sup>although in the Hebrew, it is written that the houses were built by God for them, because they feared him. Also Jacob [was like this], since he was simple [cf. [Gen 25:27](#)], or as it reads in Greek, ἀπλαστος, that is, not fabricated, and he was not like those who are condemned in the Epistle of Peter, of whom he says, “Through covetousness, they shall with fabricated words make merchandise of you” [[2 Pet 2:3](#)]. On that account, he was dwelling in the *house* [cf. [Gen 25:27](#)], which Esau, who was delighted with the beasts and forests [cf. [Gen 25:28](#)], was not able to possess. The words of the Savior in the Gospel describe such a house, “Everyone who comes to me, and hears my words, and does them, shall be like a prudent man who builds his *house* upon rock” [[Matt 7:24](#)], and the rest. In any case, according to the letter, many saints build *houses* and do not inhabit them, whether they are taken away while they are abroad or by the plunder of another, or by death. Job was such a man. Though he had been rich in flesh and spirit, he was reduced to such great poverty that he sat on a dung heap outside the gate of the city [cf. [Job 2:8](#)]. And on the other hand, that rich man in the Gospel who was dressed in purple [cf. [Luke 16:19](#)] *built a house and dwelled* in it. It was most justly said to him, “Fool, on this very night they are carrying off your soul away

from you; but who will have that which you have prepared?" [[Luke 12:20](#)].

But he says not merely, *They shall build houses and inhabit them*, but also, *They shall plant vineyards too, and they themselves will eat their fruit*. This accords with what is said in Micah: "Everyone shall rest under his own vine and under his own fig tree; and there shall be no one who strikes with terror" [[Mic 4:4](#)]. This is the vine that said in the Gospel, "I am the vine, and you are the branches, and my Father is the farmer" [[John 15:5](#)]"—"Anyone who does not produce fruit will be cut out and thrown into the fire" [[Matt 3:10](#)]. The *fruit* of this vine is eaten and drunk and it gladdens the heart of man [[Ps 104:15](#)], and it makes drunk the friends of the bridegroom [cf. [Song 5:1](#)], and in the kingdom of God new [fruit] is drunk daily [cf. [Matt 26:29](#)].

Now he rests under the fig tree, and dreads no one's ambush, who enjoys the sweetness of the Holy Spirit and is filled with his *fruit*, with charity, joy, peace, faith, continence, and patience [cf. [Gal 5:22–23](#)]. It is said of a planter of this sort, "He who plants a fig tree will eat its fruit" [[Amos 9:14](#)]. The one who has *built* such *houses* and *planted* such *vineyards*, about which even the Apostle boasts, "I *planted*, Apollo watered, God gave the growth" [[1 Cor 3:6](#)], *will eat* the labors of his own hands [cf. [Ps 128:2](#)], and sowing in the spirit, from the same shall reap eternal life [cf. [Gal 6:8](#)]. And it will not be thrown to the ground by the deceits of the devil and his attendants.

17. ([65:22c–25](#)) *For as the days of a tree, [so] shall be the days of my people, and the works of their hands shall grow old (23) for my chosen ones. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth in trouble, for they are the seed of the blessed ones of the Lord, and their grandsons with them. (24) And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will hear; as they are yet speaking, I will hear. (25) The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the lion and the ox shall eat straw; and dust [shall be] the serpent's bread. They shall not hurt nor kill in my entire holy mountain, says the Lord.* Septuagint: "For as the days of the tree of life [shall be] the days of my people, my chosen ones shall cause the works of their labors to grow old; (23) they shall not labor in vain, neither shall they bring forth sons in cursing; for they are a seed blessed of the Lord, and their grandsons with them. (24) And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will hear them; while they are yet speaking, I will say, 'What is it?' (25) Then wolves and lambs shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the serpent [shall eat] earth as bread. They shall not hurt nor destroy in my holy mountain, says the Lord."

There will be an eternal dwelling and planting of the just ones [cf. [Isa 65:21](#)], so that the *days of life of my people* are compared to the *days of a tree*, about which in the Psalms it is said, "The just will flourish as a palm tree" [[Ps 92:12](#)]. Daily he triumphs over his adversaries and bears forth the sign of victory. But if, on the other hand, we read according to the Septuagint, "the days of the tree of life," which translated the sense of the Hebrew rather than the words, we understand by "tree of life" the one that was located in paradise. To keep Adam from putting forth his hand toward it in order to live, he was expelled from paradise [cf. [Gen 3:22–23](#)]. A cherub, that is, "multitude of knowledge," was left to guard it, and a fiery spear, to guard the way of the tree of life [cf. [Gen 3:24](#)], lest Adam, now established in sin and not yet acquainted with his own sins, should eat from it and should die by a death of impenitence, desperation, and pride [cf. [Gen 2:17](#)]. Solomon explains more clearly what this tree of life is. While discussing the wisdom of God, he says, "She is a tree of life to all who approach her, and who lean upon her,

she is as it were a security upon the Lord” [[Prov 3:18](#)].<sup>334</sup> There is no doubt that he means the word of God, the very one who is life and wisdom, and who says about himself, “I am the life” [[John 11:25](#); [14:6](#)], and about whom the prophet chants, “In wisdom you have made all things, the earth is filled with your creation” [[Ps 104:24](#)]; and the Apostle Paul says, “Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God” [[1 Cor 1:24](#)].

*The works* of the people of God *shall not grow old*, but daily will be made new, so that they do not walk in the oldness of the letter but in the newness of the Spirit [cf. [Rom 7:6](#)], so that just as “through the disobedience of one man, very many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one man, many may be made just” [[Rom 5:19](#)]. Or at least this must be said, that the *works* of those *grow old* whose house founded on rock [cf. [Matt 7:25](#)] remains eternally, and who have built gold, silver, and precious stones upon the foundation of the Apostle [[1 Cor 3:12](#)]; and on the other hand, their works perish whose house founded on sand is undermined by a sudden storm [cf. [Matt 7:26](#)], and who have built wood, hay, and straw on the foundation of Christ [cf. [1 Cor 3:12](#)]. Or does it not seem to you that his *works grow old* daily who forgets about the past and reaches out toward the future? [cf. [Phil 3:13](#)]. This is why there is talk of both the old and the new covenant (*testamentum*), not that the old perishes, but that no other succeeds the new.

This too can be said according to the Hebrew, that the *works of the people* and of believers in Christ are the fruit of the apostles, that is, of God’s *chosen ones*, and they are hidden away among their treasures. “For many are called and few are chosen” [[Matt 20:16](#)].<sup>335</sup> They *will not labor in vain*, as formerly the Jews have labored, but they will eat the labors of their own hands [cf. [Ps 128:2](#)], and *will not bring forth in trouble*, or “in cursing” and, as it is recorded more expressively in the Hebrew, *על אשׁוּפָרְסִיָּא*, which in their tongue is said as *labaala*, that is, that they cease to exist and have an end of their substance. Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion translated this as “haste,” that they would not hasten to believe apart from reason, but would emulate Nathaniel, who was praised by the pronouncement of the Lord: “Behold a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceit” [[John 1:47](#)]. He sought Christ based upon the authority of the Scriptures, and was desirous to know about the prophets, when he said, “Can anything good be from Nazareth?” [[John 1:46](#)]. And the sense is, How is it that you bring me a Messiah from Galilee and Nazareth, whom I know was promised to come from Bethlehem of Judah [cf. [Mic 5:2](#)]?

Therefore the apostles and apostolic men *will bring forth* “sons” in such a way that they teach them from the Holy Scriptures, not to imitate the *cursing* of the Jews, but to say with the prophet, “We have conceived in the womb, O Lord, because of your fear, and we have suffered birth pangs and have given birth” [[Isa 26:17–18](#)]. For about these [“sons”], it was said, “Blessed is the offspring of your womb” [[Deut 28:4](#)]. Such are the “sons” of Abraham, who do his works [cf. [John 8:39–40](#)]. They are also called sons of the prophets in the old historical narratives [cf. [1 Kgs 20:35](#)].<sup>336</sup> They are of the kind the apostles have also *brought forth* in the New Instrument, as Paul [*brought forth*] Timothy [cf. [1 Tim 1:2](#)], Luke [cf. [Phlm 24](#)], Titus [cf. [Titus 1:4](#)], and many

<sup>334</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 56 (398, 17–9).

<sup>335</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (398, 29–0).

<sup>336</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (399, 8–7).



others; Peter [*brought forth*] Mark the Evangelist [cf. [1 Pet 5:13](#)], and others [*brought forth*] others. Their “seed is blessed,” and is blessed up to the present day, and the “sons” of the sons continue. The prophet says about them, “Blessed is the man who fears the Lord; he shall delight exceedingly in his commandments, his *seed* shall be powerful on earth, the generation of the upright shall be blessed” [[Ps 112:1–2](#)]; and elsewhere, “Your sons [are] as new olive plants around your table; behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord” [[Ps 128:3–4](#)]. On the other hand, it is said about Judas the traitor and about all who are like him, “May his *sons* be orphans, and his wife a widow. Let his *sons* be displaced and removed and beg; let them be cast out of their homes” [[Ps 109:9–10](#)]<sup>37</sup>—for the worst end is in store for an evil generation [cf. [Wis 3:19](#)]<sup>37</sup>—they who conceive sorrow and give birth to iniquity, about whose prince it is written, “Behold, he has travailed with injustice, he has conceived sorrow and brought forth iniquity” [[Ps 7:14](#)]. But if this is said about the impious, how did Samuel, a blessed and just man, bring forth very bad sons, who did not walk in the way of their father? [cf. [1 Sam 8:3](#)]. And David, from whose seed Christ was born, fathered two sons, Ammon and Absalom, one of whom stood out as a murderer of his brother [cf. [2 Sam 13:29](#)], the other of his father? From all these things, we learn that “sons” and *grandsons* ought to be understood in accordance with what we have said, in accordance with how even Paul suffers the pains of childbirth for his “sons,” until Christ is formed in them [cf. [Gal 4:19](#)], and how he begets Onesimus in his chains [cf. [Phlm 10](#)].

When they *call*, they will be *heard* at once, and the Lord will answer those who are *speaking*. We see that all these things were fulfilled literally in the Acts of the Apostles.<sup>37</sup> For all the nations would not have been able to believe in such a short time, unless somehow their faith had been forcibly obtained by the miracles of the signs. For when the apostles and apostolic men were *speaking* and *calling*, the Lord responded with great signs. Thus Dorcas rose up at the prayers of the apostles [cf. [Acts 9:40](#)]. On the island of Malta, the father of Publius was healed from a fever and  $\delta\upsilon\sigma\epsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\rho\iota\alpha$  (dysentery) by the prayers of Paul [cf. [Acts 28:8](#)], diseases that are contrary to each other. The result of this was that the whole world said that the gods were walking among men [cf. [Acts 14:10](#)].

At that time, *the wolf and the lamb were feeding together*: Paul the persecutor and Ananias, the disciple [cf. [Acts 9:10–19](#)]. Paul was that wolf, about whom it was written, “Benjamin, as a voracious wolf, will eat in the morning, and toward evening he will give food” [[Gen 49:27](#); cf. [Phil 3:5](#)], or as it says in the Hebrew, “He shall divide the spoils.” His doctrine was food for believers, and he triumphed over his conquered adversaries throughout the whole world. Now we must believe that all who in the white garments follow the Lamb wherever he goes [cf. [Rev 7:13](#); [14:4](#)] are the *lambs*, as well as those whom the Lord entrusted Peter to feed, when he said, “Feed my lambs” [[John 21:15–16](#)].

And the *lion will eat straw* like an *ox*, when the most eloquent men and the formerly mighty ones of this world entrust themselves to the rusticity of the Scriptures, so that they do not feed on secular eloquence, which drips like honey from the lips of harlots [cf. [Prov 5:3](#)], but they follow the common *straw* of history, until with much effort and application they may merit to arrive at a harvest of meaning. Jeremiah speaks about this *straw* and grain, “What is the straw

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (399, 20–2).

to the wheat? says the Lord” [[Jer 23:28](#)]. And one should consider that the *ox* is not converted to ferocity, but the *lion* is changed to gentleness.

The *serpent*, likewise, which was watching for the heel of the man, and whose head was being watched by the man [cf. [Gen 3:15](#)], will not feed on the destruction of others, but *it will eat* “earth,” or *dust*, as *bread*. Or at any rate it must be understood as follows, that the devil, who previously was feeding on the deaths of human beings, eats only those who are *dust* and “earth.” Through all this, the change of evils into good is shown. They will be without *hurt*, and their ancient ferocity will be put away, not externally, but *in the holy mountain of the Lord*, that is, in the church, and in the confession of his mountain, by which the prince of Tyre was wounded, and he who was cut from the mountain without hands grew into a large mountain and filled the earth [cf. [Ezek 28:16](#); [Dan 2:34–35](#)].

Let us ask the Jews on this passage, and all who are named Christian but still *eat the straw* of the Scriptures,<sup>338</sup> which when separated from the wheat by the Lord’s winnowing shovel, will be handed over to the wind and flames [cf. [Matt 3:12](#)], how is it to be esteemed blessedness, that in the kingdom of the thousand years, on Mount Zion, in the city of Christ, the present Jerusalem [cf. [Gal 4:25](#)], and in the very narrow temple, *wolves* and *lambs*, *lions* and *oxen*, serpents and humans, *eat together*, dwell together, and are only harmless with respect to these things that will have inhabited the holy mountain of the Lord? From this, we understand that all who are outside the mountain are to be killed. Therefore, the entire world will be exposed to wolves, lions, bears, leopards, and snakes and the rest of the beasts, and the immense forests and the desolate waste of Egypt, which is productive of poisonous animals; and instead of the greatest happiness, the holy city will be the dwelling place not only of men, but also of beasts and serpents, so that in accordance with a prophecy found above, the wolf dwells with the lamb and the leopard with the goat, the calf and the lion and the sheep and the bear dwell together, and a little boy rules them, and the infant from the breast puts his hand into the hole of the asp, and kills the viper in its cave. And the reason for such happiness is that the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of God [cf. [Isa 11:6–9](#)].

18. ([66:1–2a](#)) *Thus says the Lord: Heaven is my seat, and the earth my footstool. What is this house that you will build to me? And what is this place of my rest? (2) My hand made all these things, and all these things were made, says the Lord.* Septuagint: in like manner.

Lest we understand this of the holy Mount Zion, and to keep us from being taken in by the error of the Jews, who think that Jerusalem must be rebuilt and that everything that the Lord promises must be fulfilled there in a carnal fashion, he removes this suspicion from us and records the testimony that Stephen the first martyr in Christ used in opposition to the Jewish claim: “Solomon built a house to him,” doubtless referring to God, “but the Most High does not dwell in manmade things, as the prophet says: ‘Heaven is my throne, but the earth is my footstool’ ” [[Act 7:47–49](#)]. Moreover, Paul says in the same volume, “God, who made the world and the things that are in it, does not dwell in temples made by the hands of men” [[Act 17:24](#)]. For if *heaven* is his “throne,” in the manner of one who sits and reigns on a throne, and the *earth* is his *footstool*, how will the one who fills all things, and in whom all things exist, be enclosed in a small place?

<sup>338</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (399, 32–00, 7).

This is why even Moses says, “Do not say in your own heart, ‘He is far off’; for he is God in the heaven above and upon the earth below, and there is no other God besides him” [[Deut 4:39](#)]. And the Psalmist says, “Where shall I go away from your Spirit, and where shall I flee from your face? If I ascend into heaven, you are there, if I descend to the underworld, you are present” [[Ps 139:7–8](#)]. Even Jeremiah agrees with this, when he speaks under the persona of God, and says, “I am a God nigh at hand, and not a God afar off. Shall anyone be able to hide in secret places, and I shall not see him? Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord” [[Jer 23:23–24](#)]. For in him, we all exist and are moved [cf. [Acts 17:28](#)]. But he says this in order to defeat the Jewish error, they who believe that the invisible, incorporeal, and incomprehensible God can be circumscribed to the temple of Jerusalem. Indeed, even Solomon himself, the builder of the temple, admits this profusely in his prayer to the Lord [cf. [1 Kgs 8:27](#)].

And what is more, lest we suppose that the greatness of God must be measured by the heaven and earth, in another passage we read of him, “He who holds heaven in the palm of his hand and the earth in his fist” [[Isa 40:12](#)]. Through this, it is shown that God, even while he is confined by an encompassing throne, is both on the outside and on the inside, he is both infused and circumfused, and he encloses it with his fist and with the palm of his hand. He is not only the creator of heaven and earth, but also of the invisible angels and archangels, of dominions, powers, and of all other titles, about which the Apostle speaks [cf. [Col 1:16](#)]. The hand of God has worked them all, about which both Job and the Psalmist record, “Your hand made me and shaped me” [[Job 10:8](#); [Ps 119:73](#)]. For “all things were made through him, and without him nothing has been made” [[John 1:3](#)]. Again, John says of him, “He was in the world and the world was made through him” [[John 1:10](#)]. For “he spoke, and they were made, he commanded, and they were created” [[Ps 33:9](#)]. And this is what the Scripture in Genesis shows with a mystical speech: “God spoke ... and God made” [[Gen 1:1, 3](#)]; for “by the word of the Lord the heavens were established, and by the Spirit of his mouth all their power” [[Ps 33:6](#); [148:5](#)]. There is no *place of rest* for the Lord, except that which the prophet adds.

19. ([66:2b–3d](#)) *But to whom shall I have respect, but to the poor and contrite in spirit, and the one who trembles at my words? (3) He who sacrifices an ox is as if he kills a man; he who slays a beast, as if he should brain a dog; he that offers an oblation, as if he should offer swine’s blood; he that remembers incense, as if he should bless an idol.* Septuagint: “And upon whom shall I have respect, but to the humble and quiet and the one who trembles at my words? (3) But the unjust man who sacrifices a calf, as if one who strikes a man; sacrificing from the flock, as if he that kills a dog, who offers fine flour, as if swine’s blood; who offers incense for a memorial, as if a blasphemer.”

When the earthly altar and temple were taken away, which human hands had built, the sacrificial victims of the Jews are also rightly removed, lest perchance they should have said, “We are not so foolish as to think that God can be enclosed in a place, but we immolate victims to sacrifice to God in the place that was set apart, [victims] which have been prescribed by the law.” Therefore, the one who dwells in heaven, or rather, the Creator of all, who denies that he has a temple on earth, freely takes into his temple “the humble and quiet, and the man who trembles at his words.” This accords with these words of the Apostle: “You are the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit dwells in you. If anyone violates the temple of God, God will violate

him; for the temple of God is holy, which you are” [[1 Cor 3:16–17](#)].

Therefore, the Lord *respects* whoever is “humble and quiet and trembles at the words of God,” and the statement can be understood about him, which is prophesied under the term “earth”: “The earth was afraid and became *quiet*, when God rose for judgment” [[Ps 76:8–9](#)]. For “earth” is said by metonymy in place of its inhabitants; when they consider the judgment of God, they practice “quietness” from their evil works, and by staying at home [cf. [Exod 16:29](#)] they rest for an eternal Sabbath. Let them not move themselves to do the servile work of sin, just as the builders of the tower once moved their feet from the east [cf. [Gen 11:2](#)], and they abandoned the rising of the true light; and they did not hear that which is said to Cain, “You have sinned, rest!” [[Gen 4:7](#)]; but according to the Proverbs of Solomon, “He who listens to God will dwell in confidence, and will rest, apart from fear and all evil” [[Prov 1:33](#)]. That one is “humble,” *poor, contrite in spirit, and trembles at the words* of the Lord, about whom it is written in the Gospel, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” [[Matt 5:3](#)]; and elsewhere, “Blessed is he who understands concerning the needy and the poor” [[Ps 41:1](#)]; and again, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for this reason he has anointed me: he has sent me to evangelize the poor” [[Isa 61:1](#)].

And that which follows in the common edition, “but the unjust,” is not present in the Hebrew, but it simply goes on to say, *He who sacrifices an ox as if one who kills a man*. This is written even in another place: “I want mercy and not sacrifice, knowledge of God rather than a burnt offering” [[Hos 6:6](#)]. And through Malachi, “You were doing all the things that I hated, covering my altar with tears. Is it fitting for me to have *respect* for your sacrifice or to receive as welcome anything from your hands?” [[Mal 2:13](#)]. Let the Jews hear that God does not seek sacrifices, but the souls of those who offer them.

He says, *And he who slays a beast as if he should brain a dog*. This is why even through Moses, it was written, “You shall not bring the wage of a harlot nor the price of a *dog* into the house of your God” [[Deut 23:18](#)]. *Dog* and harlot are nicely linked, because both animals are prone to lust. At the same time, let us consider that he has not said, He who sacrifices a ram is as if one who sacrifices a dog, but he says, “who kills a dog.” This word is not recorded in connection with sacrifices, but in those things that are slaughtered illicitly.

*He who offers an oblation and a “sacrifice,” as if he should offer swine’s blood*. This very thing is prohibited in the law [cf. [Lev 11:7](#); [Deut 14:8](#)]; such are the ceremonies of the Jews. He who “offers incense” is as a “blasphemer,” or rather, as one who is *blessing an idol*. But this can also be the meaning: after [the coming of] my Son, who came meek and poor, sitting upon the colt of a donkey [cf. [Zech 9:9](#)], I do not want flesh, I detest sacrificial victims; I reject the sacrifices of the Jews, the shadows of the law, because the truth of the gospel is a successful sacrifice to me. But if this is said, that after the lightning flash of the gospel, the old religion stays in the cloud, what will they answer who think that Jewish believers suffer no harm to themselves when they offer sacrifices carnally?<sup>339</sup>

<sup>339</sup> This may be directed against Augustine himself, who disputed with Jerome over the validity of Jewish Christians continuing to adhere to Mosaic ceremonies. See C. White, trans., [The Correspondence \(394–19\) between Jerome and Augustine of Hippo](#) (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 26–0.

20. ([66:3e-4](#)) *All these things have they chosen in their ways, and their soul is delighted in their abominations. (4) Therefore, I also will choose their mockeries, and will bring upon them the things they feared; because I called, and there was none that would answer; I have spoken, and they heard not; and they have done evil in my eyes, and have chosen the things that I have not willed.* Septuagint: “And they have chosen their own ways, and their soul has willed their own abominations, (4) and I will choose their mockeries, and will recompense their sins upon them; because I called them, and they did not obey; I spoke, and they heard not, and they did evil before me, and chose the things that I did not will.”

*They themselves have chosen* to immolate an ox, slaughter a ram, offer a sacrifice, burn incense, which God regards just as if it is homicide, the offering of a dog, swine’s blood, and blasphemy [cf. [Isa 66:3](#)]. And it was their choice to live by such things. This is accordant with what he says through Ezekiel: “I gave them ordinances that were not good and commandments that were not good” [[Ezek 20:25](#)]. And, he says, they walked *in their own ways*, not in the way of the Lord, and “their soul willed their own abominations,” so that they were lovers of themselves rather than lovers of God [cf. [2 Tim 3:4](#)]. For this reason, when they “chose their own ways,” and not him who says, “I am the way” [[John 14:6](#)], God too “chooses their mockeries,” or their mockers, which in Hebrew is expressed as *thalule*, that is  $\epsilon\mu\pi\alpha\iota\kappa\tau\alpha\iota$ , so that it constitutes the worst leaders, and it equally brings all their “evils,” or *the things that they feared*.

And he gives the reasons why they were handed over to the scribes and Pharisees, their mockers, about whom the first Psalm chants in Hebrew, “And he has not sat in the seat of mockers” [[Ps 1:1](#)]. The Septuagint calls them “pestilent ones.” Such were “the sons of Eli, sons of pestilence” [[1 Sam 2:12](#)]. This is written in Hebrew as “of Belial,” that is, “of the devil.” He says, *Because I called, and there was no one that would answer; I spoke, and they heard not, and, They have done evil in my eyes, and have chosen the things that I have not willed.* He records these lines twice, in the present passage, and above, where he says, “I will number you in the sword, and you shall all fall in the slaughter, because I called, and you did not answer” [[Isa 65:12](#)], and the other things similarly.<sup>440</sup> The sense in which this testimony ought to be taken is expressed there.

21. ([66:5](#)) *Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at his word. Your brothers who hate you and cast you out for my name’s sake have said, “Let the Lord be glorified, and we shall see in your gladness,” but they shall be confounded.* Septuagint: “Hear the word of the Lord, you who tremble at his word. Tell your brothers who hate and abominate you, so that the name of the Lord may be glorified, and may appear in their gladness, and they shall be confounded.”

He had already spoken about them before: “Upon whom will I have respect, but upon the humble and the quiet and the one who trembles at my words?” [[Isa 66:2](#)].<sup>441</sup> He commands them to condemn the sacrificial victims of the Jews, to despise the pride of the scribes and Pharisees, and to transfer to the worship of him, whom they did not want to hear when he called, and they treated him with contempt and did evil in his sight [cf. [Isa 66:4](#)]. And he was not content with this end of the precepts, but he commands them the gospel commandment, that they should love their enemies, do good to those who hate them, and pray for their persecutors

<sup>440</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 56 (401, 11–3).

<sup>441</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (401, 23–5).

[cf. [Matt 5:44–45](#)].<sup>442</sup> Moreover, they should imitate the clemency of the Father, who makes his sun rise upon the just and the unjust, “in order that by seeing your good works,” he says, “they may glorify your Father who is in heaven” [[Matt 5:16](#)].<sup>443</sup> Following the common understanding, this is specifically being instructed to the apostles and apostolic men, that they should love the Jews, their own persecutors, and should regard as “brothers” those who “abhor” them. With Peter, they should say, “Men, *brothers* and fathers, hear!” [[Acts 7:2](#)]; and with the Apostle Paul, “I have sadness and an incessant sorrow in my heart on behalf of my *brothers*, who are Israelites” [[Rom 9:2–4](#)]. But the name of the Lord is *glorified* when men see the ferocity of the persecutors being broken by our endurance, and the hand that strikes *confounded* by turning the other cheek [cf. [Matt 5:39](#)]. They are instructed in the Gospel, “Let your light shine before men, so that by seeing your good works they may *glorify* your Father who is in heaven” [[Matt 5:16](#)]. And in the Apocalypse of John, it says, “Fear the Lord and give Him *glory*” [[Rev 14:7](#)]. Paul also writes to the Corinthians, challenging them to continence, “That you glorify God in your body” [[1 Cor 6:20](#)], and again, “Whether you eat or drink, do it all for the glory of God” [[1 Cor 10:31](#)]. And this is why the Lord did not curse in return the ones who were cursing him, and he prayed for his persecutors [cf. [1 Pet 2:23](#)]. Now his command, “Tell your brothers,” should not be interpreted literally; in any case, many brothers call out and do not preserve charity in their heart. The Apostle writes of them, “They profess to know God, but they deny [him] by their works” [[Titus 1:16](#)]. Moreover, the Lord said of them, “Not all who say to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter in the kingdom of heaven, but he does the will of my Father, who is in heaven” [[Matt 7:21](#)]. And thus the pronouncement is able to hold good, “No one says, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” [[1 Cor 12:3](#)]. For when the heretics say, “Jesus is Lord,” and when many will say at the resurrection, “Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and do many miracles?” [[Matt 7:22](#)], the Lord will answer them, “Depart from me, I do not know you, workers of iniquity” [[Matt 7:23](#)]. Therefore it is proven that he “tells” not with speech, which is easy, but with his affections and works. From which we learn that it is the same God in both testaments, he who has commanded that if we see our enemy’s beast of burden fall under his load, we should not pass by, but should lift it with him [cf. [Exod 23:4–5](#)]; and if we find his ox or his donkey wandering about, we should return it to him. This is according to the Septuagint.

On the other hand, according to the Hebrew, the sense seems to me to be this: *Hear, O apostles, hear, O my disciples, you who tremble at the word of the Lord; I shall tell you what your brothers have said, they who hate and divide you, and they judge you as estranged, not on account of your evils, but for my name’s sake, they who esteem as unclean all who believe in me from their own nation, and they say, “Depart from me, for you are unclean”* [[Isa 65:5](#)]. Therefore, what is it that he records that they have said? *Let the Lord be glorified, and we shall see in your gladness*. The meaning of this little verse is this. Why do you introduce a humble God? Why one who was crucified, and “a man of sorrows and acquainted with bearing weaknesses” [[Isa 53:3](#)]? We want to see him reigning in his majesty, as you say, and we accept the one who triumphs in his own glory; we are not able to see him humble and despondent. And immediately he adds, *But they shall be confounded*, understand, those who speak such

<sup>442</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (401, 29–3).

<sup>443</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (402, 2–).



things, who do not understand the mysteries of the Scriptures; and they will feel his power in their own evils, whom they had despised for his humility.

22. ([66:6](#)) *A voice of groaning from the city, a voice from the temple, the voice of the Lord that renders recompense to his enemies.* Septuagint: for *groaning*, they recorded “a cry,” and the rest is similar.

We want to know what is the confounding of the Jews, who said, “Let the Lord be glorified” [[Isa 66:5](#)], so that we may see your gladness and may observe the triumphs of your king, not with empty promises, but with our eyes. He says, “The voice of a cry from the city,” doubtless meaning Jerusalem, surrounded by the Roman army, and divided within into three factions during the rebellion, when one faction held the temple and possessed everything that was formerly holy. On the outside it fought against the enemy, within against the citizens. At that time, both in the city and in the temple wailing was heard, both of priests and Levites and of common people, and of women and children, when *the Lord rendered retribution to his enemies*, fulfilling his threat, in which he had said, “Your house will be left to you desolate” [[Matt 23:38](#)], and this prophecy: “I have forsaken my house” [[Jer 12:7](#)], when the protectors of the temple spoke with a common *voice* of an angel, Let us go across out of these settlements. Not only does Josephus, the writer of Jewish history, testify to these things,<sup>444</sup> but also the Psalmist many centuries before, saying, “I have seen the iniquity and the contradiction in the city” [[Ps 55:9](#)], which placed its walls around by day and by night, so that the city was overthrown, and another prediction was fulfilled: “Zion will be plowed like a field, and Jerusalem will be left like a hut in a cucumber field” [[Mic 3:12](#)].

23. ([66:7–9](#)) *Before she was in labor, she brought forth; before her birth came, she brought forth a male. (8) Who has ever heard such a thing? And who has seen the like to this? Shall the earth bring forth in one day? Or shall a nation be brought forth at once? For Zion has been in labor, and has brought forth her sons. (9) Shall not I that make others to bring forth [children], myself bring forth, says the Lord? Shall I who give generation to others be barren, says the Lord, your God?* Septuagint: “Before she who is in labor brings forth, before the travail pain comes on, she escaped [it] and brought forth a male. (8) Who has heard such a thing? And who has seen after this manner? Has the earth been in labor in one day? Or has even a nation been born at once? For Zion has been in labor, and brought forth her little children. (9) But I have raised this expectation, yet you have not remembered me, said the Lord. Have not I made the bearing and barren woman? said your God.”

A cry resounds from Jerusalem and its temple [cf. [Isa 66:6](#)], when it was besieged and overthrown. The enemies of Christ, who did not want to accept him as king [cf. [Luke 19:14](#)], receive eternal punishment for their impiety and blasphemies. Meanwhile, the church, gathered in the name of the Lord, about which it is said in the Psalm, “The man was born in her, and the Most High himself has founded her” [[Ps 87:5](#)], before *she was in labor, brought forth; before her birth came, she brought forth a male*. For in a short time, as the Jewish people grew greater through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, and again through their children and grandchildren; but at the gospel proclamation, all the world immediately conceived, went into labor, and brought forth a male. Pharaoh and Herod tried to kill him, who was saved in

<sup>444</sup> Cf. [Josephus, De Bello Iud. 6.293–9](#).

Egypt both in Moses and in Christ. Finally, Abraham and Isaac had male children, and Jacob, the father of many sons, begot a daughter, for whom he endured hardships to the full [cf. [Gen 30:21](#)].

But if the daughters of Zelophehad (*Salfaad*) receive their father's inheritance by the judgment of God, one should consider that their father died in his own sin, because he did not beget a son, and Moses did not dare to judge anything concerning them, but he referred the matter to the Lord, who ordered them to be joined to their brothers in order that they should not remain without resources [cf. [Num 27:1-7](#)].<sup>445</sup> The Book of Genesis also reports that after men began to become many, a number that is always defective, and daughters were born to them, it was not angels who took them, but the sons of God, from whom giants arose [cf. [Gen 6:1-4](#)], or as it is written in Hebrew,  $\epsilon\pi\iota\pi\iota\pi\tau\omicron\nu\tau\epsilon\varsigma$ , that is, those who assail. On the other hand, it is said to the saint, "Your wife shall be as a fruitful vine on the side of your house, your sons as young olive plants round about your table," and again, "May you see the sons of your sons" [[Ps 128:3, 6](#)].

Therefore, Zion, that is, the remnant from Israel and the faith of the believing apostles, *brought forth a male*, the Lord and Savior, who was begotten *at once* in the whole world, which no one *heard*, which no history recounts, so that in a short time all nations believed in the teaching of one, and one *nation* of Christians was made from all nations. Even Paul speaks about this: "If anyone is a new creature in Christ, the old things have passed away; behold, all things are made new" [[2 Cor 5:17](#)]. This accords with what is written elsewhere: "All the families of the Gentiles will worship in his sight; because the kingdom is the Lord's, and he himself will rule over the nations" [[Ps 22:27-28](#)]; for he says, "All the nations that you have made shall come, and they will worship before you, and they will glorify your name" [[Ps 86:9](#)]. Jacob says of him, "He himself is the *expectation* of the nations" [[Gen 49:10](#)], and the Psalmist says, "The hope of all the ends of the earth" [[Ps 65:5](#)]. Moreover the same Isaiah whom we are now discussing says, "There shall be a root of Jesse, and he who shall rise to be a ruler over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles hope" [[Isa 11:10](#)], as the apostles fulfill that command: "Teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" [[Matt 28:19](#)]. Consequently, a new people is born, about which the twenty-first Psalm also sings, "They will declare his justice to a people that will be born, which the Lord has made" [[Ps 22:31](#)], and again, "The people who will be created will praise the Lord" [[Ps 102:18](#)].

Now this people was created *in one day*, which the sun of justice illuminates [cf. [Mal 4:2](#)], since the Scripture says, "The Lord will be your everlasting light" [[Isa 60:19](#)]. We can apply what is said, *Shall a nation arise at once, because Zion has been in labor and has brought forth her own sons*, to that time when, in a single day, three thousand and five thousand believed from the Jewish people [cf. [Acts 2:41; 4:4](#)]. It is also said in the same Book of the Acts of the Apostles that there were in Jerusalem, from all nations under heaven, those who kept hearing them speaking the great things of God in various languages [cf. [Acts 2:5, 11](#)].

What follows says, according to the Septuagint, "But I have raised this expectation, said the Lord, and you have not remembered me, said the Lord. Have I not made the bearing and barren woman? said your God." This is recorded more clearly in the Hebrew, with which the other

<sup>445</sup> Cf. Origen, *Homily 22 on Numbers*.

translators agree: *Shall not I that make others to bring forth, myself bring forth, says the Lord? Shall I who give generation to others be barren, says the Lord, your God?* This accords with what is said elsewhere: “He who planted the ear, will not hear, he who fashioned the eye, does not consider” [Ps 94:9], namely, because he who created all men out of nothing, he is able to make a single church of believers in himself, equally from all the nations. Finally, in the twenty-eighth Psalm, where we read, “The voice of the Lord who shakes the desert” [Ps 29:8], it is written in Hebrew as, “The voice of the Lord that makes the desert give birth.” Thus the previously deserted church gives birth, and the deer are strengthened by the uncovered and trodden woodlands [cf. Ps 29:8].

On the other hand, according to the Septuagint, this is the sense: that at one time, at the preaching of the Gospels, one “nation” of all the earth “is born.” I have often promised this through many prophets, and “you have not remembered” my promise, O city, you are full of shouting, O temple that has been forsaken by the Lord, O people, to whom I have rendered its own recompense! [cf. Isa 66:6]. “Have not I,” he says, “made the bearing and barren woman?” She who previously had been “barren” later on has been “in labor” and has “brought forth.” It is written in the Psalm about her, “He who makes a barren woman to dwell in a house as a joyful mother of sons” [Ps 113:9]. Or at least the order of things has been reversed: the “bearing woman” has been made “barren,” and the one who formerly was “barren” now brings forth many, because that is the pronouncement of the Lord.

24. (66:10–11) *Be glad with Jerusalem, and exult in her, all you who love her. Rejoice with joy with her, all you who mourn over her, (11) that you may suck, and be filled from the breast of her consolation; that you may milk out, and flow with delights, from every manner of her glory.* Septuagint: “Be glad, O Jerusalem, and exult in her, all you who love her. Rejoice with joy, all you who mourn over her, (11) that you may suck, and be filled from the breast of her consolation; that after you have sucked, you may delight yourselves with the entrance of her glory.”

This is an instruction given to the apostles and apostolic men, *who love* both Jerusalems, both the one that collapsed with those bewailing and *mourning*, and the one that will rise with all longing in those who wait. Hence they should *rejoice with her* and *in her*, because she has been built with living stones [cf. 1 Pet 2:5], which are rolled upon the land [cf. Zech 9:16] and they follow the guiding spirit in the likeness of the wheels of the cherubim [cf. Ezek 1:20]. It is not made of those [stones] that were dissolved into eternal ashes, about which the Lord was speaking: “Amen, amen I say to you, there shall not remain a stone upon a stone, until all these things are completed” [Matt 24:2].

*Rejoice with joy with her*, he says, *all you who mourn her*. Above, we have shown what kind of men were the apostles Peter and Paul, and all who were awaiting the redemption of Israel [cf. Luke 2:38], so that they *suck and are filled from the breasts of her consolation*.<sup>446</sup> For it was impossible that she who begot a male [cf. Isa 66:7] and was in childbirth would have lacked an abundant supply of milk for the rearing of her nation and of her little ones, who had been born at the same time [cf. Isa 66:8]. Thus she provided them with two breasts, not as previously in Egypt, fallen and flat [cf. Ezek 23:3], but standing firm and with a virginal comeliness. They

<sup>446</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 57 (404, 1–2).

supply the rational milk [cf. [1 Pet 2:2](#)] of the Old and New Instrument. The bridegroom speaks to her about these [breasts], “Your breasts are better than wine” [cf. [Song 4:10](#)]. They were those about whom it was especially said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be *consoled*” [[Matt 5:5](#)].

And this must be noted, that those who are little ones need the milk *of consolation*, and they still dwell in a mortal place, but those who have made headway towards solid food [cf. [Heb 5:12](#)], after the milk *of consolation*, will *flow with delights* of truth and with the knowledge of *every manner of glory*. This is expressed in Hebrew as *ziz*, which the Septuagint translated as “entrance,” Symmachus as “richness,” Theodotion as “multitude.” We said this in order to open up the meaning of the ambiguous word found in the seventy-ninth Psalm, where it is written, “The boar from the wood has laid it waste, and a singular wild beast has devoured it” [[Ps 80:13](#)]. For what is read in our codices and in the Greek ones as *μονιός αγριός*, that is “singular wild beast,” is written in Hebrew as *ziz sadai*. Aquila translated this as *παντοδαπον χορῶς*, that is, “every manner of region.” Consequently it signified not only that Israel was laid waste by the Romans, but by all nations.

But this glorious “entrance” of the church must be understood as the one of which John the Apostle writes, “And there were twelve pearls on the twelve gates, and the streets of the city were of pure gold, as clear glass” [[Rev 21:21](#)]. The Lord forbids that these pearls be cast before swine [cf. [Matt 7:6](#)], [pearls] that the good merchant, when he found them in the prophets and apostles, goes after the most precious pearl. He does not cast away the former ones, but by means of them seeks the more precious one [cf. [Matt 13:45–46](#)].

25. ([66:12](#)) *For thus says the Lord: Behold, I will deflect upon her as it were a river of peace, and as an overflowing torrent the glory of the Gentiles, which you shall suck; you shall be carried at the breasts, and upon the knees they shall caress you.* Septuagint: “For thus says the Lord: Behold, I shall deflect toward them as a river of peace, and as a torrent overflowing with the glory of the Gentiles. Their little children shall be carried upon the shoulders, and comforted on the knees.”

When Jerusalem has been built by the apostles and restored to its former condition, after her sons and inhabitants have been comforted at her breasts, and with an abundance of milk have arrived at the delights of truth through which one enters unto the glory of God [cf. [Isa 66:11](#)], then the Lord will *deflect upon her a river of peace*. We have frequently spoken about this: “The river of God is filled with waters” [[Ps 65:9](#)], and: “The flow of the river gladdens the city of God” [[Ps 46:4](#)].<sup>447</sup> Thus when “peace” takes possession of all things, and when the wars of the nations cease, about which Scripture says, “Scatter the nations that want wars” [[Ps 68:30](#)], the *torrent* of the doctrines of God irrigate the plowed fields of believers.

Then her sons or her “little children,” as the Septuagint translated, “shall be carried upon the shoulders,” and they shall receive “comfort upon the knees”—on the “shoulders” of which it was spoken in the earlier prophecy as well [cf. [Isa 49:22](#)], and which Jacob invokes in respect to his son Issachar, “Because he subjected his own shoulder to labor, he was called a farmer” [[Gen 49:15](#)]. For by sweat and extreme effort, we attain to an abundant harvest. And this is why through Jeremiah it is said to Zion, “Put your heart on your shoulders” [[Jer 31\(38\):21](#)], in order

<sup>447</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (404, 15–3).

that Zion may understand the Lord from his commandments, imitating him about whom it is written, “Jesus began to do and to teach” [[Acts 1:1](#)]. Let her faith not be idle, but run to the reward by means of works. But what the *knees* and the bosom signify, I have explained briefly above, and now the example of Abraham will be able to teach us, in whose bosom Lazarus rests [cf. [Luke 16:22](#)], and all those who come from the east and the west, who will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [cf. [Matt 8:11](#)].

26. ([66:13–14](#)) *As if one whom the mother caresses, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.* (14) *You shall see and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall germinate like grass, and the hand of the Lord shall be known to his servants, and he shall be angry with his enemies.* Septuagint: instead of *servants*, they recorded “those who fear [him]”; instead of *enemies*, “unbelievers.” The rest is similar.

We learn the Creator’s mercy in his creatures, from the example of mothers, who by lovingly nurturing their children on their bosom surpass all charity. After all, God wants to show how he loves those whom he has created, and says, “Will a woman forget, so as not to have compassion upon the offspring of her own womb? But even if a woman should forget these, yet I will not forget you” [[Isa 49:15](#)]. Moreover the following passage in the Gospel contains this sense, where the Lord says to Jerusalem, “How often have I wanted to gather your children, just as a hen gathers her own chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling?” [[Matt 23:37](#)]. Also there are the words of Deuteronomy, where something like this resounds, “Just as the eagle has longed to protect her own nest and chicks, spreading out her wings, she took them and carried them on her shoulders” [[Deut 32:11](#)]. Those who have written about the nature of living things, indeed of all wild animals, beasts of burden, livestock, and birds, say that affection for the offspring and chicks is inborn, but the greatest love is that of the eagles. They locate their nests upon high and inaccessible places, to keep snakes (*coluber*) from ravaging the offspring. They also say that the eagle–stone is found among its chicks to overcome all venoms.<sup>448</sup> If this is true, God’s affection for his creatures is rightly compared with eagles. He protects his children with all vigilance, lest the dragon and ancient serpent (*coluber*), the devil and Satan [cf. [Rev 12:9](#)], sneak up upon the young offspring. Hence all the plots of the adversaries are broken at the name of the stone that is placed in the foundations of Zion [cf. [Isa 28:16](#)]. Now this Jerusalem, in which the sons *shall be comforted* by the *mother* and will be dandled on her *knees*, is the one about which the Apostle writes, “But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is the mother of us all” [[Gal 4:26](#)]. The Apostle was filled with the milk of his comfort, and he comforted others who needed his words, and he said, “Blessed be God, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in every tribulation, so that we also may be able to comfort them who are in every tribulation, by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” [[2 Cor 1:3–4](#)].

After they have been *comforted*, it will be said to them, *You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice, and like grass your bones shall germinate*, or “spring up,” or, according to Symmachus, “flourish.” But they *shall see*, doubtless he means, see God, which is the true “rejoicing.” The

<sup>448</sup> Cf. [Pliny the Elder, Natural History 10.3–, 12: Strabo 16.1.24](#). This allusion may have escaped the notice of Hagendahl.

Lord spoke about them, “Blessed are those with clean heart, for they shall see God” [[Matt 5:8](#)].<sup>449</sup> The sight of him is perfect joy, which dwells in a heart that is filled with faith, and the germination of the *bones* comes next, about which we have already spoken before.<sup>550</sup> If the reader has forgotten these things, let him go back to the original comments. For it is better for him to reread what is written than for us to repeat what has been said.

He says, *And the hand of the Lord shall be known to his servants*, or “to those who fear him,” *and he shall threaten his enemies*, or “the unbelievers.” Now his *hand* either means his power, because God can do all that he promises, according to what Moses says to Pharaoh under the persona of God, “For now I will send forth my *hand* and strike you and kill your people, and you shall be blotted out from the earth” [[Exod 9:15](#)]. And again he says to the same tyrant, “Behold, the *hand* of the Lord will be upon your cattle” [[Exod 9:3](#)]. The Psalmist spoke to God about this: “Your *hand* has killed the nations and you have planted them” [[Ps 44:2](#)]. Or, at any rate, the *hand of the Lord* must be understood as Christ, about whom we also read above, “My *hand* has made all these things” [[Isa 66:2](#)]. The Lord will make *known to his servants* and to “those who fear him” and will threaten the “unbelievers” and his *enemies*, so that to some he promises rewards, others he threatens with punishments. Here the proper meaning of the words must be considered. For he did not say “he will bring upon his enemies,” but “he will threaten,” so that when they have been terrified by the threat, they too may cross over to the Lord’s service.

27. ([66:15–16](#)) *For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and his fourhorse chariots are like a whirlwind, to render his fury in indignation, and his rebuke with a flame of fire. (16) For the Lord is judged by fire, and by his sword unto all flesh, and those slain by the Lord shall be multiplied.* Septuagint: “For behold, the Lord will come as fire, and his chariots as a storm, to render his vengeance with fury, and his rebuke with a flame of fire. (16) For with the fire of the Lord all the earth shall be judged, and all flesh with his sword. Many shall be wounded by the Lord.”

The hand of the Lord, which he will make known to his servants and to those who fear him, itself threatens the unbelievers, or his enemies [cf. [Isa 66:14](#)]. Thus, if they do not repent, they would endure what follows. *For behold, he says, the Lord will come with fire, and “his chariots” are like a whirlwind, or “storm.”* We ought to understand this as referring to the angelic powers, when the Lord shall come in the glory of the Father with his angels [cf. [Matt 16:27](#)],<sup>551</sup> to judge the living and the dead. It is not that the Lord *is fire*, but that he seems to be *fire* to those who are enduring punishments. And although Moses said, “God is a consuming fire” [[Deut 4:24](#)], and the Apostle affirms the same thing [[Heb 12:29](#)], nevertheless the Savior expresses the essence of divinity by saying, “God is Spirit” [[John 4:24](#)]. Now there is a great difference between spirit and fire according to the corporeal understanding. But if he is fire or spirit, how is he said to have eyes, ears, hands, feet, stomach, and the other members of the body, since spirit and fire do not have these things? Therefore God is called a consuming fire [cf. [Deut 4:24](#)] in order that he may consume as hay, wood, and straw [cf. [1 Cor 3:12](#)] whatever pertains to the vices in us, as well as the thorns, that is, the cares of this world, which the infertile ground brought forth on

<sup>449</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 57 (405, 2–).

<sup>550</sup> Cf. 16.22.

<sup>551</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 58 (405, 12–6).



behalf of the good seed [cf. [Matt 13:7, 22](#)]. To the Hebrews it is said about this, “But that which brings forth thorns and thistles is rejected, and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be consumed” [[Heb 6:8](#)]. And in the Gospel, the Lord was speaking about this fire, “I have come to cast fire on the earth” [[Luke 12:49](#)]. Moreover, above we read, “Iniquity will burn as fire, and like the dry grass it shall be consumed by fire” [[Isa 9:18](#)], and all the weeds, which the enemy man has sown over, while the householder was sleeping [cf. [Matt 13:25](#)]. It is also written in the Epistle of James about this, “How much timber does a small fire kindle!” [[Jas 3:5](#)]; and in Proverbs, “In many woods the fire is strong” [[Prov 26:20](#)], although in proverbial speech something else can be understood. I believe that this fire settled on the tongues of the apostles and of all the believers, when they were speaking in various languages [cf. [Acts 2:3](#)], and they put to flight all the darkness of error, and they were illuminating the hearts of those who were receiving the word of God.

Now as for what follows, “his chariot” or *four-horse chariot* is “as a storm,” we shall explain this by means of examples from the Psalms, where it is written, “God shall come manifestly, our God, and he will not be silent; fire will burn before him, and round him there will be a mighty storm” [[Ps 50:3](#)]; and elsewhere, “The *chariots* of God are ten thousandfold, thousands of rejoicing ones” [[Ps 68:17](#)]. Elisha was surrounded by these “chariots” and horses, which his servant could not see. This is why he says, “Lord, open the eyes of this servant and let him see; and when his eyes were opened,” it says, “he saw the *chariots* and the *four-horse chariots* and the horses round about” [[2 Kgs 6:17](#)]. And in this fiery “chariot,” Elijah was taken to heaven, when Elisha was calling out, “My father, my father, the *chariot* of Israel and his charioteer” [[2 Kgs 2:12](#); cf. [Sir 48:9](#)]. But all these things are narrated not because God has either “chariots” or *four-horse chariots*, or because he travels with the speed of horses, about whom it is written elsewhere, “He who walks on the wings of the winds” [[Ps 104:3](#)]. Instead, just as he is said to sit upon a throne, when he assumes the character of a judge, so when he comes for “vengeance,” in order to wage war against his adversaries, he is shown in the character of a triumphant conqueror.

We have frequently spoken of the *fury* of the Lord, that it should be interpreted in the same manner as his forgetting, repentance, grief, and other emotions, which do not correspond with the majesty of God. By this *fire* and *fury*, therefore, by these “chariots” and with a *flame of fire*, all the flesh “shall be judged”; or *the Lord* himself [*is judged*] with his creatures. Consequently, he would appear to bear the sentence not in potency, but by the truth of judgment, in accordance with what is said at greater length in Micah [cf. [Mic 6:1–5](#)], and rather briefly in the fiftieth Psalm: “That you may be justified in your words and may overcome when you are judged” [[Ps 51:4](#)].

Now as for the *sword* by which *all flesh* must “be judged,” this should be understood of that sword of which even earlier we have spoken,<sup>552</sup> and now we say briefly, “Unless you convert, he will brandish his *sword*” [[Ps 7:12](#)]. The Israelites complain that this *sword*, which punishes the sinner’s flesh and all his vices, was put into the hands of Pharaoh, and they say to Moses and Aaron, “Let God look upon you and judge, because you have made our odor hateful to Pharaoh, so that a *sword* has been placed in his hands to slay us” [[Exod 5:21](#)]. It is even written about this

*sword* in Amos, “All the sinners of the people will perish by the *sword*” [[Amos 9:10](#)], though assuredly there are other kinds of punishments as well. Therefore, whatever punishes and strikes, tortures and torments, is called a *sword* in the Holy Scriptures. By this *sword*, those who do not do the will of God will be “wounded,” or *slain*, and when the light of the truth has been cast out, they will have enveloped themselves in the darkness of error. In Jeremiah, it is written about them, “If the Ethiopian shall change his skin” [[Jer 13:23](#)], and in Zephaniah, “And you Ethiopians will be *wounded*, or *slain* by my *sword*” [[Zeph 2:12](#)].

When writing to the Romans, the Apostle discusses at length in what sense the entire content of this passage must be taken:

But according to your hardness and impenitent heart, you treasure up for yourself wrath on the day of wrath and of the revelation of the just judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his works; to them, indeed, who with patience in good work, seek glory, honor, and incorruption, eternal life; but to those who are contentious, and who disbelieve the truth, but acquiesce to iniquity, wrath and *fury*, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that works evil, of the Jew first, and of the pagan. [[Rom 2:5–9](#)]<sup>553</sup>

28. ([66:17](#)) *Those who were sanctified, and thought themselves clean in the gardens behind one (unam) [house] within, who were eating swine’s (suillam) flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse: they shall be consumed together, says the Lord.* Septuagint: “Those who are sanctified and purified in the gardens and on the porches, eating swine’s (*porcinam*) flesh and the abominations, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, said the Lord.”

Symmachus and Theodotion translated this passage in this way: “You who are sanctified and purified in the gardens one after another, among them who eat swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse, will fall down together, says the Lord.” They wanted to show that those who are sanctified and purified in the gardens one after another do not eat swine’s flesh and the abomination and the mouse; but those who are purified are living among those who eat the things that are prohibited.

Now the divine words are rebuking the Jewish people, or rather, the scribes and Pharisees, whom the Lord also rebuked, when he said, “You are they who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts, since that which is exalted to men is an *abomination* before God” [[Luke 16:15](#)]. This is why he was rebuking them, and was saying, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; you who cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within you are full of uncleanness” [[Matt 23:25](#)]; and again, “You are whitewashed sepulchers, but within you are filled with the bones of dead men, and with all filthiness” [[Matt 23:27](#)]. They are ones who “blessed with their own mouth, but cursed in their heart” [[Ps 62:4](#)]; who spoke things of peace to the Lord [cf. [Ps 35:20](#)] and softened their words upon oil, yet they themselves were spears [cf. [Ps 55:21](#)]. Very justly he said of them, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me” [[Isa 29:13](#)]. Now through Moses, God had commanded that if anyone had been overtaken by sin, he returned to the temple by means of sacrifices and victims, once he was sprinkled with the ashes of a red heifer and with other ways of expiation

<sup>553</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 58 (405, 32–06, 2).

[cf. [Num 19:2–22](#)]. Those who neglected this built either plunge baths or pools for watering small garden beds, in the places of delights and pleasures, that is, in the loveliest gardens.<sup>554</sup> They thought that by simple waters they washed away their adulteries and all their disgraceful lusts. The following shall be most justly applied to them: And they “purge the night in the river.”<sup>555</sup> Nor should it seem unfitting to anyone, if the things that are done shamefully are set forth quite clearly for the improvement of those who are not ashamed to commit such things, things that “it is a shameful even to say” [[Eph 5:12](#)], while they cleave like dogs to prostitutes, and males practice base acts with males, receiving in themselves the retribution of sin [cf. [Rom 1:27](#)]. Those who do these works, by their will and wicked deeds, are with those who *eat swine’s flesh*, and all those things that are forbidden by the law, *and the mouse*, which we called the dormouse, or according to the eastern provinces *μυοξους*. They *shall be consumed together*, therefore, both those who eat these things, and those who practice every base act and do such things that possibly not even pagans do.

According to tropology, we can say that all lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God [cf. [2 Tim 3:4](#)] are *sanctified in the gardens* and “on the porches,” because they are not strong enough to be introduced to the mysteries of truth, and they *eat* the food of impiety, as long as they are not holy in body and spirit [cf. [1 Cor 7:34](#)]; and they do not eat the flesh of Jesus nor do they drink his blood, about which he himself says, “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life” [[John 6:55](#)]. For indeed “Christ our Passover has been sacrificed” [[1 Cor 5:7](#)], he who is not outside, but in *one (una)* house and is eaten *within*.

29. ([66:18–19d](#)) *But I [know] their works and their thoughts; I am coming to gather them together with all nations and tongues, and they shall come and shall see my glory. (19) And I will set a sign among them, and I will send of them that shall be saved to the nations, into the sea, to Africa, to Lydia those who hold the arrow, to Italy and Greece, to the islands afar off, to them that have not heard of me, and have not seen my glory.* Septuagint: “And I [know] their works and their thoughts, I am coming to gather together all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory. (19) And I will leave a sign upon them, and I will send of them that shall be saved, to the nations, to Tarshish (*Tharsis*), and Phud, and Lud, and Mosoch, and to Thobel, and to Greece, and to the islands afar off, who have not heard my name, nor seen my glory.”

Before I explain what this roster of many nations means, I should speak briefly about the variety that is found in the translations. In the Hebrew language, Tarshish is called *the sea* and, as they say, it refers to the country of India; although Josephus, changing a letter, thinks that Tarsus the city in Cilicia is being identified, instead of Tarshish, as the city to which Jonah wanted to go when he fled from Joppa [cf. [Jonah 1:3](#)]. Now as for Phut, or *Phul*, Libya and all of Africa down to the Sea of Mauritania, in which today there is a river called the Phut, and everything around it is called the Phutian country. But they call the Lydos, Lud, whose Etruscan settlers, who are now called Tuscans, at one time were the most skilled shooters of *arrows*. Now they are called *those holding the arrow*. The Hebrew for this reads as *mosche ceseth*, which all apart from the Septuagint have translated similarly as “those holding the bow,” whereas the Septuagint recorded “Mosoch,” translating a noun for a verb. But if this is accepted, it signifies

<sup>554</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (406, 11–8).

<sup>555</sup> [Persius 2.16](#).

Cappadocia, of which Mazaca is the metropolis, which afterwards received the name of Caesarea from Caesar Augustus. I do not know what they intended, for likewise in Genesis they translated as Mosoch the last son of Aram, that is, of Damascus of the Syrians, who is called Mes [cf. [Gen 10:23](#)]. We render this more accurately as Meonas. On the other hand, Thubal or Thobel is interpreted either as Italia or Iberia, that is, Spain, from the river Hiberus. This is why even today the country of the Spaniards is called Celtiberia. Lucan writes beautifully about them, “The Celts of the Gauls, joining name with the Iberians.”<sup>556</sup> We can call them Gallo-Spaniards. But the Greeks, who are called Javan in the Hebrew tongue, express Ionans, whence the Greeks are called Ionians and their sea Ionian. And this must be considered, that he recorded particularly the western nations from Japheth, one of the sons of Noah, although he has recalled the names Shem and Ham, that is of India and Africa, in respect to Tarshish and Put, so as to show the whole world.

Therefore the Lord *is coming to gather both the works and the thoughts* of each one. From this we learn not only that *works*, but also *thoughts* are to be judged on the day of judgment. For “he who looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” [[Matt 5:28](#)]. He says about them, “Now their thoughts have encircled them” [[Hos 7:2](#)], when God will judge the hidden things of men according to the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that what the Apostle writes is confirmed by the truth of the judgment: “With their thoughts mutually accusing and also satisfying them, on the day in which God will judge the hidden things of men” [[Rom 2:15–16](#)]. Thus all our *thoughts*, having been *gathered together* at one time, would test the just judge, while our conscience either accuses us, or satisfies us for our transgression, whether the sins or good works be more, whether they be old or new ones, whether they have been erased by penitence or renewed by new crimes, when the Lord says, “I have given on their heads their ways, and I will render their thoughts to them” [[Hos 4:9](#)].

“He has fashioned individually their hearts and understands all their works” [[Ps 33:15](#)]. In another passage, as well, we read about this, “You alone know the hearts of men” [[1 Kgs 8:39](#)]. For no one knows what things are in man, except the spirit of man who is in him [cf. [1 Cor 2:11](#)]. And this is why God says through Jeremiah, “I am God who draws nigh and not from far away, says the Lord; shall a man hide himself in secret places, and I will not know?” [[Jer 23:23](#)]. Finally, it is said to the scribes and Pharisees, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts” [[Luke 16:15](#)]. In this it must be observed that he did not say, “the Father,” according to the blasphemies of the heretics, lest he should seem to exclude the Son, but “God,” because such knowledge is shared by the Father and the Son. For “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; this one was in the beginning with God” [[John 1:1–2](#)]. The same John writes of him, “But Jesus himself did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all, and he did not need anyone to provide testimony to him about a man; for he himself knew what was in man” [[John 2:24–25](#)]. The following also agrees with this: “But Jesus, knowing their *thoughts*” [[Matt 12:25](#)]; and in another place: “But Jesus, knowing their malice” [[Matt 22:18](#)]. And what is more, lest there be any doubt when heretics make false accusations about the Word (*verbo*) of God, and question whether he knows everything, there is a rather lengthy discussion in the letter written to the Hebrews:

<sup>556</sup> [Lucan 4:10](#).

For the word (*sermo*) of God is living, both manifest and piercing more than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, and it is a judge of the *thoughts* and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is invisible in his sight; but all things are laid bare and open to the eyes of him of whom we are speaking. [[Heb 4:12–13](#)]

But after all *thoughts* have been *gathered* together, either accusing or defending us [cf. [Rom 2:15](#)], then all nations and languages will equally be brought forth publicly with their thoughts. But according to the Apostle Paul we read not only of languages of men, but also of angels [cf. [1 Cor 13:1](#)]. From which it is granted to be understood that all creatures must be judged by the Lord, not only those upon the earth, but also those in the air and in the heavens. This accords with what he himself had said above: “My sword has been made drunk in heaven, and it will descend to the earth” [[Isa 34:5](#)]. But *all will come to see the glory* of God, and he will put a *sign* on them, which also, at the beginning of Ezekiel, is shown by the translation of the Hebrew letter *thau* [cf. [Ezek 9:4](#)]. The one who will have been marked with this *sign* will escape the hands of the slayer. The doorposts of the houses in Egypt were signed with this as well, when Egypt perished and Israel alone remained unharmed [cf. [Exod 12:22–23](#)]. Isaiah the prophet testifies about this sign, which Ahaz, king of Judah, was unwilling to receive [cf. [Isa 7:12](#)], “Therefore the Lord shall give you a *sign*: behold, a virgin shall conceive in her womb and shall give birth” [[Isa 7:14](#)]. This is also why the prophet prays for what had been promised, “Make with me a *sign* for good” [[Ps 86:17](#)]. And in another passage, “You gave a signal to those who feared you so that they could escape from the face of the bow” [[Ps 60:4](#)]. When the Lord was ascending to the Father, he left behind this sign for us, or he placed it on our foreheads, in order that we might say freely, “The light of your countenance O Lord is signed upon us” [[Ps 4:6](#)].

Now as for what follows, *And I will send of them that shall be saved to the nations*, and he lists each one; but this seems to contradict our explanation. For if it is said about the day of judgment, how does he again return to the first coming of a Savior, when the apostles are directed to the nations, and hear from the Lord, “Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” [[Matt 28:19](#)]? This is solved as follows: the day of judgment is proclaimed, or rather, is threatened, in order that out of fear of the coming punishment, those who must first be *sent* may receive the coming of the Savior and the gospel of the apostles. But he has nicely said, *I will send of them that shall be saved*. “For unless the Lord had left us seed, we would have been as Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah” [[Isa 1:9](#)]. And the Apostle says, “A remnant has been saved” [[Rom 11:5](#)].

They are *sent* “to the nations, to Tarshish (*Tharsis*), and Fut, and Lut, and Mosoch, and Thobel, and Greece, and to very many islands, which are afar off, and which have not heard the name of the Lord, nor seen his glory.” We have spoken about these things above according to history. Now we must touch upon them anagogically. “Tarshish” means “contemplation of joy.” Consequently, let us consider not the things that are in the present, but what will be in the future, and let us deserve to hear, “Because you were faithful with few things, enter into the joy of your Lord” [cf. [Matt 25:21](#)]. Peter the Apostle also writes about this, “Exult with an inexpressible and glorious joy” [[1 Pet 1:8](#)], in order that we may praise God, and say, “Our mouth was filled with joy and our tongue with exultation” [[Ps 126:2](#)]. And what follows, “Fut,”

means “shutting out from the mouth.” Hence by shutting out all blasphemy let us speak those things that are good, and say, “Oh Lord, my mouth has proclaimed your justice, your salvation all day long” [[Ps 71:15](#)]; and again, “I have not hidden your truth in my heart, and I have spoken your salvation” [[Ps 40:10](#)]. “Lud” too is translated into our language as “usefulness,” and “Mosoch” as “stretching out,” and Thubal or “Thobel” as “led to mourning” or “converted,” or “all.” All of this is congruent with the calling of the nations, that they may pursue “usefulness” through the confession of their soul, and by forgetting the things past, “stretch out” toward the future [cf. [Phil 3:13](#)]; and let them “mourn” old sins and be drawn to the “mourning” and sadness, which “leads” to life. “For blessed are those who *mourn*, because they shall laugh” [[Luke 6:21](#)]. And may they “all” be “converted” to the Lord, so that later they may pass over to grace, and know that which is said by the Apostle, “Glory and honor and peace to everyone who works good, to the Jews first and to the Greek” [[Rom 2:10](#)]. For he is God not only of the Jews but also of the Gentiles [cf. [Rom 3:29](#)].

On the other hand, as for what is said, “And to the islands afar off, which have not heard my name, nor seen my glory,” this agrees with what we read above: “For those to whom no report was brought concerning him will see, and those who did not hear shall understand” [[Isa 52:15](#)]; and again: “I appeared to those who were not asking for me, I was found by those who were not seeking me; I said, ‘Behold, I am here,’ to those who were not calling upon my name” [[Isa 65:1](#)]. Now we have frequently said that the “islands” signify either the nations of the whole world, or the churches that are disseminated throughout the whole world.

30. ([66:19e–20c](#)) *And they shall declare my glory to the Gentiles, (20) and they shall bring all your brothers out of all nations for a gift to the Lord, upon horses, and in four-horse chariots, and in litters, and on mules, and in coaches, to the holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord.* Septuagint: “And they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles, (20) and they shall bring your brothers out of all nations for a gift to the Lord with horses, and four-wheeled wagons, in covered chariots (*lampenis*) of mules, with awnings, to the holy city Jerusalem, says the Lord.”

Those who will be saved and sent to various nations, and those who at first had not heard, nor had they seen the glory of the Lord [cf. [Isa 65:19](#)], *they shall declare it to all the Gentiles and they shall bring the brothers* of the Jewish people, a remnant of whom has been saved [cf. [Rom 11:5](#)], *out of all nations*, as a present *to the Lord*. This refers either to those who have followed the knowledge of the true God, having despised the error of idolatry, or to those who have believed from the people of Israel throughout the whole world, to whom the Apostle Peter writes [cf. [1 Pet 1:1](#)].

But *they shall bring them upon horses, and in four-horse chariots, and in litters, and on mules, and in carriages*. For *carriages*, which only Symmachus has translated, whom we have followed in this passage, Aquila, the Septuagint, and Theodotion have translated “mules.” And where the Septuagint recorded “with awnings,” which we can interpret as sleeping coaches or enclosed litters, the others with one voice have translated as φορτιοις, which we interpret as various kinds of vehicles. But where the Septuagint and Theodotion said “covered chariots” (*lampenas*) [cf. [Num 7:3](#)], which Symmachus translated as litters (*lecticas*), Aquila put down σκεπαστα, which also signifies the same thing, litters (*lecticas*) that have been covered with animal skins. Let this be said on behalf of the variety of translations.



But we can understand the *horses*, the *four-horse chariots*, the *litters*, the *mules* and the *carriages*, and the different kinds of vehicles as angelic ministries. Elsewhere it is said to God about these, “Ascend upon your *horses*, and your horsemanship is salvation” [[Hab 3:8](#)]. By these *horses*, “chariots,” and *four-horse chariots*, Elijah was taken into heaven [cf. [2 Kgs 2:11](#); [Sir 48:9](#)], and Elisha showed to an unaware servant boy that they were surrounded and protected by them [cf. [2 Kgs 6:17](#)]. Moreover Zechariah saw during the night, “Behold, a man mounted on a red horse, and he stood between the shady mountains; and behind him were red horses, and grey, and piebald, and white. And I said,” it says, “ ‘What are these, O Lord?’ And the angel who spoke with me said to me, ‘I will show you what they are.’ And the man that stood between the mountains answered, and said to me, ‘These are they whom the Lord has sent to go through the earth’ ” [[Zech 1:8–10](#)].<sup>557</sup> John also, in the Apocalypse, testifies that he saw these things:

I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he that sat upon it was called faithful and true, and he judges with justice and is a warrior. And his eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many diadems. And he had a name written, which no one knows except himself. And he was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood. And his name was called “the Word of God.” And an army in heaven followed him on white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and very pure. And out of his mouth proceeded a sharp sword, that with it he could strike the nations. [[Rev 19:11–15](#)]

The Lord and Savior sat on a red horse, when he assumed a human body. To him it is said, “Why are your garments red?” [[Isa 63:2](#)]; and, “Who is this who ascends from Edom, with red garments from Bosra?” [[Isa 63:1](#)]. And horses of various colors were following him, either red for their martyrdom, or piebald ones for their flight, or variegated for their virtues, or white for their virginity. But he was sitting on a white horse, when after his resurrection he assumed an immortal and incorrupt body. And whoever was following him made use of white horses, that is, bodies that are incorrupt and immortal. If I should wish, it would take a long time to explain both of these citations.

I shall say only this, that the different vehicles by which human beings are brought to faith are either angels, or holy men, who have progressed from men into angels. Now many scriptural passages teach that each one of us has his angels. One of these is the following: “Do not despise one of these least ones, for their angels daily see the face of the Father who is in heaven” [[Matt 18:10](#)]. And when the girl Rhoda announced the Apostle Peter, the others believed that it was his angel [cf. [Acts 12:13–15](#)]. But if this is said concerning the least ones, and about one man, how much more must this be understood concerning all the saints, and especially in regard to the apostles? Their angels daily see the face of the Father, according to what is written, “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him” [[Ps 34:7](#)]. And Jacob speaks about himself, “The angel who delivered me” [[Gen 48:16](#)]. These are the ones who ascend and descend upon the son of man [cf. [John 1:51](#)].

Those who are swift in faith are conveyed by *horses*; those who are manifold in grace by *four-horse chariots*; those who need consolation, in *litters* that are covered and have “awnings,” so that they may merit to hear, “Through the day, the sun shall not burn you, nor the moon

<sup>557</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 58 (407, 27–0).

through the night” [Ps 121:6]. Now we know that in the Holy Scriptures, *mules* are understood in two senses. Either they stand for sterility and continence, on which kind David and Solomon sat [cf. 1 Kgs 1:33, 38], one of whom means “strong of hand,” the other “peaceful”; or they have the bad connotation, about which it is said, “Do not become like the horse and the *mule*, who have no understanding” [Ps 32:9]. Doeg was put in charge of this sort [1 Sam 21:7]. On the other hand, *carriages*, which, as we said above, the Septuagint translated as covered vehicles, the rest translated literally as vehicles. They are to be understood as those of whom the Apostle says, “Carry one another’s burdens” [Gal 6:2]. On the other hand, “covered chariots” (*lampenae*) must be understood as the gleaming bodies of the saints, and souls illuminated by faith in the Lord, to whom it can be said, “You are the light of the world” [Matt 5:14].<sup>558</sup>

Now all this equipment advances to this purpose, in order that we may enter the “holy city” of God, or the *holy mountain of the Lord, Jerusalem*, not that Jerusalem that kills prophets and stones those who have been sent to her [cf. Matt 23:37], but the heavenly Jerusalem, of which we frequently have said, “But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother” [Gal 4:26]. And again, “But you have come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” [Heb 12:22]. We can understand this either concerning the present church, which has been gathered together from the whole world through the apostles, or concerning the future one, so that what the apostle has prophesied by the Holy Spirit may be fulfilled: “We will be taken into the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord” [1 Thess 4:17].<sup>559</sup>

The Jews and the heirs of the Jewish error, the Ebionites, who took the name of “poor ones” in view of the lowliness of their interpretation, and all those who are expecting a thousand years of delights, interpret the *horses*, the *four-horse chariots*, the “four-wheeled wagons,” the *litters*, or portable couches and sleeping quarters, the *mules* and the she-mules, the *carriages*, and the different kinds of vehicles, just as they have been written; that is to say, they believe that at the consummation of the world, when Christ will have come to rule over Jerusalem, and the temple will have been restored, and the Jewish victims will be sacrificed, the children of Israel will be led back from the whole world, not by their having taken up wings, but they will be carried back by means of a Gallic wagon and Belgian war chariots, and on horses from Cappadocia and Spain, and with “four-wheeled wagons” from Italy, and with litters and portable couches for their wives, not upon horses, but on “mules” of Numidia. But those who will have been of senatorial rank and those who have occupied prominent places among the British, Spaniards, Gauls, and Morini, utmost of men,<sup>660</sup> and those from where the Rhine is divided by two currents, they will come in *carriages* for the meeting of all the nations, which will have been prepared for their service.

31. (66:20d–21) *As if the sons of Israel should bring a gift in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord, (21) and I will take of them to be priests and Levites, says the Lord.* Septuagint: “As if the sons of Israel should offer their sacrifices to me with psalms in the house of the Lord, (21) and I will take of them priests and Levites, said the Lord.”

<sup>558</sup> *Lampena* (covered chariot) is a Greek word related to λαμπας, lamp, torch.

<sup>559</sup> Cf. *Eus Is* 2, 58 (407, 35–08, 5).

<sup>660</sup> Jerome’ exact phrase, *extremique hominum Morini*, is found in [Vergil, Aeneid 8.727](#).

They who will have been directed to the Gentiles, he says, and will have declared to them my glory [cf. [Isa 66:19](#)], will thus lead your brothers from all the nations as a *gift* to the Lord, with horses and four-horse chariots, and litters, and mules, and carriages, and with diverse vehicles into the holy mountain of Jerusalem, just as *the sons of Israel* were accustomed to do, while their religion was abiding and the ceremonies of their temple were being preserved, to “offer sacrifices with psalms in the house of the Lord,” or, as is found in the Hebrew and as all translated in unison, *in a clean vessel*. Even up to this day, *the sons of Israel*, who conceive God in their mind, “offer” spiritual sacrifices, with the fruits and virtues of their soul, “in the house” of God, which is the church, *in clean vessels*, that is, in holy bodies. The Apostle writes about them, “Or do you not know that you are the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit dwells in you?” [[1 Cor 3:16](#)].

“And I will take of them,” he says, “priests and Levites, says the Lord,” who will have been saved in order to declare to the Gentiles [cf. [Isa 66:19](#)]. One man said about them, “Thus let a man account us as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God” [[1 Cor 4:1](#)]. And Luke the Evangelist says, “Just as they have handed down to us, who from the beginning saw and became ministers of the word” [[Luke 1:2](#)]. We also read above about them, “But you shall be my priests of the Lord” [[Isa 61:6](#)]. For just as a Jew is in secret, who is circumcised in his spirit [cf. [Rom 2:29](#)], about whom it is written, “For we are the circumcision, who serve God in spirit” [[Phil 3:3](#)], and we “offer” spiritual “sacrifices” that are pleasing to God [cf. [1 Pet 2:5](#)], and we sing psalms in spirit and with our mind [cf. [1 Cor 14:15](#)], so too there are priests and Levites in secret, who do not follow a succession of race, but a progression of faith. Or at any rate he is not speaking about the apostles and the apostolic men, who were the princes of the church from the Jewish people, but about the nations enumerated above, from the sea, from Africa, from Libya, from Cappadocia, from Italy, from Greece, and from all the islands [cf. [Isa 66:19](#)]. At first, their inhabitants had not heard the Lord, nor had they seen his glory [cf. [Isa 66:19](#)], but afterwards they shall be turned into priests, in order that those who had been the tail may be the head, and those who were the head may be turned into the tail [cf. [Deut 28:44](#)].

32. ([66:22–23](#)) *For as the new heavens, and the new earth, which I am making to stand before me, says the Lord, so shall your seed stand, and your name. (23) And there shall be month after month, and Sabbath after Sabbath; all flesh shall come to worship before my face, says the Lord.* Septuagint: “For as the new heaven and the new earth, which I am making to remain before me, says the Lord, so shall your seed stand and your name. (23) And there shall be month after month, and Sabbath after Sabbath; all flesh shall come to worship before me in Jerusalem, the Lord.”

When he says, “I will take of them to be priests and Levites” [[Isa 66:21](#)], he shows that the old priesthood has been bypassed, which was allotted to the tribe of Levi, where there was no election but the order of nature and the succession of family through the offspring of the descendant.<sup>661</sup> But “when the priesthood is changed, it is necessary that a change of law be made also” [[Heb 7:12](#)], and election pertains to those for whom priesthood is conferred not in accordance with blood but according to merits and virtues. They shall come from the islands of the Gentiles and will proclaim the glory of the Lord, and they will be led on horses and in four-

<sup>661</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 58 (408, 14–09, 1).

horse chariots, and in litters, and on mules, and in carriages [cf. [Isa 66:19–20](#)].

Now just as there will be a “new heaven and a new earth” and a new Jerusalem, so that it is not said, “Heaven and earth shall pass away” [[Matt 24:35](#)], and again, “The heaven shall be rolled up as a book” [[Isa 34:4](#)], “and with corruption shall the earth be laid waste” [[Isa 24:3](#)], so also in all of us, a new people of God will be made. For the Scripture says, “The old things have passed away, behold all things are made new” [[2 Cor 5:17](#)]; and in another passage, “If in any way there is a new creation in Christ” [[2 Cor 5:17](#)]. And there will also be a new people—for “the first fruits, Christ, then those who are Christ’s, at his coming” [[1 Cor 15:23](#)]—and a new heaven and earth, about which it is said in the midst of the eight Beatitudes, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, because theirs is the kingdom of heavens; blessed are the meek, because they shall possess the earth” [[Matt 5:3–4](#)]. If indeed all creation has now been subjected to vanity in hope, because of him who subjected it, it will set free from the servitude of corruption into the glory of the sons of God [cf. [Rom 8:20–21](#)], who will be made his sons from human beings, and they will *stand before* him forever, and their *name* will last unendingly, so that no other nation succeeds them, which was done in the case of the Jews, but it would remain into eternity.

He says, *And there shall be month after month, and Sabbath after Sabbath*. Thus from being carnal Sabbaths and months they may become Sabbaths of spiritual delights [cf. [Isa 58:13](#)], the Sabbath rest that is reserved for the people of God [cf. [Heb 4:9](#)], and the spiritual month, when from point to point, the moon will complete its course and run by its own progression, so that it brings about a month, that is the calends, which in Greek is called new moon, that is, the beginning of a new month. Among them, the beginning of the calends is not according to the course of the sun and the different intervals of months, but it begins and ends according to the circuit of the moon. This is the moon that it is talked about in praise of the true Solomon, “And he shall continue with the sun, and before the moon, throughout all generations” [[Ps 72:5](#)]. In the Song of Songs it is called chosen: “Who is this that looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, chosen as the marvelous sun?” [[Song 6:9](#)].

Natural scientists, and those whose concern is to discuss the heavens, say that the moon does not have its own light, but is illuminated by the rays of the sun; for it always completes its course and shines from the same side of the globe, which is nearer to the sun and is not obscured by the earth’s shadow. Even the poet has shown this in one brief line: “Nor does the moon rise beholden to her brother’s rays.”<sup>62</sup> If this is true, we can also say tropologically that the church waxes and wanes during times of peace and persecution. Even when it has been overwhelmed by the darkness of temptations, it again assumes its original light and receives her splendor from the sun of justice [cf. [Mal 4:2](#)]. And this is what is said: “The moon will shine as the sun” [[Isa 30:26](#)], and her just inhabitants shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father [cf. [Matt 13:43](#)]. And during these months, the *seed* of the Lord, which *will stand* for eternity, comes to his solemnities, which the saint sounded forth with mystical speech, when he said, “I kept the eternal years in mind and meditated” [[Ps 77:5](#)].<sup>63</sup>

Now concerning the *Sabbath* that signifies rest, we have treated it in a detailed discussion in

<sup>62</sup> [Vergil, Georgics 1.396](#).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 58 (409, 16–6).

the prophecy of the eunuchs and foreigners.<sup>664</sup> And now one should say briefly that they *come* on the new moons and on the Sabbaths, who, when the six days in which the world was made, pass on and go past, they hasten towards the seventh day, that is the Sabbath, in which there is true rest. The Apostle Paul instructed believers about these solemnities, when he said, “For the law contains a shadow of the good things to come” [[Heb 10:1](#)]; and again, “Let no one judge you therefore in food or in drink, or in respect of a festival day, or new moon, or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come” [[Col 2:16–17](#)].

But if these things have preceded as an image and shadow of the good things to come, the whole law must be understood spiritually, about which the same Apostle said, “For we know that the law is spiritual” [[Rom 7:14](#)]. Even David longed to know its mysteries: “Unveil my eyes, and I will consider wondrous things about your law” [[Ps 119:18](#)]. “For the things that are seen are temporal, but those that are not seen are eternal” [[2 Cor 4:18](#)]. Now is not the time to touch upon in a hurried discussion all that is associated with this. For if neither the eye has seen, nor the ear heard, nor have they ascended into the heart of man those things that God has prepared for those who love him [cf. [1 Cor 2:9](#)], how should we attempt in a brief written composition to show a description of the whole law, as if of the entire world?

As for what follows, “All flesh shall come to worship before me in Jerusalem,” one should know that “Jerusalem” is not written in the Hebrew. Consequently let us strike down the haughtiness of the Jews. Instead, only “in my sight” is written, so that the word of the Lord may be fulfilled, who said in the Gospel, “Amen, amen, I say to you, that the hour will come, when you will *worship* the Father neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem” [[John 4:21](#)]. And again, “God is a spirit, and those who *worship* him must *worship* in spirit and in truth” [[John 4:24](#)]. And there are the words of the Apostle: “lifting up holy hands in every place” [[1 Tim 2:8](#)].<sup>665</sup> Now *all flesh* signifies not the Jewish people, but the whole human race, according to what was said above: “*All flesh* shall see your salvation” [[Isa 40:5](#)]. And in Joel: “I will pour out from my spirit upon *all flesh*, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy” [[Joel 2:28](#)]. And in Zechariah: “May *all flesh* fear at the presence of the Lord” [[Zech 2:13](#)]. And in the Psalms: “*All flesh* shall come to you” [[Ps 65:2](#)]. This is expressed in different words in another Psalm: “All the nations that you made shall come and *worship* before you, and they shall glorify your name, O Lord” [[Ps 86:9](#)].

The *χιλιασται*, whom we can call millenarians, place an absurd interpretation on the *month after month and Sabbath after Sabbath*, in which *all flesh shall come to worship* God. They say that those who are nearby would come into Jerusalem every Sabbath; those who are farther away would come monthly, that is, when the cycle of the calends has been completed; those who are very far away would come each year, that is, on the days of Passover or Tabernacles, according to what is said in Zechariah: “They shall go up from year to year, to worship the the Lord, the king of hosts, and to celebrate the feast of tabernacles” [[Zech 14:16](#)]. And in order to provide an occasion for greater laughter from those who hear, they interpret what is written in the final section of the same prophecy, “And the merchant shall be no more in the house of the Lord of hosts in that day” [[Zech 14:21](#)], to mean that business dealers will cease to exist during the thousand years. For everything would be produced in all locations; that

<sup>664</sup> Cf. 15.19.

<sup>665</sup> Cf. *Eus Is 2*, 58 (410, 6–2).

is to say, we would lack neither the leaf of the spice plant, nor pepper, nor would the Indians long for our mint.

33. (66:24) *And they shall go out, and see the corpses of the men who have transgressed against me; their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be a loathsome sight to all flesh.* Septuagint: in like manner.

All flesh that shall worship in the sight of the Lord [cf. [Isa 66:23](#)], either in the heavenly Jerusalem [cf. [Heb 12:22](#)], or in every place where clean hands are raised [cf. [1 Tim 2:8](#)], *shall go out to see the corpses* of dead men, those *who have transgressed against* God. This can be understood either of the Jews, of whom it was said, “I have fathered sons and exalted them, but they have spurned me” [[Isa 1:2](#)]; or of all who have the knowledge of God in their hearts and have turned to vanity, to worship the creature rather than the Creator [cf. [Rom 1:25](#)]. However, *they shall go out* not spatially, but by their understanding; for *corpses* of the dead cannot be inside with the Lord. But if all flesh shall worship the Lord, but on the other hand, the *corpses of men who have transgressed against* the Lord will be handed over to eternal flames, in both respects the resurrection shall truly be of the flesh.

Now the *worm* that *shall not die*, and the *fire* that *will not be quenched*, are taken by many to mean the consciousness of sins, which tortures those who are appointed for punishments, because they lacked goodness by their own fault and by such great sin.<sup>666</sup> This agrees with what is said: “I lived in my misery, while a thorn is fastened in me” [[Ps 32:4](#)]; and in Proverbs: “An understanding heart is a moth of the bones” [[Prov 14:30](#)]; and again under the obelus: “As a moth [does to] a garment, and a worm [does to] wood, so grief torments the heart of a man” [[Prov 25:20](#)], so that at least they are not denying the eternal punishment of transgressors and of those who deny God. For the Lord says in the Gospel, “Go into the eternal fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels” [[Matt 25:41](#)]; and in another passage, “Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” [[Matt 22:13](#)].

If we have heard of hands, feet, and outer darkness, which is the punishment of the eyes that do not see the light of God, and of weeping, which certainly itself pertains to the eyes, and of the gnashing of teeth, I marvel that certain ones are introducing after the resurrection an airy body and one that must gradually be dissolved into the light breezes.<sup>667</sup> For by the power of his own majesty, the Lord entered in among the apostles when the doors were shut [cf. [John 20:19](#)]. Certainly, even before the resurrection, he walked upon the sea with a buoyant step [cf. [Matt 14:24–25](#)], and he offered this same thing to the Apostle Peter, so that he who had been walking by faith later sank on account of his faithlessness [cf. [Matt 14:29–30](#)]. And he said to him, “Why did you doubt, you of little faith?” [[Matt 14:31](#)].<sup>668</sup>

The *fire*, too, must be taken in accordance with this, and the *worm*, which is set on fire for as long a time as it has material for the devouring fire to feed on. If someone therefore has weeds in his conscience, which the enemy man sowed while the householder was asleep [cf. [Matt](#)

<sup>666</sup> Cf. *ibid.* (410, 29–11, 2).

<sup>667</sup> O’onnell thinks that Jerome has Origenists in view here. Cf. *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, 60.

<sup>668</sup> Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 108.24](#) (NPNF2 [6:209](#)).



[13:25](#)], the fire will burn these things, the conflagration will devour them. And before the eyes of all the saints, the punishments shall be shown of those who, instead of gold, silver, and precious stone, have built grass, wood, and hay upon the foundation of the Lord [cf. [1 Cor 3:12](#)]. This is fodder for the everlasting fire.<sup>669</sup>

On the other hand, those who want the punishments to be ended at some point, even though they grant that this will be after long ages, nevertheless they want the torments to have a limit, and make use of the following testimonies: “When the fullness of the Gentiles shall have entered in, then all Israel shall be saved” [[Rom 11:25–26](#)]. And again: “God has enclosed all things under sin, that he may have mercy on all” [[Rom 11:32](#); cf. [Gal 3:22](#)]. And in another passage the saint says, “I will endure the wrath of the Lord, because I have sinned against him; until he may justify my cause and remove my judgment, and bring me forth into the light” [[Mic 7:9](#)]. And again, “I will bless you, O Lord; for you were angry with me, you turned your face from me, and you pitied me” [[Isa 12:1](#)]. The Lord also says to the sinner, “When the anger of my fury shall have been, I will heal again.” And this is what is said in another passage, “O how great is the multitude of your goodness, O Lord, which you have hidden for those who fear you!” [[Ps 31:19](#)]. They reflect upon all these things and long to affirm that after the tortures and torments, there shall be relief in the future. Now, they say, this has to be concealed from those for whom fear is advantageous, so that while they are fearful of punishments, they may stop sinning.<sup>770</sup>

We ought to leave this to the knowledge of God alone. Not only are his mercies in equilibrium, but so are his torments, and he knows whom he ought to judge, how, and for how long. And let us say only what befits human frailty: “O Lord, do not rebuke me in your fury, nor chastise me in your wrath” [[Ps 6:1](#)].<sup>771</sup> And just as we believe in the eternal punishment of the devil and of all deniers and of the impious, who have said in their heart, “There is no God” [cf. [Ps 14:1](#)]; so we think that the judge’s sentence is moderate and mingled with mercy, as it pertains to sinners, wicked men, and even Christians, whose works must be examined and cleansed by fire.<sup>772</sup>

<sup>669</sup> See the important clarifying note (bk. 10, n. 3).

<sup>770</sup> Jerome seems to be presenting Origen’s views here, and he does so quite fairly.

<sup>771</sup> Cf. [8.10](#).

<sup>772</sup> This is a key text in the discussion of the question of whether Jerome was a “ercyist,” i.e., held the view that all believing Christians, even those who died in sin, will eventually be saved. There is a close parallel in [Jerome’s Dial Pel 1.28](#). O’onnell discusses these passages in *The Eschatology of St. Jerome*, 166–2. He concludes of the present Isaiah text (169), “n themselves these words are susceptible of many meanings; e.g., a gradual mitigation of the punishments of hell, complete cessation after a time of the punishments imposed by the Judge, or the imposition of a sentence to eternal punishments less severe than those deserved. However, the context makes it clear that the meaning is something short of eternal torments. For it is with eternal torments that the moderate sentence is contrasted....To say that [this passage] is a clear and irrefutable proof that Jerome taught mercyism would be to go beyond the certain meaning of the text. On the other hand, to say that it refers only to venial sinners or to repentant sinners is to choose a possible but questionable hypothesis. The text lacks the clarity required to reach

## APPENDIX 1

### *Origen's Homilies 1–9 on Isaiah, translated by St. Jerome*

#### TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION<sup>11</sup>

Origen published twenty-five<sup>22</sup> homilies on Isaiah, nine of which are preserved in Latin translation and are presented here for the first time in English. In the manuscript tradition the name of the translator is not indicated, but his identity is confirmed by Rufinus, who twice quotes from them, stating explicitly that Jerome translated them.<sup>33</sup> Jerome never denied this, nor is there any doubt that he is the translator. Yet Jerome did not list this work among his translations in his famous catalogue of Christian writings, *De viris illustribus* 135 (392/393). Although he had probably translated and published these nine homilies of Origen on Isaiah between 379 and 382, he seems to have kept silent about them in his subsequent writings. Nor does he mention them in his *Commentary on Isaiah*, though in 3.3 he does refer to his earlier treatment of *Isaiah 6* (*EEp* 18A to Damasus [see appendix 2]), composed “thirty years ago” in Constantinople, while he was studying Holy Scripture under the tutelage of Gregory Nazianzus. Why would he fail to mention his earliest translation of Origen?

A. Fürst has recently analyzed this topic of Jerome's silence about his translation of Origen's homilies. He has persuasively argued that the reason for Jerome's silence was probably because over time he became convinced that some of Origen's opinions expressed in the Isaiah homilies were impious and unorthodox. One example is Origen's identification of the seraphim (cf. *Isa* 6:2) with the Son and the Holy Spirit (1.2). In fact, Jerome came to believe that this interpretation tended toward or anticipated Arianism, the heresy condemned at the Council of Nicaea in 325 that asserted that the Son of God was a creature subordinate to the Father. Jerome later expressed the opinion that this incidental interpretation transmitted by Origen, which Origen himself reports was not original to him, but that he had learned it from a Hebrew convert to Christianity,<sup>44</sup> constituted the gravest error of all in Origen's theology. In 396 Jerome a certain conclusion concerning its meaning. But it probably teaches mercyism.”

1 For this brief introduction, I was aided by A. Fürst, “[Jerome Keeping Silent: Origen and His Exegesis of Isaiah](#),” in *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings and Legacy*, ed. A. Cain and J. Lössl (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 141–2.

2 The number thirty-two reported by Jerome in *Ep.* 33.4 is not reliable. Cf. Fürst, “*erome Keeping Silent*,” 141n2.

3 *Apology against Jerome* 2.31; 2.50.

*EEp* Epistle

4 Cf. *De Principiis* 1.3.4.

writes to Vigilantius,

Origen is a heretic, true; but what does that take from me who do not deny that on very many points he is heretical? He has erred concerning the resurrection of the body, he has erred concerning the condition of souls, he has erred by supposing it possible that the devil may repent, and—an error more important than these—he has declared in his commentary upon Isaiah that the Seraphim mentioned by the prophet are the divine Son and the Holy Ghost.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, in the assessment of St. Jerome of Stridon, Origen's most serious theological error was his suggestion that the seraphim represent the Son and the Holy Spirit. Fürst plausibly suggests that Jerome believed that his own reputation for orthodoxy was menaced by the fact that he had translated Origen's homilies into Latin.<sup>66</sup> Thus he kept silent about his translation.

Jerome's identification of Origen's interpretation of the seraphim as the very gravest of all his theological errors actually bodes well for the case of Origen's fundamental ecclesiastical orthodoxy. For modern critical scholarship has demonstrated that Origen's interpretation did not at all have the "impious" and "blasphemous" character that Jerome would later ascribe to it. The assimilation of the Word and the Spirit (Wisdom) to the cherubim and seraphim came from Judeo-Christian sources and was already found in the work of [St. Irenaeus, \*DDem\* 10.](#)<sup>77</sup> Thus if the interpretation menaces Origen's orthodoxy and turns him into a proto-Arian, it simultaneously menaces the orthodoxy of Irenaeus, a step no modern or ancient scholar would wish to take. Jerome's indictment is thus unfair and uncalled for.

Indeed, Jerome did not always put such a malicious interpretation on Origen's exegesis of this passage. This can be seen from the techniques he used to translate Origen into Latin in the first place. Later in his career, during the Origenist controversies, Jerome would accuse Rufinus of Aquileia of being an unfaithful translator of Origen and a falsifier of Origen's original texts. Rufinus replied to the accusation by saying that Jerome himself had added, subtracted, and altered Origenian material as he made his own translations of Origen. Rufinus says that he had simply imitated this method of his great predecessor.<sup>88</sup> Jerome was unable to deny the charges, since they were true. Rufinus writes in connection with a passage from Jerome's translation of Origen's *Hom* [1.2](#),

But, in certain places where you found things relating to the faith, that is the Trinity, expressed in a strange manner, you left out words at your discretion. This mode of translation we have both of us observed, and if any one finds fault with it, it is you who ought to make answer, since you made use of it before me. But now the practice which

5 Cf. [Ep. 61.2](#) to Vigilantius; NPNF2, [6:131–2](#).

6 Cf. A. Fürst, "erome Keeping Silent," 152.

[D\*Dem\*](#) Irenaeus' [The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching](#), ed. A. Robinson, DD (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920)

7 Cf. H. de Lubac, [Medieval Exegesis](#), trans. M. Sebanc and E. M. Macierowski, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998–009), 1:255.

8 [Apology against Jerome 2.27](#).

you blame is undoubtedly one for which you may yourself incur blame. The practice of translating word for word you formerly pronounced to be both foolish and injurious. In this I followed you. You can hardly mean that I am to repent of this because you have now changed your opinion, and say that you have translated the present work with literal exactness. In previous cases you took out what was unedifying in matters of faith, though you did so in such a way as not to excise them wholly nor in all cases. For instance, in the *Homilies on Isaiah* [1.2], at the Vision of God [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)] Origen refers the words to the Son and the Holy Spirit; and so you have translated, adding, however, words of your own which would make the passage have a more acceptable sense. It stands thus: "Who are then these two Seraphim? My Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit"; but you add of your own, "And do not think that there is any difference in the nature of the Trinity, when the functions indicated by the several persons are preserved." The same thing I have done in a great many cases, either cutting out words or bending them into a sounder meaning. For this you bid me do penance. I do not think that you are of this opinion as regards yourself. If then on this ground no penitence is due from either of us, what other things are there of which you invite me to repent?<sup>99</sup>

Fürst shows that Jerome's intention in adding these words to his Latin translation of Origen's Greek text is to update Origen's bold exegesis and make it acceptable in the eyes of theologians who live after the Council of Nicaea, at which Arianism was condemned. At the time when Jerome translated these homilies, he believed, along with many other Western Christian theologians (including Athanasius himself), that Origen was himself proto-orthodox, not proto-Arian. Jerome glossed and updated the text to protect Origen and prevent misrepresentation of his exegesis. Fürst shows other examples in which Jerome not only altered Origen's original text, but also omitted material that might have occasioned suspicion in the post-Nicene period. I have identified these passages in the footnotes. As far as Rufinus's devastating critique of Jerome's hypocrisy goes, this example provides us with another reason for Jerome's complete silence about his being the translator of Origen's homilies on Isaiah. Rufinus's exposé also goes a long way toward accounting for Jerome's intense hatred of Rufinus, which lasted until the day of his death.

I have translated these homilies from the critical edition: W. A. Baehrens, [GGCS Origenes 8](#) (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1925), 242–89. The following is a summary of their content:<sup>110</sup>

[Homily 1: \[Isaiah 6:1–7\]\(#\)](#) (The call of the prophet)

[Homily 2: \[Isaiah 7:10–16\]\(#\)](#) (The virgin's son)

[Homily 3: \[Isaiah 4:1\]\(#\)](#) (The seven women)

[Homily 4: \[Isaiah 6:1–7\]\(#\)](#) (The vision of God)

[Homily 5: \[Isaiah 41:2\]\(#\); \[6:1ff\]\(#\)](#) (The vision of God, cont.)

[Homily 6: \[Isaiah 6:8ff\]\(#\)](#) (The mission of the prophet)

[Homily 7: \[Isaiah 8:18ff\]\(#\)](#): (The prophet and his children)

9 NPNF2, 3, p. 472.

[GGCS](#) Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller

<sup>110</sup> I have adapted this outline from Westcott, "origenes," [DCB 4:110](#).

[Homily 8: Isaiah 10:10–13](#) (Making graven images)

[Homily 9: Isaiah 6:8–7:11](#) (A fragment)

## ORIGEN'S HOMILIES ON ISAIAH

### *Homily 1*

The first vision. “And it came to pass in the year in which King Uzziah (*Ozias*) died, I saw the Lord sitting on a high throne (*solium*).” [[Isa 6:1](#)]

1. As long as King Uzziah was alive, the prophet Isaiah was not able to see a vision [cf. [Isa 1:1](#)]. For Uzziah was a sinner, and did evil in the sight of the Lord [cf. [2 Kgs 13:2](#)] and acted contrary to the will of the divine law. He entered the temple and the Holy of Holies [cf. [2 Chr 26:16ff.](#)], and because of this, he contracted leprosy on his forehead [cf. [2 Chr 26:19](#)], so that he went outside the city and was reckoned among the unclean [cf. [2 Chr 26:21](#)]. Therefore this sort of ruler of the soul must die, so that we may be able to see the vision of God. For it is not in vain that it is written, “And it came to pass in the year in which King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord.”<sup>111</sup> Uzziah, or pharaoh, is alive in each one of us, and we do not groan as we do Egyptian works [cf. [Exod 2:23](#)].<sup>112</sup> But if he dies, then we groan, as it is written in Exodus. If Uzziah is alive, we do not see the glory of God [cf. [Exod 16:7](#)]; but if he dies, then we see the glory of God as soon as Uzziah dies. Only may this be the case, that the word reign in us of him who said, “But I have been appointed king by him” [[Ps 2:6](#)], and may wrath not reign. To be sure, there is also a king of sin; the Apostle knew this when he said, “Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body” [[Rom 6:12](#)]. Wretched is the man in whom sin reigns, who hands himself over to such a king, who despises the kingdom of God, and subjects himself to pleasure. This is why the lover of pleasure is no lover of God, and according to the Apostle, it is said of certain ones, “Being lovers of pleasure rather than God” [[2 Tim 3:4](#)]. And indeed, the same thing is not said about those who are complete infidels, but about those who live internally as “lovers of pleasure rather than God, who have the outward form of piety, but deny its power” [[2 Tim 3:4–5](#)]. These things [have been said] on *account of the death of King Uzziah, after whose demise the prophet says that he saw the vision* [cf. [Isa 6:1](#); [1:1](#)].

Now what is the “vision” [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)]? “I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne (*thronum*)” [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)]. Not everyone who sees the Lord sees him “sitting on a high and exalted throne.” I know that another prophet saw the Lord, and saw him sitting upon a throne, but not on a “high and exalted” one. While discussing a writing, Daniel says, “Thrones were set in place” [[Dan 7:9](#)], but that throne was not “high.” And, “I shall come to sit in judgment of the people in the valley of Jehoshaphat (*Josaphat*)” [[Joel 3:2](#), [12](#)]. Here, then, he sat “in the valley,” and he is “in the valley” when about to judge, when about to condemn.<sup>113</sup> But it is something else “to see him sitting upon a high and exalted throne.” And in Micah, God goes forth and comes down [cf. [Mic 1:3](#)]. And he “came down” to see Sodom. It says, “I will go down to see if they completely

<sup>111</sup> Cf. [Origen, Homilies on Judges 1.1](#).

<sup>112</sup> Cf. [Jerome, Ep. 18A](#); [Origen, Homily 3.1 on Judges](#).

<sup>113</sup> Cf. [Origen, Homilies on Numbers 12.2](#).

correspond<sup>114</sup> with the cry that has come to me” [[Gen 18:21](#)]. God therefore is seen sometimes on high, sometimes down below, in accordance with the worthiness of those he is dealing with.<sup>115</sup> Therefore, Isaiah says, “I saw the Lord sitting upon a high and exalted throne.” If I see God reigning in those who are here, I do not see him “upon a high and exalted throne.” If I see him reigning with the heavenly powers, I see him “upon a high and exalted throne.” What do I mean by “heavenly powers”? The heavenly powers are “thrones, dominions, principalities, authorities” [cf. [Col 1:16](#)]. And if I see him, just as he reigns in them in the word, I have seen the Lord “sitting upon a high and exalted throne.”

“And the house was full of his glory” [[Isa 6:1b](#)]. He means, on high where his throne was “lifted up,” “and the house was full of his glory.” I do not think that this house that is on earth is “full of glory.” “The earth is the Lord’s and its fullness” [[Ps 24:1](#)]. But you will not find a fullness of the glory of God in the present; but if someone builds the temple of God, the “glory” of God will be seen, and if he observes what is said, the “house” will appear “full of the glory” of God. But I do not know whether a “house” may be “filled” full with “glory” in this way. There is also a passage in Leviticus, however much it does not yet pertain to the present; and when God freely gives the opportunity, what follows will be read in the assembly, that the Lord commanded certain things to be done in order that the glory of the Lord may appear [cf. [Lev 9:6](#)]. And the glory of God shall never appear, if these things are not done. But we shall become acquainted with those things when they are read forth.

2. “And seraphim were standing round about him; one had six wings, and the other had six wings” [[Isa 6:2](#)]. I see two “seraphim,” each of which has six wings on itself. Then comes the arrangement of the wings: “And with two wings they covered the face” [[Isa 6:2](#)], not their own but God’s; “and with two wings they covered the feet,” not their own but God’s; “but with two wings they flew” [[Isa 6:2](#)]. What is written seems to be contradictory: if they were “standing,” they could not be “flying.” For it is written, “They were standing round about him; one had six wings, and the other had six wings; and with two they covered the face, and with two they covered the feet, and with two they flew; and they called out the one to the other” [[Isa 6:2–3](#)]. But these are the seraphim which are around God, which say by knowledge alone, “Holy, Holy, Holy!” [[Isa 6:3](#)]. The reason they preserve the mystery of the Trinity is because even they themselves are holy. For among all these things that exist, nothing is more holy than them. And it is not casually that they say “one to the other, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy!’” but by their cry they proclaim a saving confession to all. Who are these two seraphim? My Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit. And do not think that the nature of the Trinity falls apart, if the functions that attach to the names are preserved.<sup>116</sup> “They covered the face” of God; for God’s beginning is unknown. But also “the

<sup>114</sup> Lit., “ave consummated.”

<sup>115</sup> Cf. [Origen, Homilies on Genesis 4.5](#).

<sup>116</sup> According to [Rufinus, Apology against Jerome 2.27](#) (NPNF2, [3:472](#)), Jerome has added this sentence on his own to his Latin translation of Origen. Jerome never denied the charge. See the introduction to this [appendix](#) and note 4 in book 3 in Jerome’s commentary, where I refer to H. de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, 1:255, who observes that Origen’s interpretation did not at all have the “mpious” and “laspheous” character that Jerome would later ascribe to it. The assimilation of the Word and the Spirit (Wisdom) to the cherubim and seraphim came from Judeo-Christian



feet”; for what could be understood as the end in our God? Only the middle is visible. What was before this, I do not know. I understand God from those things that are. What will come about after this, in accordance with what is coming, I know not. “Who has declared to him?” said Ecclesiastes [[Eccl 6:12](#)]. “Declare to me the former things and the last things that shall be, and I will say that you are gods” [cf. [Isa 41:22–23](#)], said Isaiah. Therefore, if someone shall tell past things and shall be able to speak of the last things, he is a “god.” Who then besides the seraphim can say this? Who can say, “Holy, Holy, Holy!” besides the seraphim?

But what part of God have they left exposed, so to speak? His middle: “And they cried one to another,” as they attended God “and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy!” They “stand” therefore and move themselves; they stand with God, they move themselves and point out God. For you should understand that in “covering the face,” in covering the feet, they do not move what is covered, they do not cover what flies.

And they say, “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord Sabaoth, all the earth is full of his glory” [[Isa 6:3](#)]. The coming of my Lord Jesus Christ is being announced; and so, now “all the earth is full of his glory.” Or surely it is not yet full, but it will be, so that it may be fulfilled when the prayer will have been accomplished that the Lord himself commanded us to pray “Father.” He says, “When you pray, say, ‘Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name! Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven’ ” [cf. [Matt 6:9–10](#)]. The will of the Father is still “in heaven”; his will has not yet been accomplished on earth, and Jesus himself, according to the dispensation of the flesh that he had assumed, says, “He has given me all authority, both in heaven and on earth” [cf. [Matt 28:19](#)]. This is not because he did not have authority on earth, he who had it in heaven, and that he who had come to his own things [cf. [John 1:11](#)] received something from the world. Instead, in order that God would be believed to be on earth, just as he was believed to be in heaven, therefore the human being Christ received authority that he did not have earlier, and up to the present he does not yet have authority over all on earth. For in those who sin, he does not yet reign, but when authority even over these has been given to him, when all things shall have been subjected to him [cf. [Phil 3:21](#); [1 Cor 15:28](#)], then the authority will be fulfilled when he goes about subjecting all things to himself. But some are not yet willing to be subjected to him, but they are still subjected to his enemies. We, on the other hand, should say, “Shall not my soul be subjected to God? For with him is my salvation” [[Ps 62:1](#)].

3. “And with two they were flying, and saying one to the other, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy Lord Sabaoth, all the earth is full of his glory.’ And the lintel was lifted at the voice with which they cried” [[Isa 6:2–4](#)]. They cried with the “voice” of Jesus Christ and at the “voice” of the Holy Spirit. If one of us should hear the “voice” of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit “crying,” the “lintel” is “lifted up” and becomes higher than at that time when it was “lifted up,” and when it was said, “Lift up the gates, you princes, and be lifted up you everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in” [[Ps 24:7](#)].

4. “And the house was filled with smoke” [[Isa 6:4](#)]. The whole house was filled with smoke that came from the abatement of the fire. But smoke is the vapor of fire. “And I said, ‘Woe is me, for I am pricked [to the heart]; for since I am a man, I also have unclean lips’ ” [[Isa 6:5](#)]. I do

sources and was already found in the work of St. Irenaeus, [Dem 10](#).

not think that Isaiah is humbling himself here; he is speaking the truth, and Scripture bears witness that his lips are cleansed by one of the seraphim, which “was sent” to “take away his sins” [cf. [Isa 6:6–7](#)]. Now one of the seraphim is my Lord Jesus Christ, who was “sent” from the Father to “take away our sins” [cf. [John 1:29](#)]. And he says, “Behold, I have taken away your iniquities, and I have purged off your sins” [cf. [Isa 6:6–7](#)]. Do not think that it is a debasement of the Son’s nature if he is sent from the Father. Lastly, for you to see the unity of divinity in the Trinity, in the present reading Christ alone is forgiving sins now, and yet it is certain that sins are forgiven by the Trinity. For whoever believes in one [person], believes in all [three of them].<sup>117</sup> Therefore may “tongs” be brought to me from the heavenly altar to touch my lips. If the Lord’s tongs touch my lips, they cleanse them. And if they cleanse them and circumcise them from vices, as we have recently said, may I open my mouth to the word of God and may unclean speech no longer proceed from my mouth. “For since I am a man, I also have unclean lips; I dwell too in the midst of a people having unclean lips” [[Isa 6:5](#)].<sup>118</sup>

The seraph that was sent cleansed the lips of the prophet [cf. [Isa 6:6–7](#)], but it did not cleanse the lips of the people. For Isaiah himself confessed that he had unclean lips, and that he dwelled in the midst of a people having unclean lips. But the seraph that was sent did not judge that those of the people were worthy to have him cleanse their lips as well, and on that account they are still acting impiously, on that account they still reject my Lord Jesus Christ, they still curse him with unclean lips. But I pray that the seraph may come and cleanse my lips.

5. “And I have seen with my eyes the King, the Lord Sabaoth” [[Isa 6:5](#)]. Why should we not mention here a certain tradition of the Jews that, although not true, is not unrealistic?<sup>119</sup> And why should we not find a resolution to it? They say that Isaiah was cut off from the people as one who transgressed against the law and proclaimed things contrary to Scripture. For the Scripture says, “No one shall see my face and live” [[Exod 33:20](#)], but he says, “I have seen the Lord Sabaoth” [[Isa 6:5](#)]. Moses, they say, did not “see,” and you “have seen”? For this reason they cut him off and condemned him as godless; for they did not know that the seraphim covered the face of God with two wings [cf. [Isa 6:2](#)]. “I have seen the Lord.” If Isaiah saw the face, Moses saw it too. Moses saw him from behind, as it is written [[Exod 33:23](#)]; nevertheless, he “saw the Lord,” even if he did not see his face. So here too, although Isaiah “saw,” he did not see the face. Therefore they wrongly condemned the prophet.

“And I have seen with my eyes the King, the Lord Sabaoth; and one of the seraphim was sent to me” [[Isa 6:5](#)]. There is not just one advent of my Lord Jesus Christ in which he came down to

<sup>117</sup> It seems probable that these last three sentences, beginning with “o not think ...” are clarifying glosses of St. Jerome to Origen’s original text, intended to protect Origen against the charge of proto-Arianism. They interrupt the flow of the homily. Cf. Fürst, “erome Keeping Silent,” 143.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. [Origen, Homilies on Genesis 3.5](#).

<sup>119</sup> The following tradition is preserved in [Ascensio Isaiae 3.6–2](#). See n. at [1.14](#) in Jerome’s commentary. Cf. Justin, *Dial*; Origen, *In Matth Comm* 3, 49 Lommatzsch; Origen, *In Matth Comm Ser* 18 (4, 238 Lommatzsch). (*Origenis opera omnia quae graece vel latine tantum exstant et ejus nomine circumferuntur*. Ed. C. et C. V. Delarue. Denuo recensuit, emendavit et castigavit, C. H. E. Lommatzsch, I–XV, Berlin, 1831–8.)

earth; he also came to Isaiah, and he came to Moses, and he came to the people, and he came to each one of the prophets;<sup>220</sup> and you should have no fear: even if he has already been received [into heaven], he will come again. But to prove that he also came before his presence in the flesh, let him be his own witness, when he denounces and says, "Jerusalem! Jerusalem! You who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you, how often have I wanted to gather your children together!" [[Matt 23:37](#)]. "How often have I wanted!" He does not say, I have not seen you except at this coming, but he says, "How often have I wanted." And while converting them through each of the prophets, "I was the Christ," he said, "who spoke through the prophets." Do not be afraid; even now Jesus Christ is being sent. He is not lying. He says, "I am with you always until the consummation of the age" [[Matt 28:20](#)]. He is not lying. "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I too am in their midst" [[Matt 18:20](#)]. Since, therefore, Jesus Christ is near and at hand and prepared and is a girded high priest to offer our intercessions to the Father [cf. [Rom 8:27, 34](#)], let us arise [cf. [John 14:31](#)] and offer through him sacrifices to the Father. For he is the propitiation for our sins [cf. [1 John 2:2](#)], to whom is the glory and power in the ages of ages. Amen [cf. [1 Pet 4:11](#)]!

### Homily 2

"Behold, a virgin will conceive in the womb." [[Isa 7:14](#)]

1. As far as pertains to the statement, Ahaz acted with modesty when he was commanded to ask for a sign in the depth or in the height [cf. [Isa 7:11](#)]; and he gave the reason why he was unwilling to ask, for he says, "I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord" [[Isa 7:12](#)]. And yet he is faulted for this modesty, and it is said to him, "Hear now, O house of David; is it a little thing for you to contend with men, and how do you contend with the Lord?" [[Isa 7:13](#)]. Then this promise is spoken, "Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign: behold, a virgin shall conceive in the womb, and shall bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Emmanuel" [[Isa 7:14](#)]. Let these things be explained, and we who are without resources concerning the remaining things shall see by the grace of God that they are cleared up in those things.

He is commanded to "ask for a sign," and not just simply to ask, but to "ask for himself"; for the Scripture says, "Ask *for yourself* a sign from the Lord your God in the depth or in the height" [[Isa 7:11](#)]. The sign proposed is my Lord, Jesus Christ. For this is the sign that is commanded, that he should "ask for himself in the depth or in the height." On the one hand, it is "in the depth," because he is the one who *came down* [cf. [John 6:33](#)]; but it is "in the height," because he is the one who *ascended* above all the heavens" [cf. [Eph 4:10](#)].

But this sign proposed to me, my Lord Jesus Christ, is of no use to me "in the depth and in the height" [cf. [Isa 7:11](#)] unless the mystery of his "depth" and "height" takes place within me. For when I receive the mystery of Christ Jesus from the "depth" and "height," then will I receive the "sign" according to the command of the Lord, and it will be said to me as to one who has this "for himself" "in the depth" and "in the height": "Do not say in your heart, 'Who ascends into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down). Or, 'Who descends into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ back from the dead). Your powerful word is near, in your mouth and in your heart" [cf.

<sup>220</sup> Cf. [Homily 9.1 on Jeremiah](#).

[Rom 10:6–8](#)]. Therefore, it is being commanded to all of us to seek this “sign” for ourselves, so that it may become useful to us, the sign that the Lord God gives “in the depth and in the height.”

But if there is someone who knows how to reflect rationally, let him know that the statement “in the depth and in the height” has not been spoken disjunctively; for it refers to one that could be in both places. “Seek for yourself a sign from the Lord in the depth and in the height” [[Isa 7:11](#)]. But the Apostle too has spoken as a promise, “That we may know what is the depth and height and breadth and length” [cf. [Eph 3:18](#)]. And Ahaz says, “I will not ask” [[Isa 7:12](#)]. He was without faith, for he said, “Seek for yourself.” Now up to today, the people do not “seek a sign.” This is why they do not have one, and they “contend with the Lord”—I am referring to the people who do not receive my Lord Jesus Christ.

Then another question follows. For when he said, “I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord” [[Isa 7:12](#)], and was thinking that it was a temptation if he should ask for a sign, it says, “Hear now, O house of David: Is it a little thing for you to contend with men, and how do you contend with the Lord?” [[Isa 7:13](#)]. Now I think that he who “seeks a sign in the depth or in the height” [[Isa 7:11](#)] does not “contend with the Lord”; in fact, he does not even “contend with men.” For God’s “contest” is how he may save humanity. Therefore, the one who flees for salvation does not “contend” with the Lord; but the one who flees from salvation and withdraws far from the Lord, as the Lord strives to save man, he “contends with the Lord.”

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: behold, the virgin shall conceive in the womb and shall bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Emmanuel” [[Isa 7:14](#)]. The truth of the original copies of this prophet says, “*You* shall call.” In Matthew, on the other hand, we know that it reads, “And *they* shall call his name Emmanuel” [[Matt 1:23](#)]. We cannot say that one should make something less out of the prophet. How in fact does the Gospel preserve this reading of Scripture? Did it come from someone without understanding who was rushing on to easier things, just as has been done in many other cases? Or would someone possibly say that the Gospel was published this way from the beginning? Let the one who wants to reflect on this. The prophet reads clearly, “And *you* shall call his name Emmanuel.” I know that a certain reader, at the beginning of the Scriptures of the Gospel, “And *you* shall call his name Emmanuel,” said to himself, what is this “*you* shall call”? Who shall call? Ahaz? But how can Ahaz hear about the Savior who came after many generations, “*You* shall call his name Emmanuel”? And so, in place of this, “*You* shall call,” he wrote, “*they* shall call.”

But notice that it is not to Ahaz that it is said, “And *you* shall call his name Emmanuel,” but to the “house of David.” Notice that it is clearly stated, “Hear now, O house of David: Is it a little thing for you to contend with men, and how do you contend with the Lord? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin will conceive in the womb and shall bring forth a son, and you will call his name Emmanuel” [[Isa 7:14](#)]. And so, if at any time we do not understand what is spoken, let us not on that account make something less of it and rush on to easier things. Instead, let us wait for the grace of God to suggest an explanation of the problem to us through the illumination of knowledge; or on the other hand, may the grace of God at least illumine us through whom it wills, so that we seek no longer, but our questions may be resolved. But if we are deserving of understanding from the Lord, he will more readily excuse

us.

What is the “house of David” [[Isa 7:14](#)]? If David is Christ, as I have repeatedly shown, we are the “house of David,” the church of God,<sup>221</sup> and the statement above this is being said to us who are the church<sup>222</sup>: we are not to “contend with the Lord,” but when the Lord gives the “sign,” we are to receive it. This is being said to us, not to the “house of David.” And it is prophesied that if someone is the “house of David,” “he shall call his name Emmanuel.” For at the coming of Christ our church alone says of Christ, “God is with us” [cf. [Matt 1:25](#)]. Let us now seek to explain other enigmas, since these ones have been explained, as the grace of the Lord granted.

2. “Butter and honey shall he eat” [[Isa 7:15](#)]. How is Christ being prophesied as one who will “eat butter and honey”? And if we can explain this by the Lord’s gift, once again the things that follow shall present other questions for us. And would that we would all apply what is written, “Examine the Scriptures” [[John 5:39](#)]. In the Scriptures, many things are named from physical foods that represent spiritual dishes. “As newly born infants, long for the rational milk without deceit” [[1 Pet 2:2](#)]. Doubtless then there exists a “rational milk,” and it behooves us to seek milk of this sort. Again, in Proverbs it is written of “honey,” “Having found honey, eat what is enough, lest perhaps you be filled and vomit it up” [[Prov 25:16](#)]. Now was the Holy Spirit concerned [cf. [1 Cor 9:9](#)] about that honey that is well known, “lest perhaps” we should eat too much of it? On the contrary, surely the Holy Spirit with his knowledge is speaking of spiritual honey: “Having found honey, eat what is enough.” But why has the perceptive Holy Spirit commanded us to “eat what is enough,” if we “find honey,” if indeed he means the kind of honey that can be found? “Go to the bee,” he says, “and learn how hard working she is” [[Prov 6:8](#)].

The prophets are also found to be bees, since indeed they form wax and make drops of honey,<sup>223</sup> and if it is not too bold of me to say, the Scriptures are their honeycombs that they have left behind. Come then to the Scriptures willingly, and you will find honey. Moreover, “Eat the honey,” and again in Proverbs, it is said, “For the honeycomb is good, that your throat may be sweetened” [[Prov 24:13](#)]. Do you actually think that the Holy Spirit says, “Eat the honey” which is in common use, “for it is good”? I do not dare to say that it is about physical honey that the Holy Spirit orders me, “Eat the honey.” Behold, I do not have, or at any rate I am of such a nature, that I could not eat honey; for what reason does he say to me, “Eat the honey” and do not eat meat, but “eat honey, my son, for [it is] good”? If you see the “bees” as the prophets and their work as the “drops of honey” or the “honeycombs,” then you will see how you should understand “Eat honey, my son, for it is good.” This is the way that corresponds with the dignity of the Holy Spirit. If someone meditates upon the divine oracles and feeds on the words of Scripture, he fulfills the command that says, “Eat honey, my son” [[Prov 24:13](#)]. And by doing

<sup>221</sup> Cf. [Com in Jn 1.23.146](#); [Homily 19.1 on Numbers](#). H. de Lubac, [History and Spirit: The Understanding of Scripture according to Origen](#), trans. A. Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2007), 137, refers to this text to clarify and explain ancient and modern misunderstandings of Origen’s manner of speaking. “Christ is no more identically David than we, his Church, are identically the house of David. We all use such turns of phrase without having evil intentions.”

<sup>222</sup> Cf. Origen, [Homily 2.1 on Isaiah](#).

<sup>223</sup> Cf. [Origen, Homily 5.2 on Judges](#).

what is commanded, he experiences the words that follow: “for it is good,” since this “honey” that is found in the Scriptures “is good.”

Now the words, “Go to the bee” [cf. [Prov 6:8](#)] are of this sort. There is a certain “bee” beyond the bees, so to speak. And just as among the bees a certain one is king, who is designated to be the king, so my Lord Jesus Christ is the ruler of the bees to whom the Holy Spirit sends me to “eat honey, for it is good,” and its “honeycombs, to sweeten my throat” [[Prov 24:13](#)]. And possibly the loftier writings (*litterae*) will be honeycombs; but the honey is the understanding that is in them. On the other hand, that Emmanuel who was born from the virgin “eats butter and honey” [[Isa 7:15](#)] and seeks to eat “butter” from each of us. The word will show how he seeks “butter and honey” from each of us. Our sweet works, our very pleasant and beneficial words, are “drops of honey” that Emmanuel eats. This is what that one who was born from a virgin eats. But if our words are full of bitterness, wrath, animosity, sorrow, obscenity, vices, contention, they have put gall in our mouth and the Savior does not eat from these words. But the Savior will eat from words that are among men, if their words are honey.

Let us prove this from the Scriptures: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone opens the door to me, I shall enter to him and dine with him and he with me” [cf. [Rev 3:20](#)]. Therefore he himself promises that he will dine with us from our own things. But it is certain that we too dine with him, if we dine on him. For by eating from our good words, works, and understanding, he feeds us with his own food, which is spiritual, divine and better.<sup>224</sup> Therefore, since it is a blessed thing to receive the Savior, let us open the doors of our principal part, our heart, and prepare for him drops of honey and his whole supper. That way, he may lead us to the great banquet of the Father in the kingdom of heaven, which is in Christ Jesus, “to whom is the glory and power in the ages of ages. Amen [cf. [1 Pet 4:11](#)]!

### Homily 3

Concerning the “seven women.” [cf. [Isa 4:1ff.](#)]

1. “Seven women” suffer “reproach” and go around seeking to receive someone who can “take away their reproach” [cf. [Isa 4:1](#)]. These very “seven women” promise to “eat their own bread and wear their own clothing” [cf. [Isa 4:1](#)]. They do not need to have the bread of him who takes away their reproach; they do not require the clothing of the man whom they adopt. They have better clothing than the man is able to provide them; they have finer foods than the human condition can bestow. It is worthy to contemplate, then, to whom the seven women belong and what is their reproach.

The seven women are one; for they are the Spirit of God [cf. [Isa 11:1](#)]. And those seven are one; for the Spirit of God is “the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of virtue, the spirit of knowledge and of piety, the spirit of the fear of the Lord” [cf. [Isa 11:2–3](#)]. That *wisdom* suffers “reproach” from the many wisdoms that rise up within it; that true *understanding* sustains “reproach” from false understandings; that great *counsel* is reproached by many counsels that are not good; that *virtue* is cursed by a certain one that promises that it is virtue, although it is not virtue; that *knowledge* endures “reproach” by a certain falsely

<sup>224</sup> Cf. [Origen, De Orat 27.11](#); *Com in Jn* 13.32 (31).



named knowledge that steals its name [cf. [1 Tim 6:20](#)]; that *piety* is faulted by that one that, though it claims to be piety, is impiety and instructs the impious; that *fear* suffers “reproach” by that one that is reckoned to be fear; for many promise divine fear, but they do not fear with knowledge [cf. [Rom 10:2](#)].

So then, let us consider how these seven suffer “reproach” [cf. [Isa 4:1](#)]. Observe the wisdom of this age, observe the wisdom of the rulers of this world [cf. [1 Cor 2:6](#)], how they find fault with the wisdom of my Christ, how they find fault with the wisdom of true Judaism, in accordance with the fact that we are circumcised spiritually, but they are mutilated [cf. [Phil 3:2–3](#)].<sup>225</sup> And so, understand how the wisdom of this age and of the rulers of this world speak evil of wisdom; and what is more, by this means a “man” is sought who might be with these seven spiritual “women” to “take away their reproach” [[Isa 4:1](#)]. Properly speaking there is one “man” who “takes away their reproach.” Who is that man? Jesus, who came forth according to the flesh [cf. [Rom 1:3](#)] “from the root of Jesse” [cf. [Isa 11:1](#)], “having been born from the seed of David according to the flesh [cf. [Rom 1:3](#)], having been predestined the Son of God in power according to the spirit of justification” [cf. [Rom 1:4](#)]. For “a rod came forth from the root of Jesse” [cf. [Isa 11:1](#)]. A rod is not “the firstborn of all creation” [cf. [Col 1:15](#)], a rod is not he who “in the beginning was with God, God the Word” [cf. [John 1:1](#)], but “a rod from the root of Jesse,” who “was born according to the flesh.”

Therefore, “a rod came forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower came up from his root” [cf. [Isa 11:1](#)]. Who is the “flower” and what is the “root”? For both are one in the same subject; the difference is only one of activity.<sup>226</sup> For if you are a sinner, there is no “flower” for you, nor will you see the “flower” who is from the root of Jesse. For the “rod” will come to you in the way that the disciple [Paul] speaks of the “rod” and the “flower.” Speaking of the “rod,” he says, “What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod?” [[1 Cor 4:21](#)]; but of the “flower,” he says, “or with God’s love and a spirit of gentleness?” [[1 Cor 4:21](#)]. Thus “there came forth from the root of Jesse a rod” for the one who is inflicted with punishment, a “rod” for the one who needs a scolding, a “rod” for the one who requires a rebuke. But a “flower” is for the one who has already been trained and does not need harsh correction, or at any rate does not need punishment, but is able already to begin to bloom on the way towards perfect fruit. For first the “flower” appears, then after the “flower,” comes the “rod”<sup>227</sup> leading to fruit. For “a rod has come forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower has come up from his root” [[Isa 11:1](#)]. And seven women shall rest, the Spirit of God, the spirit of wisdom and understanding will “rest” upon him. For the spirit of wisdom did not “rest” on Moses, the spirit of wisdom did not “rest” on Jesus son of Nun, the spirit of wisdom did not “rest” on any of the prophets, on Isaiah, on Jeremiah.<sup>228</sup>

2. But please do not stone me as a blasphemer, provided that I wish to glorify my Lord Jesus Christ. Instead, patiently reflect upon what is said, and you will see that in none of them did the “Spirit rest.” It is not that he did not *come* to any of them, but that he did not *rest* on any of

<sup>225</sup> Cf. Origen, *Com in Rom* 2.11.

<sup>226</sup> Cf. [Origen, Homilies on Numbers 9.9](#).

<sup>227</sup> Or “wig.”

<sup>228</sup> Cf. [Origen, Homilies on Numbers 6.3](#).

them. He came upon Moses, and after the “spirit of wisdom” who came to him, Moses does not believe. For he says, “Listen, you stubborn ones, should I bring forth water for you from this rock?” [[Num 20:10](#)].<sup>229</sup> He came upon all the just ones, he came also upon Isaiah. But what does he say? “I have unclean lips, and I live in the midst of a people who have unclean lips” [[Isa 6:5](#)]. The “spirit of wisdom” came after those tongs and fire [cf. [Isa 6:6](#)], he came to the one who had unclean lips, but he did not “rest.” To be sure he made use of that minister, but he did not “rest.”

There is affliction to any human being to whom he comes. For every human being sins, “there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin” [[Eccl 7:20](#)]; “no one is clean of defilements, even if his life should be only a day, and his months are numbered” [[Job 14:4–5](#)]. Therefore he rests upon no one. We can also prove from the Gospel that the Spirit came upon many and did not abide in them. A little while ago it was read, “And my Spirit will not remain among these men forever” [[Gen 6:3](#)]. He does not say “shall not be,” but “shall not remain.” John saw one alone in whom he remained, and this was the sign: “Upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining in him, that is the Son of God” [cf. [John 1:33–34](#)]. Someone has ministered to the Word of God, when the Spirit descended. But after a little while, he sins; after a little while, he speaks an idle word [cf. [Matt 15:36](#)]. But I do not know whether he may continue even without sin. You don’t think that one yields to sin when the Spirit is present, do you? Therefore the Spirit of God has rested upon no one, in accordance with what is written: “A rod has come forth from the root of Jesse, and a flower from his root has come up, and the Spirit of God will rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of virtue” [cf. [Isa 11:1–2](#)].

For this reason, he is the “angel of the great counsel” [cf. [Isa 9:6](#)], for this reason, he grew strong and came up strong, and the virtues marvel at him as he comes up, and they say of him, “This is the Lord, strong and mighty in battle” [[Ps 24:8](#)]. Therefore I shall say to this one ascending into the heavens, or to his strength, that “the spirit of counsel and of strength has rested upon him” [[Isa 11:2](#)], “the Lord is my strength and my praise, and he has become my salvation” [[Isa 12:2](#)]. Therefore the Spirit of God “rested” upon him, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of virtue, the spirit of knowledge and of piety, and the spirit of the fear of God filled him [cf. [Isa 11:2–3](#)].

3. Therefore “seven women,” seeking someone whom they might adopt, “will take hold of one man” [cf. [Isa 4:1](#)]. This depends upon what comes before, and it is necessary first to know when the seven women receive the one man. It is when “the strong men” of Jerusalem “shall be brought low” [cf. [Isa 3:25](#)], when “the cases used for the adornment” of the daughters of Zion “shall mourn,” when she “will have been left all alone,” and when she “shall be leveled to the ground” [cf. [Isa 3:26](#)]. That is when “seven women will take hold of one man, saying, ‘We shall eat our own bread, and wear our own clothing; only let your name be called upon us’ ” [[Isa 4:1](#)]. That is when seven women have taken hold and have truly grasped the “one man” Jesus Christ our Lord. This agrees with the fact that he is understood as a “man,” that he was born, that he assumed a body.

“Seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, ‘We shall eat our own bread’ ” [[Isa 4:1](#)].

<sup>229</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

Many men walk about and “women take hold of” none of them, no “man” pleases them; for they are “taking hold of one man” not on account of a scarcity of men, but on account of the rarity of the “man” who was the kind they wanted, the kind they sought. For they found only “one man,” whom they took hold of, so that they say to him, “We shall eat our own bread and we shall wear our own clothing” [[Isa 4:1](#)].

There is a food of “wisdom,” there is likewise a food of both “understanding” and of the remaining spirits. Who is this food? I am not afraid to say, there is another food beyond these; perhaps, as my food is the word of God who says, “I am the living bread, who came down from heaven” [[John 6:51](#)], and “I give life to the world” [[John 6:33](#)], so the Father himself is the food of “wisdom” for this reason: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to complete his work” [[John 4:34](#)]. Let no one think that “wisdom,” “understanding,” and the other spirits need anything, because they have other food, since the entire dispensation has but one kind of food, God’s essence.<sup>330</sup> “We shall eat our own bread and we shall wear our own clothing” [[Isa 4:1](#)].

There is an adornment of “wisdom” with which it is decorated; “wisdom” is adorned by speech. Each of these “women” have adornments. “Only let your name be called upon us, remove our reproach” [[Isa 4:1](#)]. What is the “name” of “wisdom”? Jesus. What does this mean, “Let your name be called upon us”? I am “wisdom,” I want to be called by your name, so that I may be called the “wisdom” of Jesus, so that the “understanding, great counsel, strength, knowledge, piety, and fear of God” [[Isa 11:2–3](#)] may be named Jesus, so that your name may become “all things in all” [cf. [1 Cor 15:28](#)]. “Let your name be called upon me, take away our reproach” [[Isa 4:1](#)]. Indeed Jesus has taken away reproach. Therefore let us rise up and pray to God, who sent this “man” and the Spirit of seven women rested in him, so that this “man” might grant to us, too, communion with these “women” and by receiving them we might become wise and understanding in God, and the other virtues might adorn our soul in Christ Jesus, “to whom is the glory and power in the ages of ages. Amen [cf. [1 Pet 4:11](#)]!

#### *Homily 4*

1. It is impossible to find the beginning of God. You never understand the beginning of movement in God, neither you nor anyone else nor any other kind of existing being. Only the Savior and the Holy Spirit, who always were with God, see his “face”; and perhaps the “angels” who “always behold the face of the Father who is in heaven” [[Matt 18:10](#)] also see the beginnings of the activities. And so also do the seraphim hide his feet from human beings [cf. [Isa 6:2](#)]; for the last things cannot be told as they are. “Who has declared of the last things?” [cf. [Isa 41:26](#)], says the Scripture. What we see—admitting that we do see something—are the things in between. What was before the world, we do not know; and there were indeed certain things before the world. What will come about after the world, we do not understand with certainty; but there will be other things after the world. Therefore, what is written, “In the beginning God made heaven and earth. But the earth was invisible and disordered, and darkness was upon the abyss; and the Spirit of God was being borne over the waters” [[Gen 1:1–2](#)], is understood. These

<sup>330</sup> This sentence is believed to be an addition of St. Jerome to Origen’ text. Cf. A. Fürst, “erome Keeping Silent,”143.

“waters” over which the “Spirit of God” was brooding were of the world.

But also the “darkness” that was “upon the abyss” is not unborn; for both were created out of nothing. Hear God speaking in Isaiah: “I am God, who formed light and made darkness” [[Isa 45:7](#)]. Listen to wisdom declaring in Proverbs, “I was born before all the abysses” [[Prov 8:24](#)]. These things were not unborn, but when or how they were born, I do not know. For the former things of the works of God, that is, “the face of God,” are “covered” by the “seraphim”; and so too are his “feet” [cf. [Isa 6:2](#)]. For who can describe what will be after the final age in the “ages of ages” [cf. [1 Pet 4:11](#)]?

Some talkative types promise knowledge of these things, unaware that a human being can grasp only the things in between. Both the things that will come to pass in the judgment after the world up to the consummation, concerning punishments, concerning retribution, and much of this too, has been concealed from us. These things have been said for the sake of what is written: “With two they covered the face” [[Isa 6:2](#)]. They did not just “cover,” they also covered up; that is, they “covered” in such a way that not the slightest bit of the former things, I mean of the “face,” would be seen, nor anything at all of the last things, that is, of his “feet,” would be made known. “And with two [wings] they flew” [[Isa 6:2](#)]. The things in between stand open to view.

“And one cried to the other” [[Isa 6:3](#)], not “one” to several, but “one to the other.” For in accordance with the dignity of the matter, no one but the Holy Spirit is able to hear of the sanctity of God that is announced by the Savior; just as, on the other hand, no one but the Savior alone is able to inhabit the sacredness of God that is announced by the Holy Spirit. This is why “one cried out to the other and they said: Holy, Holy, Holy!” [[Isa 6:3](#)]. It does not suffice for them to cry “Holy!” one time, nor twice, but they adopt the perfect number of the Trinity, that they may show the abundance of God’s sanctity, which is a community that is repeated by a threefold sanctity; the sanctity of the Father is joined to the sanctity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.<sup>331</sup> “For indeed the one who sanctifies and those sanctified are all from one” [[Heb 2:11](#)]. He who “sanctifies” is the Savior, in accordance with the fact that he is a man receiving sanctity from God the Father.<sup>332</sup> And so they say: “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord Sabaoth!” Now *Sabaoth* means Lord of armies, as Aquila had handed down.

2. “The whole earth is full of his glory” [[Isa 6:3](#)]. Once the house was full of glory [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)], but now to those who are upon the “earth,” it is prophesied by the seraphim that it will come to pass that Christ the “glory” of God would fill the “whole earth.” For his “glory” is in everyone who glorifies God by their manner of life, and thus the “whole earth is full of the glory” of God. Once the “whole earth” was not “full of the glory” of God, but one corner of the earth, when it was said, “God is known in Judea, his name is great in Israel” [[Ps 76:1](#)]. Glory be to God who sent his own Son [cf. [Rom 8:3](#)] so that the “whole earth would become full of his glory.”

But what good does it do you if the “earth is full” because of the churches of the blessed ones, who everywhere are the “glory” of God, but you do not share in the “glory of the fullness of God” [cf. [Eph 3:19](#)]? You too must work, therefore, and exert yourselves in all things,

<sup>331</sup> A. Fürst conjectures that this sentence was added by St. Jerome to Origen’s text. “erome Keeping Silent,” 143.

<sup>332</sup> Cf. [Origen, Homilies on Numbers 11.8](#).

searching for the “glory” of God, where it might indwell and find room even in you, and you likewise would become “full of his glory,” together with the “whole earth” in which there is the “glory of God.” How does the fullness of the glory of God come to exist in each of us? If the things that I do and speak are done for the glory of God, my speech and actions become full of the glory of God. If both my going out and coming in are for the glory of God, if my food and drink and all that I do are done for the glory of God [cf. [1 Cor 10:31](#)], I too share in that statement, “The earth was full of his glory.” Therefore when I shall have done all these things, “the lintel was lifted at the voice with which they cried out” [cf. [Isa 6:4](#)]. And so, it is a blessed thing for each of us to work in such a way that he becomes a sharer of the entrance and of the lintel of the entrance that is near the understanding of the Christ of God. For it is not unbefitting to say, I think, that the flesh is called the entrance and the Word is called the “lintel.”

3. “The lintel was lifted up at the voice by which they cried out, and the house was filled with smoke” [[Isa 6:4](#)]. This refers to that good “smoke” that comes from the glory of God. “And I said, ‘O wretched me, for I am pricked!’ ” [[Isa 6:5](#)]. Do you not admit to being “wretched” before you “see the vision” [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)], O Isaiah? He does not say, As long as Uzziah was alive, it did not come into my thinking that I was “wretched”; for I am beginning to realize that I am “wretched,” when I “see the vision,” when the leprous King Uzziah dies in me, and I say, “Oh, I am wretched!” I myself, too, am now beginning to confess this to the Lord and to say of my own self, “Oh, wretched me!”, just as Isaiah says, “Oh, wretched me!” But very close to this is what the Apostle also says: “I am a wretched man; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” [[Rom 7:24](#)]. It is a blessed thing, therefore, for me to confess that I myself am “wretched.” If I humble myself and weep tears of repentance over my sins, God shall hear me and shall give me a deliverer, and I shall say, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” [[Rom 7:25](#)]. Indeed, let us say from the heart, “I am wretched.”

Let each one recall the reasons for his miseries and his transgressions, and let us rise up and say in prayer, mindful of them, to be sure, as those who are confessing, but forgetting these things, as those who will do them no longer, and let us say, “I am wretched, because I am pricked!” [[Isa 6:5](#)]. There is no “pricking” before he saw the vision, before Uzziah died [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)]; when he begins to repent, at once he says, “For I am pricked.” If someone is without understanding in the inner man, though he may be a sinner, he is not “pricked”; but although you may apply a goad, as it were, to the outer members, a dead body does not feel it. In the same manner as well, if you apply divine words to a sinner who has been put to death by sin and does not repent, he neither grieves nor regrets nor has the “sorrow that produces confession, sorrow that is according to God” [cf. [2 Cor 7:10](#)]. But if someone wants to be saved, and he hears the words of one who is rebuking and correcting him, at once he says, “Oh, I am wretched.” It is not enough to say, “I am wretched”; one must add to this, “For I am pricked.” And would that he would be “pricked” all the more. For the more we are “pricked,” so much the more are the chains of our sins loosened for us.

This is why that man Ahab did not obtain much benefit, for he was not “pricked” very much; he was “pricked” to be sure, but only once.<sup>333</sup> For this reason it was said, “You have seen how Ahab has been pricked!” [[1 Kgs 21:29](#)]. But if someone shall become like this, so that he does

<sup>333</sup> Cf. [Origen, Homilies on Leviticus 9.8](#).

not cease being “pricked,” he says in the same manner as the Apostle, “I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” [[1 Cor 15:9](#)]; and, “To me, the least of all the saints, this grace was given” [[Eph 3:8](#)]; and, “God is faithful, because Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners, of whom I am the first” [cf. [1 Tim 1:15](#)]. Do you not see that he was “pricked” many times, not once, but always? He was “pricked” as he writes, speaks, and acts. He was just like Isaiah in the present passage, who says, “O I am wretched, for I am pricked, because though I am a man and have unclean lips, I live in the midst of people too who have unclean lips” [[Isa 6:5](#)].

Note also something else, that Isaiah’s sins were not in his deeds, but solely in his words. This is why he says, “For though I am a man and have unclean lips.” But there was also a “people who had unclean lips.” It was not fitting for him to accuse the people and say that they had more sins among them than “unclean lips.”

4. “And I have seen with my eyes the king, the Lord Sabaoth” [[Isa 6:5](#)]. If at any time we think about God, though we are still sinners, let us also say what the prophet now says: “And there was sent to me one of the Seraphim” [[Isa 6:6](#)]. How good is God! Since, he says, I hear Isaiah confessing—for he said, “O, I am wretched” [[Isa 6:5](#)—since I hear that he is penitent—for he says, “I am pricked” [[Isa 6:5](#)—since he has declared his own transgressions, saying, “For though I am a man and have unclean lips, I also dwell in the midst of a people having unclean lips” [[Isa 6:5](#)], and I say, while he is still speaking, “Behold I am here” [[Isa 6:8](#)]. “And there was sent to me one of the seraphim, and he had in his hand a coal” [[Isa 6:6](#)]. A “coal” is brought to the prophet so that his lips, which at some time had sinned, are purged by the burning fire. Who is this “one of the seraphim”? My Lord Jesus Christ:<sup>334</sup> he was sent in accordance with the dispensation of the flesh, having in his hand a “coal,” and saying, “I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and would that it were burning!” [[Luke 12:49](#)].

5. “And there was sent to me one of the seraphim, and he had in his hand a coal, which he had taken from the altar with tongs” [[Isa 6:6](#)]. The prophet is not purified with any old fire that happens to be there, but with fire that comes “from the altar” of God. If you are not purified with fire “from the altar,” that fire shall settle on you, of which it was said, “Depart from me into the eternal fire that was prepared for Zabulus<sup>335</sup> and his angels” [cf. [Matt 25:41](#)]. That sort of fire is not “from the altar.” All must be handed over to fire, but not all to the same fire. A “fire from the altar” waits for some, for others there will be that fire “that was prepared for Zabulus and his angels” [cf. [Matt 25:41](#)]. Thus, may the chastising word touch the “lips” of our mind and soul, so that we too may say, “And he touched my mouth” [[Isa 6:7](#)]. If I cleanse “my mouth” so that I say nothing idly, nothing foolish, disgraceful or mean—to name everything at once—nothing that is forbidden, then I can say, “He touched my mouth.” On the other hand, as long as I have unclean lips and carry out unclean things, “fire from the altar” does not touch me, because of the words of sin, and there is not “sent to me one of the seraphim.”

6. “And he said, ‘Behold, this has touched your lips, and has taken away your iniquities, and has purged off your sins’ ” [[Isa 6:7](#)]. May the divine word sink its teeth into us and burn out our souls. As we listen to it, may we say, “Did not our hearts burn within us?” [[Luke 24:32](#)], so that

<sup>334</sup> Cf. [1:2](#).

<sup>335</sup> This is a collateral form of the Greek word, *diabolos*, “he devil.”



our iniquities and sins are removed; and having been cleansed with a clean mouth and a clean heart and a completely clean conscience, may we give thanks to Almighty God in Christ Jesus, “to whom is the glory and power in the ages of ages. Amen” [[1 Pet 4:11](#)].

### Homily 5

Concerning what is written, “Who raised up justice from the east?” [[Isa 41:2](#)]; and once again but differently, concerning the “vision.” [cf. [Isa 1:1](#); [6:1](#)]

1. The prophet as well is saying that “justice” is living [cf. [Isa 41:2](#)]; and yet we thought that the Apostle alone said that Christ is “justice, sanctification, and redemption and wisdom” [cf. [1 Cor 1:30](#)]. But perhaps even the Apostle was instructed by the prophets to know that “justice” is animate and living. What is this “justice”? The “only begotten God” [cf. [John 1:18](#)]. But it is certain from the section where the reading has now paused that the thought that Christ is “justice,” both living and existent justice, did not originate with the Apostle. On the contrary, he found this mystery in the words of the prophets and presented it to us. For he says, “Who has made justice rise from the east, [and] called it to his feet?” [[Isa 41:2](#)]. He has “called justice.” If it walks when “called,” then it is clear that it is animate. But the Father “called” Christ, because for the sake of our salvation he had made a journey to us and had come down from heaven to us. “For no one has ascended into heaven but him who came down from heaven, the son of man” [[John 3:13](#)]. He “called” him “from the east” [[Isa 41:2](#)], not “from the east” that is subject to the senses, but “from the east” of the true light. And this is why it is written, “Who has made justice rise from the east, [and] called it to his feet?” [[Isa 41:2](#)]. The Father “called” the Son, or rather, that we may speak truly, God “called” the man “justice to his feet,” that is, [he “called”] the incarnation of his own Son. Therefore we worship his footstool as well, in accordance with what is written: “Worship his footstool, for it is holy” [[Ps 99:5](#)]. For indeed the flesh of the Lord assumes the dignity of deity. But since the first part of the reading requires a more lofty exposition, let us pray to the highest king that the Word who had gone away when called may return again to us and we may discuss a few things according to our ability.

2. “And it came to pass in the year in which King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a high throne; and the house was full of his glory. And seraphim stood round about him; each one had six wings, and with two they covered his face, and with two they covered the feet, and with two they flew. And they were crying out one to the other and saying, ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth, the earth is full of his glory!’ ” [[Isa 6:1–3](#)], and the rest. But in order that we ourselves may also see the “vision” that Isaiah “saw” [cf. [Isa 1:1](#); [6:1](#)], let us call Jesus, who has granted sight to those who do not see [cf. [Matt 20:34](#)]. For even now, he can come and cause us to gaze with open eyes at the things that have been spoken in the reading of the mystery; let us promise him that we will no longer make the body of Christ the body of a harlot [cf. [1 Cor 6:13](#)], that we will not do works that are deserving of mourning.<sup>336</sup> May each one of us say this to God in his heart

<sup>336</sup> Under the theme of “the Meaning of [1 Cor 6:15](#)” “do you not know that your bodies are limbs and organs of Christ? Shall I then take from Christ his bodily parts and make them over to a harlot?” F. Ledegang, *Mysterium Ecclesiae: Images of the Church and Its Members in Origen* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), 97, comments on this passage in Origen’s homily, “n a

and pray that his advent may take place even now, for if Jesus does not come, we cannot see these things.<sup>337</sup>

I pray that a “seraph may be sent even to me” [cf. [Isa 6:6](#)], and having “taken hold of a coal with tongs, he may purge my lips” [cf. [Isa 6:7](#)]; and why do I say lips? Isaiah was holy, and the reason why only his lips were purged is because he had transgressed only with his lips, that is, in speech. But I am not the type that could say, “I have unclean lips”; I fear that I have an unclean heart, unclean eyes, unclean ears, an unclean mouth. As long as I sin in all these [members], I am totally unclean. If I “look upon a woman in order to lust, I have committed adultery with her in my heart” [cf. [Matt 5:28](#)]. Behold, unclean eyes. If “evil thoughts proceed from my heart, adultery, fornication, false testimony” [cf. [Matt 15:19](#)], behold, an unclean heart. “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news of peace, who preach glad tidings!” [cf. [Rom 10:15](#); [Isa 52:7](#)]. But I am apprehensive that I might rush toward evil and have unclean feet. I stretch forth my hands to God, but perhaps he will turn his face away and say, “If you stretch forth your hands, I shall turn my face away from you” [[Isa 1:15](#)]. Who then cleanses me? Who washes my feet? [cf. [John 13:5](#)]. Come, Jesus, I have filthy feet, become a slave on my behalf, put water in your basin [cf. [John 13:5](#)]; come, wash my feet. I know that what I am saying is impetuous, but I am apprehensive about his threat when he says, “If I do not wash your feet, you shall have no part with me” [cf. [John 13:8](#)]. Therefore, wash my feet, that I may have a part with you. But why do I say, Wash my feet. Peter can say this, who had no need of it, except only that his feet be washed; for he was clean all over. But though I have been washed once, I need that baptism of which the Lord says, “I have another baptism to be baptized with” [[Luke 12:50](#)].

Why have we said these things? I am preparing both myself and those who are listening for greater mysteries, but only if the Word of God comes, if he descends to us; for I fear that he may flee from me, that he may disregard my blessing too. The word once fled from the people on account of Achan (*Achar*), a single sinner, the word fled from the people, I say, for one sinner, “Achan the son of Zabdi (*Zambri*), son of Zerah from the tribe of Judah” [cf. [Josh 7:18](#)]. He was disobedient to God and was therefore anathematized [cf. [Josh 7:13](#)]. And since now there is a multitude of people because it is Easter (*Parasceven*), and especially on the Lord’s Day, which is the commemoration of Christ’s passion—for the Lord’s resurrection is celebrated not once a year and not just after the eight days, but at all times—pray to Almighty God that his word (*sermo*) may come to us. Even if you are sinners, pray; God hears sinners. But if you are afraid of

sermon on Isaiah he calls on the church to promise Jesus that they will no longer make the body of Christ into the body of a harlot or do anything that is shameful. Thus he hopes to receive open eyes to discover the secret of the Scriptures. If the Latin translation gives a correct rendering of the original, Origen has changed the expression ‘limbs and organs of Christ’ into ‘he body of Christ,’ which is a legitimate interpretation (cf. [1 Cor 12:27](#)), albeit one that lays a greater emphasis on collectivity than individuality. The sin of the individual actually affects the whole body of Christ, the church.”

<sup>337</sup> H. de Lubac, *History and Spirit*, 363, paraphrases Origen’s meaning here: “It was Jesus who, through his coming, created the new meaning of the law; thus, in order for us to assimilate this new meaning, it is necessary that he come in us, that we ourselves be recreated in him, that the New Man be created in us.”

what is said in the Gospel, “We know that God does not hear sinners” [[John 9:31](#)], do not be alarmed, do not believe it. For the one who said that was blind [cf. [John 9:40–41](#)]. But instead, believe him who says and does not lie, “Even if your sins be as crimson, I will make them white as wool; and if you are willing and hearken to me, you shall eat the good things of the land” [[Isa 1:18–19](#)]. “If you are willing” even now to “hear,” let us pray together to the Lord, that at least when the word (*Verbo*) arrives now, we may be able to pay attention to the prophetic statements.

3. “And it came to pass,” he says, “in the year in which King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord Sabaoth sitting on a high throne” [[Isa 6:1](#)]. A “vision” [cf. [Isa 1:1](#)] has been described; why is the time of the king indicated? Look carefully at when the “vision” appeared: when Uzziah the king died, Isaiah saw the Lord Sabaoth sitting upon a high throne [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)]. If any of us know who Uzziah was and what he did, he can know what the prophet has taught through the Spirit, what the divine word is presenting to us. Let me go to the life of “King Uzziah” and inquire about “Uzziah” from the Books of Kings and from the history of Chronicles (*Paralipomenon*). And there I see that for me King Uzziah must die, if it shall come to pass that I “see the Lord Sabaoth sitting on a high throne” [[Isa 6:1](#)]. This “Uzziah” descended from David’s seed and ruled over the people of Judah, and as long indeed as Zechariah was alive, who was “understanding,” he “did right in the sight of the Lord” [cf. [2 Chr 26:3–5](#)]<sup>338</sup>—for that is what is written in Second Chronicles. Not content with that, he made great lamps for the Lord [cf. [2 Chr 4:7](#); [1 Kgs 6:4](#)] and he set the temple of God in order [cf. [1 Kgs 6:35](#); [2 Chr 3:1](#)] and his religious virtues were many.<sup>338</sup> But when “understanding Zechariah” died, then he did evil. Do you want to know what evil he did? He was a king, not a priest (the former is a royal class, the latter sacerdotal). He wanted to “enter the temple,” hold the place of a priest and do a task that was not allowed to him. Going in before the priests, he “entered” and took the “vessel of libation” [cf. [2 Chr 26:16](#)]. But the “chief priest” of that time also “entered” and “eighty priests with him” [cf. [2 Chr 26:17](#)]. “The chief priest said to him,” Are you not Uzziah, and no priest? He persevered in his outrageous behavior, and “leprosy went up on his forehead” [cf. [2 Chr 26:19](#)]. He was cast forth dead, went out from the temple, the Lord led him out. Therefore he became leprous on account of his transgression of the law.

Everyone is under the reign either of sin or justice [cf. [Rom 6:12](#)]. If sin reigns in me, I am one of the kings of Israel who have entered the temple by violence; if I am just according to the measure of my progress, and do right and persevere in the sight of God, justice reigns in me. But as long as the leprous one [cf. [2 Chr 26:19](#)] was alive, Isaiah had “unclean lips”; as long as the wicked one lived, Isaiah was not able to “see the Lord Sabaoth” and he had “unclean lips”; for he was under a wicked king.<sup>339</sup> But when does he begin to “see the vision” of God? “In the year in which Uzziah died” [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)].

By God’s gift, you too will be able to learn things similar to these from many passages of Scripture. Something of this sort is written in Exodus: “And it came to pass after some days, the king of Egypt died and the sons of Israel groaned, and their cry went up to God” [cf. [Exod 2:23](#)]. As long as Pharaoh was alive, the sons of Israel did not groan, and being set in punishments,

<sup>338</sup> Origen may have confused Uzziah with Solomon.

<sup>339</sup> Cf. [1:1](#).

they did not even have the capacity to groan; for a king was alive who was commanding them to “make both bricks and straw” [cf. [Exod 5:7](#)]. As long as Pharaoh was alive, they did not “groan for God”; when Pharaoh died, then they were able to lift up their mouths moist with weeping. An evil king lives in our heart, as long as pharaoh Zabulus<sup>440</sup> lives.<sup>441</sup> That is when we produce “bricks and straw,” that is when we swallow our tears in silence and start to do works of iniquity; but when he dies, when the Lord God visits us, then we “groan to the Lord” [cf. [Exod 2:23](#)]. Therefore, let us pray that the reign of sin, which is in our mortal body, may die. For he says, “Sin is dead, but I have revived” [cf. [Rom 7:8–9](#)]; and again, “Sin revived, but I died” [cf. [Rom 7:9–10](#)]. Pharaoh dies, too, when Uzziah dies, who is in charge of the kingdom of sin. When the very wicked king dies, I raise my eyes to heaven and God hears my voice, just as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I “see the Lord Sabaoth sitting” and reigning “upon a high throne” [[Isa 6:1](#)], whom the people did not see; for Uzziah had not yet died.

I want to interject a comparison to a good thing, which is the opposite of this. This very Uzziah himself, as long as “understanding Zechariah” was alive, did not “commit sin in the sight of God” [cf. [2 Chr 26:5, 4](#)]. It was after Zechariah died that he turned away from the Lord, when he held command over the people and ruled the city. And those who read these things day and night, and who hear the Lord saying, “You should have put the money in the bank and I would have come and received it back with interest” [cf. [Matt 25:27](#); [Luke 19:23](#)], let us not amass in a napkin the mina entrusted to us [cf. [Luke 19:20](#)]; let us not put the money in the bank, but let us lend it to the people. And when we entrust the Lord’s accounts to you, it shall have to be seen how you are paying out with interest what has been entrusted! Amen.

### *Homily 6*

Concerning what is written, “Whom do I send, and who is going?” [[Isa 6:8](#)] down to the passage where he says, “And they would be converted and I shall heal them.” [[Isa 6:10](#)]

1.<sup>442</sup> When Isaiah “sees the Lord Sabaoth sitting on a high and exalted throne” [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)], and when he also sees seraphim standing round about him [cf. [Isa 6:2](#)], and he receives remission of sins through that fire that was taken from the altar and cleansed his lips by its touch [cf. [Isa 6:6–7](#)], he says that he “heard the voice of the Lord,” not commanding, but arousing and saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?” [[Isa 6:8](#)]. Then he says that he answered the Lord, “Behold, here I am, send me” [[Isa 6:8](#)]. Now being occupied with this passage and having examined what is written, I find that Moses did one thing, Isaiah another. For Moses, when he was chosen [cf. [Pss 105:26](#); [106:23](#)] to bring the people out of the land of Egypt, says, “Provide another whom you may send” [cf. [Exod 4:13](#)]. He seems even to oppose God. Whereas Isaiah, who was not chosen, but who hears, “Whom shall I send, and who will go?” says, “Behold, here I am, send me” [[Isa 6:8](#)]. So it is worthwhile to compare spiritual things with spiritual [cf. [1 Cor 2:13](#)], and to ask which of the two did better; Moses,

<sup>440</sup> See n. above at [4:5](#).

<sup>441</sup> Cf. [Origen, Homily 6.1 on Exodus](#).

<sup>442</sup> For this section, I was greatly aided by the earlier English translator R. B. Tollinton, [Selections from the Commentaries and Homilies of Origen](#) (London: SPCK, 1929), 139–2.

who after being chosen, refused; or Isaiah, who, without even being chosen, offered himself to be sent to the people. For I do not think anyone observing the difference of procedure that appears in the two men could say that Moses acted as Isaiah did.

Therefore I shall be brash enough to compare two holy and blessed men and distinguish them by saying that Moses acted more modestly than Isaiah. For Moses was considering the great responsibility of being in charge of the people to lead them out of the land of Egypt, and of opposing the incantations and curses of the Egyptians. This is why he says, "Provide another, whom you may send" [[Exod 4:13](#)]. But Isaiah, without waiting to hear what he might be commanded to say, or whether he had even been chosen, says, "Behold, here I am, send me" [[Isa 6:8](#)]. On this account, because without knowing what he would be commanded to say, he says, "Behold, here I am, send me" [[Isa 6:8](#)], he is commanded to say things that he had no desire to say. Or, was it not an undesirable task for one who had been commanded to prophesy to begin immediately with curses, and to say, "With hearing you shall hear, and you shall not understand; and seeing, you will perceive and you shall not see; for the heart of this people is fat" [[Isa 6:9–10](#)], and so on? Perhaps, then, if I may be permitted to speak boldly, he received the reward for his temerity and audacity, in that he is commanded to speak those things that he did not want to prophesy.

But since we have compared Isaiah and Moses, let us make another similar comparison as well, of Isaiah and Jonah. The latter is sent to proclaim the overthrow of Nineveh after "three days," and he is reluctant to set out and become the unwilling cause of calamity to that city [cf. [Jonah 3:3](#); [1:1](#)]. But the former, without waiting to hear what he would be commanded to say, answers, "Behold, here I am, send me" [[Isa 6:8](#)]. It is a good thing not to rush eagerly to those things that are from God: honors, positions of rulership and ministries in the church. Would that we would imitate Moses, and with him say, "Provide another whom you may send" [[Exod 4:13](#)]. For he who wants to be saved does not come to a position of rulership in the church, even if he is put in charge, but of service, if it is proper to speak even from the Gospel: "Indeed, the rulers of the Gentiles lord over them, and those who hold authority among them are called magistrates; but it shall not be so among you" [cf. [Luke 22:25–26](#)]. For your rulers do not "lord over" you, but "he who wants to be greatest among you shall be least of all" [cf. [Mark 9:35](#)]; "He who wants to be first shall be last of all" [cf. [Matt 19:30](#)].

Therefore, he who is called to the office of bishop is not called to rulership, but to service of the whole church. If you want to believe on the basis of Scripture that he who is in charge in the church is the servant of all, let the Lord and Savior himself persuade you: so much so was he like this among his disciples that he was not as one reclining, but as one serving [cf. [Luke 22:26–27](#)]. For after he had "taken off his garment, he took a towel, girded himself, poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded" [[John 13:4–5](#)]. And teaching that it is necessary for our rulers to be just like servants, he says, "You call me teacher and lord, and you say well, for I am. If, then, I the lord and teacher have washed your feet, you too ought to wash one another's feet" [[John 13:13–14](#)]. Thus the ruler of the church is called to service, that he may be able by such service to attain the heavenly throne, as it is written, "You shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" [[Matt 19:28](#)].

And listen to Paul as well, so famous a man, declaring himself to be the servant of all believers. “For I am the least of the apostles; I am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God” [[1 Cor 15:9](#)]. On the other hand, if this seems only to show his humility and not his servitude, listen to him when he says, “We have become infants among you, as when a nurse cares for her children, though we might have been burdensome, as apostles of Christ” [cf. [1 Thess 2:7, 6](#)]. Therefore it is advantageous for us to be imitators of the humble words and deeds of the Lord himself, and of his apostles, and to do as Moses did, so that if a man is called to leadership, let him say, “Provide another, whom you may send” [[Exod 4:13](#)]. To God, he says, “I have not been worthy, neither yesterday nor the day before. I am weak in speech and slow tongued” [[Exod 4:10](#)]. But because he said to God humbly, “I am weak in speech and slow tongued,” he hears from God, “Who has given a mouth to man, and who has made the very hard of hearing and the deaf, the seeing and the blind? Is it not I, the Lord God?” [[Exod 4:11](#)]. Trust in God, consecrate yourself to him. Though you may be weak in speech and slow tongued [cf. [Exod 4:10](#)], commit yourself to the word of God. Later you will say, “I opened my mouth and drew in my breath” [[Ps 119:131](#)]. Now these things have been said in light of what Isaiah says: “Behold, here I am, send me” [[Isa 6:8](#)].

2. But let us act along with him, at least in part. For though he had already received grace from God, he did not want to receive it in vain, but to use it for necessary things. When he saw the “seraphim,” when he saw the “Lord Sabaoth sitting upon a high and exalted throne” [[Isa 6:1](#)], he said, “O, I am wretched, for I am pricked, since, though I am a man and have unclean lips, I live in the midst of people too who have unclean lips, and I have seen with my eyes the king, the Lord Sabaoth” [[Isa 6:5](#)]. Upon saying this and making himself wretched, he earns help, since God accepts his humility. What help is that? It says, “There was sent to me one of the seraphim, and he had in tongs a coal which he had taken off the altar, and he touched my lips and said, ‘Behold, I have taken away your iniquities and I have purged off your sins’ ” [cf. [Isa 6:6–7](#)]. He obtained the benefit of having been made clean and of receiving the forgiveness of his sins. When he heard, “Whom shall I send to this people, and who will go for us?” [[Isa 6:8](#)], he dared to say, “Behold, here I am, send me,” not because of his former conscience, but because he had heard, “Behold, I have taken away your iniquities” [[Isa 6:7](#)].

Therefore, since saints are pricked [cf. [Isa 6:5](#)] and it is asked about Moses and Isaiah, let us apologize for Moses and even for Isaiah, giving even to them their allotment from the Scriptures. Moses did not receive forgiveness of sins, so that he would speak as if he were already aware that he had been cleansed: “Send me.” Therefore, he says, “Provide another, whom you may send” [[Exod 4:13](#)]. For he had the killing of the Egyptian on his conscience [cf. [Exod 2:12](#)]; but perhaps as a human being he knew that he had certain other sins as well, and because of those sins, he refuses. But Isaiah demands a ministry, not as though he is just by nature, but as one who had obtained grace. If even Moses had perceived a similar grace and would have heard, “Behold, I have taken away your iniquities” [[Isa 6:7](#)] and this, “I have purged off your sins” [[Isa 6:7](#)], perhaps he never would have said, “Provide another, whom you may send.” Therefore both Moses has some reason to refuse, and Isaiah has reason to say, “Behold, I am here, send me.”

3. But let us consider as well the things that the Lord commanded him to say to the people.



Go, and say to the people: You shall hear with hearing, and you shall not understand; and seeing you shall perceive, and you shall not see. For the heart of this people has become fat, and they have heard with their ears with heaviness (*graviter*), and they have closed their eyes; lest when they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, I should heal them. [[Isa 6:9–10](#)]

He knows that there are two ways to hear his words, and he recognizes that there is a twofold issue, that is, one physical, the other spiritual.

Thus, he says to the people and prophesies about those things that would take place at the advent of Christ, that there would be a time when they “would hear and not understand” these things. Indeed, when they “heard” my Lord Jesus Christ, they heard only the sound of his statements, not the meaning of them. And this is clear from the fact that to the people “outside,” he was speaking in parables [cf. [Matt 13:3–4](#); [Mark 4:11–12](#)], but to his disciples he explained them in secret [cf. [Mark 4:34](#)]. But he prophesies what is coming to pass: “You shall hear with hearing, and you shall not understand.” On the other hand, since this was prophesied to the people concerning the coming of the Lord, the Savior himself says, “Well has Isaiah prophesied about you, saying, ‘You shall hear with hearing, and you shall not understand’ ” [cf. [Matt 15:7](#)].

Let us grant, therefore, that the people, upon hearing the Lord’s words, were not able to recognize what was said. Let us consider, however, what that means that follows: “And seeing you shall see, and you shall not know” [[Isa 6:9](#)]. Not everyone who “saw” what the Savior did could, in “seeing,” immediately “understand” [cf. [Isa 6:9](#)] why it was done. To take an example: “He washed the feet of the disciples,” and they “saw” quite well how the master was washing the feet of the disciples [cf. [John 13:5](#)]. Those who were present indeed “saw,” but only what was done, not why it was done. For it was an image of that other washing of the feet in which the Word of God washes the feet of the disciples. That is why the Savior speaks to Peter, who is refusing and saying, “You shall not wash my feet” [[John 13:8](#)]. And what does he say? “What I am doing, you do not know now, but afterward you will understand” [[John 13:7](#)]. What are you doing now? says Peter; I see you washing our feet; I see the basin there and you girded with a towel and serving us and wiping off our feet. But because this was not what was going on—but the Savior, stripped down, is pouring spiritual “water into the basin” according to the Scriptures, and is “washing the feet of the disciples” so that, when they were “clean,” they could ascend to the one who said, “I am the way” [[John 14:6](#)] and not be full of the “dust” that he wanted to “shake off” on the unworthy who did not accept his peace [cf. [Matt 10:14](#)], and were not worthy of what was being said—and because this was what was being signified he says, “What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand” [[John 13:7](#)]. And this was what was said in the remaining section, that “You call me master and Lord, and you say well; for I am. If then I the Lord and master have washed your feet, you too ought to wash one another’s feet” [[John 13:13–14](#)].

Is he saying this, therefore, so that the bishop might put water into a basin and, having stripped off his garments and girded himself with a towel, he might wash my feet that I have stretched forth? For indeed, he says, “You ought to wash your feet mutually.” If this is what he is saying, none of us will keep the command; for no deacon, priest, or bishop has taken a towel

and washed the feet of anyone coming to him. But if you understand the things that are written, who the truly blessed bishops are, serving the church, they pour water from the Scriptures into the basin of the soul, which is according to the Scriptures; and they attempt to wash, cleanse, and cast off the dirt from the feet of the disciples. And thus do the bishops keep the command to imitate Jesus, and so do the priests.

And would that I would now take water that could wash the feet of your soul, so that each of you might say, when he is washed, “I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?” [[Song 5:3](#)]. For in the Song of Songs, the bride who says this is not indicating physical feet that have been washed, but feet that do not stumble, of which Solomon says, “But do not let your foot stumble” [[Prov 3:23](#)]. It is also written about them in the Psalms, “But my feet were nearly moved” [[Ps 73:2](#)]. But even widows are established in the churches, it says, on the condition that they have “washed the feet of the saints” [[1 Tim 5:10](#)]. But if you want to hear more plainly how the widow washes the feet of the saints, hear Paul in another passage establishing widows, and saying, “Teaching well, so that they may become chaste young women” [[Titus 2:3–4](#)], washing the dirt from the feet of the young girls. And such widows are worthy of ecclesiastical honor, whosoever wash the feet of the saints with words of spiritual instruction, not of the male saints but of the women; for “I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man” [cf. [1 Tim 2:12](#)]. He wants the women to teach well so that they may persuade to chastity not the young men but the younger women—for it is unbecoming for a woman to become a teacher of a man—but let them persuade the younger women to chastity and to love their husbands and their children [cf. [Titus 2:4](#)].

Let us learn, therefore, to wash the feet of the disciples. These things have been said in view of this: “Seeing you will see and you will not understand” [[Isa 6:9](#)]. Since, if something was being done by the Savior, it was indeed seen physically by those who were not understanding, but it was not seen notionally. It was indeed seen with the eyes by those who were understanding, but it was also seen with the understanding; so that it was not fulfilled in those seeing this blessedly that was said, “Seeing you will see and you will not understand,” but in sinners.

But also in seeing all things from the Gospels, we pray to see them in a twofold way, as they were carried out physically, when our Savior descended to the earth; for indeed each thing that was done in his body was the image and type of things to come.<sup>443</sup> Just as I do not know what man “blind from birth” recovered his sight [cf. [John 9:1ff.](#)]; but the people of the Gentiles were truly “blind from birth” to whom the Savior restored sight, anointing their eyes with his saliva [cf. [John 9:6](#)] and sending them to Siloam, which means “sent” [cf. [John 9:7](#)]. For those whom he anointed with the Spirit in order that they might believe, he sent to Siloam, that is, to the apostles<sup>444</sup> and teachers. This is why it was written about Siloam that it means “sent.” And whenever we begin to be visited by Jesus to receive the sight of the soul, we are sent to Siloam, that is, “sent.” And let each of us, therefore, when he reads these things that have been done in the Gospels, pray that the following may not be fulfilled even within himself: “Seeing you will see, and you will not understand” [[Isa 6:9](#)].

4. But if, as the more simple think, these things that were done were not done “for our

<sup>443</sup> Cf. [Origen, Contra Celsum 2.69](#); *Com in Jn* 20.26; 10.35–6; [Hom 7 in Lk](#).

<sup>444</sup> The word *apostle* in Greek means “one sent.”

sake” [cf. [Rom 15:4](#); [1 Cor 9:10](#)], but they were merely done and were not examples of something else, let them explain what meaning this has: “Seeing you shall see, and you will not understand” [[Isa 6:9](#)]. For if these things that were being seen had not contained some sacred meaning, so that they might be looked at spiritually as well with fleshly eyes, he never would have said, “Seeing you shall see, and you will not understand.” But to prove this, let us cite the testimony of another Scripture from the Gospel, which is a falsehood according to those who follow the letter only. Our Lord and Savior says to the disciples in the Gospel according to John, “If you shall believe, not only shall you do the things that I am doing, but you shall do even things greater than these” [[John 14:12](#)]. Let us see, then, if the disciples did “things greater.”<sup>445</sup> What is greater than resuscitating the dead [cf. [John 5:21](#)]? Which, I do not say of us, but of the apostles, raised the dead? History relates that Paul resuscitated Eutychus from the dead [cf. [Acts 20:9–11](#)], and Peter, Tabitha, which means Dorcas [cf. [Acts 9:36–43](#)]. Now you can find these and other things of this nature; but where are the “things greater”? Moreover, the Savior caused the blind to see again [cf. [Matt 9:27–31](#)], and, what is greater, those who had been born so [cf. [John 9:1](#)]. Let them exhibit what people blind from the womb they have seen cured by the hands of the apostles. And the one who seeks can find countless other things from the Gospels that neither the apostles nor their successors have done “greater than these.”

But the words of Scripture have spoken something that is of this nature: “You shall do things greater than these” physical (*corporalibus*) things “that I have done” [[John 14:12](#)]. I have caused the dead to rise physically; you will make them rise spiritually. I have poured this sensible light into the blind; you shall give spiritual light to those who do not see. But up to today, I see these signs being done by the most faithful disciples of Jesus, which are “greater” than the physical signs that Jesus did. Or do not the blind now see and the lame walk and the lepers are cleansed [cf. [Luke 7:22](#)] and the remaining things are being done, if he who yesterday had been made blind when he approached an idol as if it were God, today should call upon the living God and forsake the former things? Or does he who had been lame yesterday on account of sin, now that he has been taught by the doctrine of the disciples, walk with a steady gait on the true road? Does not he who yesterday had a withered hand [cf. [Luke 6:8](#)] that was useless in respect to doing good works, today receive and possess that living hand? If you see someone defiled and leprous in his soul suddenly repent when he has been pricked [cf. [Isa 6:5](#)] by the word of doctrine, do not hesitate to say that it is “greater” that this leper was cleansed spiritually than anyone who has been cleansed physically. Now this sermon has indeed been quite diffuse because of my desire to show what these words that were spoken mean, “And seeing you shall see, and you will not understand” [[Isa 6:9](#)].

5. But what causes the hearer “not to understand,” and the seer “not to see”? He says, “The heart of this people has become fat” [[Isa 6:10](#)]. If indeed it is essential for this to be understood as well, what is the source of this, [we should know that] physical and spiritual fatness are not the same thing, nor are spiritual and physical thinness the same. For indeed, physically fatness occurs in the flesh, and it does no harm to my “heart of flesh” [cf. [Ezek 36:26](#)], if it is fattened. Moreover, it does no good if because of an illness or for some other reason one’s heart becomes thin. But I imagine that such a heart of flesh occurs in those who are held back by fear.

<sup>445</sup> Westcott, “*rigenes*,” [DCB 4:110](#) calls this section a “assage of characteristic excellence.”

For just as all begin to decay during a sickness, so they say also that fatness and whatever is fat around their heart is thinned down. What harm comes to me, then, if my physical heart grows fat? Indeed, let my heart even be thinned down. What good comes to me from that? Instead, under the so-called designation of physical heart, the principal part of our soul is being named. This is clear, for example, from the fact that in the Gospel it is said, “Blessed are the pure in heart” [[Matt 5:8](#)].<sup>446</sup> For they are not “pure in heart” who do not have blood or any other physical material internally. But it was said, “Blessed are the pure in heart” in view of the fact that it is the “blessed” who have a “pure heart.” The principal part of the soul has been named “heart.”

Since, therefore, the principal part of our soul, which is said to be in the physical heart, is either pure or impure, and our heart is impure indeed when “evil thoughts proceed from it, murder, adultery, theft, false testimony, blasphemy” [cf. [Matt 15:19](#)]; but it is “pure” when holy thoughts and divine understandings and a pure mind [proceed from it], for this reason, one should consider that it pertains to one who is saved to be said to have been “thinned” by the thin and holy Spirit [cf. [Wis 7:22](#)]; but the one who sins is said to have been “fattened” and choked by wickedness. For it is said of the Holy Spirit who is according to wisdom, that he is “only begotten, manifold, *thin*, lively” [cf. [Wis 7:22](#)], and that the just man receives this “subtle spirit” [cf. [Wis 7:23](#)]; for this spirit differs from all “understanding, pure, subtle spirits” [cf. [Wis 7:23](#)].

Therefore, the principal part of the heart that is spiritual is thin, but it becomes fat when it has grown solid from the vice of bodily matter, when it is full of bodily thoughts that are blameworthy. Thus he says, “The heart of this people has become fat.” Understand this: the reason “the heart has become fat” is because there is nothing in it but human and fleshly concerns; for just as the material of the body is fat, in the same way as well are bodily understandings and thoughts. Therefore two things have been set forth. The heart is fattened by worldly cares, and it is thinned down by spiritual concern. Thus when someone thinks those things that are of the Lord, he is expelling the fat from his heart; moreover, he knows that if his heart becomes fat, it does not receive the words of God, nor see the mystery of salvation. Therefore, let us lay aside fatness and let us take up that thinness that has been spoken of, so that we too may say like the prophet, “My soul has thirsted for you; how often has my flesh [longed] after you in a barren, trackless, and waterless land. Thus have I appeared before you in the sanctuary” [[Ps 63:1–2](#)]. It is not as if I am a saint naturally, but if the wisdom of the flesh begins to decay and if the wisdom of the flesh disappears, then I shall “appear in your sanctuary.” These things have been said as an explanation of what was said, “For the heart of this people has become fat” [[Isa 6:10](#)].

6. But then it follows, “And they have heard with ears with heaviness” [[Isa 6:10](#)]. No harm comes to me if I hear with “heaviness” in the physical sense, and that does not become a reason for me not to hear the words of God. For just as physical blindness does not harm me, if my soul has not been blinded, so neither lightness nor “heaviness” of hearing in the bodily sense is an impediment to me. But there is a certain “heaviness” of hearing that is harmful to

<sup>446</sup> By “principal part” he means apparently the *hegemonicon* or governing part of the soul. The Stoics taught that the soul had eight parts of which the *hegemonicon* was the ruler.

the human soul. What is this “heaviness” that is in the soul’s hearing? Sin is “heavy,” according to Scripture. This is why someone who sensed his own sins said, “They have weighed down upon me like a heavy burden” [[Ps 38:4](#)]. And it is because iniquity is “heavy” that it “sits upon a talent of lead,” as is written in Zechariah [cf. [Zech 5:7–8](#)]. Now the Egyptians “sank like lead in the mighty water” [cf. [Exod 15:10](#)] not because they had “heavy” bodies, but because their souls were “weighed down” by a “talent of lead” upon which “iniquity was sitting.” This is why they “sank like lead in the mighty water.”<sup>447</sup> Therefore “heaviness” of hearing comes from sin, and lightness comes from justice.

What is it that makes hearing not heard “with heaviness,” but lightly? The “feathers” (*pennae*) of the word, the “feathers” of virtue [cf. [Ps 55:6](#)]; for indeed the “feathers” of the word provide much lightness. “Who shall give me wings (*pennas*) like a dove’s that I may be at rest?” [cf. [Ps 55:6](#)]. The prophet says this not as a prayer for physical “wings of a dove,” but for the wings of the dove of the Holy Spirit. But once again, Solomon speaks of the rich man, “But he prepares for himself wings (*pennas*) like an eagle, and he returns to the house of his master” [[Prov 23:5](#)]. If we take up wings, therefore, we shall hear lightly; but if we sin and become negligent concerning the wings (*alas*), and our feathers (*pennae*) fall out, we shall become heavy and we shall “hear with heaviness.” Therefore, “with their ears,” sinners “have heard with heaviness” [[Isa 6:10](#)].

To be sure, all the Jews who heard the Savior at that time “heard” him “with heaviness”; that is why they did not believe. But up to today, as many as hear the Scriptures without hearing the spiritual word, which is light, but only the letter, which is “heavy” and which kills [cf. [2 Cor 3:6](#)], “hear with heaviness.” And so, the Scripture is heard in two ways; it is “heard with heaviness” by him who does not understand the things that are being said; but by the one who understands it, not only is it not “heard with heaviness,” but rather it is heard sharply. That is how someone becomes an understanding hearer.

7. But something else is prophesied about the Jewish people and about all of us, if we sin. “And they have closed their eyes, lest at some time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart” [[Isa 6:10](#)]. Of those who do not see, some are blind, and because of blindness they do not see; but others are neither in darkness nor are they blind, but they do not “see” because they “close their eyes.” And Holy Scripture knows these differences that pertain to the principal part of our heart; for the Savior says “to those who are in chains, ‘Come forth,’ and to those who are in darkness, ‘Let it be revealed to them’ ” [[Isa 49:9](#)]; and “to those sitting in the region and shadow of death, light has risen for them” [[Matt 4:16](#)]. The reason they did not see is because they were in darkness until the light rose for them. “Hear, O deaf, and see, O blind” [[Isa 42:18](#)]. Therefore, they did not see before because they were blind naturally. But those are much worse who are outside of these circumstances, and who have as the reason they do not see, and are compared with the blind and with those who are in darkness, that they have “closed their eyes” of their own accord. But the Savior will be my witness that this is the case, as we have claimed, when he says, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains” [[John 9:41](#)]. And he says well, “You say, ‘We see’ ”; for indeed they say that they see and have the capability of seeing, but

<sup>447</sup> Cf. [Origen, Homily 6.4 on Exodus](#).

they do not see because they close their eyes.

And if at any time, you see a soul that is gifted with the ability to understand, and that is swift and eager, but that does not meditate upon God's utterances, recognize that it is not on account of blindness that it does not see those things that are contained in the Scriptures; it is not in darkness for that reason, but because it "closes its eyes." Therefore if you hear a Scripture telling those who "close their eyes," "Open your eyes and see straight" [cf. [Bar 2:17](#); [Prov 4:25](#)], "open your eyes" in respect to that which you had closed them, then you will be able to "see straight" and to look at the light of truth. And to be sure, he accuses them of whom it is asked why they "close their eyes lest they should see"; but he is not denying the fact that even this is sometimes advantageous, even to close the eyes of one's soul. For it is advantageous, as Isaiah makes clear when he says in the things that follow, "Who will tell you of the eternal place? He that walks in justice and speaks the true and right way, stopping up his ears that he should not hear the judgment of blood, *closing his eyes that he should not see iniquity*" [cf. [Isa 33:14-15](#)]. If it shall come to pass that by opening the eyes of the soul, I should hear and perceive obscene speech, it is better to "close" the entrance way, than to hear and understand what brings harm. When do I close them, therefore? When there is talk of evils, and I do so in order that I might not understand those things. When God's utterances need to be seen, we are both "converted" and God "heals" us, by sending his word, which "heals" those who want to be cured in Christ Jesus, "to whom is the glory and power in the ages of ages. Amen!" [cf. [1 Pet 4:11](#)].

### Homily 7

Concerning what is written, "Behold, I and my children (*pueri*) whom God has given me" [[Isa 8:18](#)], and so on.

1. The divine word has said, "Give an opportunity to a wise man and he will be wiser" [[Prov 9:9](#)]. But by accepting the "opportunity" that comes from the most sacred Apostle for understanding the words of the prophets, let us pray to God that we may receive wisdom, and be able to become wiser through this "opportunity" from the apostles to expound the prophets. When the Apostle recalls this statement: "Behold, I and the children whom God has given me" [[Isa 8:18](#)], he then adds to it, and explains,

Therefore, because the *children* had blood and flesh in common, so he has come very near those who have these things in common, so that through death he might destroy him who has the command of death, that is, Zabalus;<sup>448</sup> and might deliver them who all their life were kept in servitude by the fear of death. [[Heb 2:14-15](#)]

Therefore, because the "children" had "blood and flesh in common," our Savior too "shared in blood and flesh." For it was foreign to his nature and deity to receive blood and flesh; but for our sake he received things that were foreign to himself, in order to make us members of his own household, we who had become alienated through sin.

And the Apostle has indeed explained it this way, saying, "Therefore, because children had blood and flesh in common, so he has come very near those who have these things in common"

<sup>448</sup> See n. above at [4:5](#).



[[Heb 2:14](#)]; but I shall say that just as “because children had blood and flesh in common, so he has come very near those who have these things in common,” so, because children cannot hear more solid words—for they ought to hear the words of God as children—for this reason, when he was made blood for the sake of children, who shared in flesh and blood, speaking as if to infants, he speaks not divine and ineffable things, but whatever little children are capable of.

But all human beings are little children if you compare them to the perfection of the Word; though you might name Moses, though you might speak of one of the prophets, though John, than whom no one was greater among those born of women [cf. [Matt 11:11](#)], though you may come to the apostles, Peter, against whom the gates of hell shall not prevail [cf. [Matt 16:18](#)], or Paul, who “was caught up to the third heaven and heard unspeakable words” [cf. [2 Cor 12:2, 4](#)], you are not setting aside their glory by saying that even they, in the things that they understood, in comparison with those things that they did not understand, were learned in the instructions given to little children, which are handed down to human beings.

Therefore the Savior is not speaking about those whom Paul names “little children” in Christ, and asserts that they must be given milk to drink, and not solid food [cf. [1 Cor 3:1–2](#)], but about all men equally, when he says, “Behold, I and my little children (*parvuli*) whom God has given me” [[Isa 8:18](#)]. But just as among children (*pueris*), some are more eager than others, and attain more quickly the things that are delivered to them, so, I say, that Moses and the prophets were like gifted children. But so were the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. For that reason, perceiving this in themselves, that even though they had made progress, they had progressed with the progress of children, and they said, “We know in part and we prophesy in part” [cf. [1 Cor 13:9](#)]. For their visions did not yet trade in matters of truth, but in the shadows of things, not in the full light, but in obscure images; and for that reason they repeatedly say, “For we see now through a mirror obscurely, but then face to face” [[1 Cor 13:12](#)].

Who therefore who reads this and understands it will be puffed up and haughty in respect to his knowledge or any of his gifts? For, indeed, since the things that have come to children (*pueros*) are far inferior to those that are laid up for adults (*viris*), those among the children who seem to be sharper in talent and quicker in understanding should not get puffed up and be proud. But he calls all human beings “children,” whom the Savior also referred to when he said, “Behold, I and the children whom God has given me” [[Isa 8:18](#)]. And the Savior accepted the gift from God; for “no one comes to” him unless he who sent him draws him to come to the Savior [cf. [John 6:44](#)], as we have learned in the Gospel according to John. And since he received those who believe as a gift from the Father, on that account he prophesies about them, and says, “Behold, I and the children whom God gave me” [[Isa 8:18](#)]. And you must not think that he who received them does not have them, just because he who gave them still has them.<sup>449</sup>

2. Then, in the things that remain, the Savior prophesies, saying in the prophet that it will come to pass that when he receives “children,” “signs and wonders are done in Israel” [[Isa 8:18](#)]. Now it stands as follows: “And there shall be signs and wonders in Israel by the Lord Sabaoth, who dwells on Mount Zion” [[Isa 8:18](#)]. For he who “dwells in” the watchtower and is able to view the truth in every soul, does “signs and wonders” through the Savior, and after the Savior,

<sup>449</sup> A. Fürst conjectures that this sentence is an addition of St. Jerome to Origen’ text. “erome Keeping Silent,”143.

through the apostles; and wherever a soul is found that is suitable for the ministry of “signs” and portents of God, whether in accordance with spiritual healing (to exhort to faith those who see), or that kind of healing that is empirical, God is not inactive in this. Back then he did “signs and wonders,” and even now he works them.

“And if they should say to you, ‘Seek ventriloquists and those who cry out from the earth, who speak vain things, who speak out of their belly,’ does a nation not diligently seek to their God? Why do they inquire of the dead concerning the living?” [[Isa 8:19](#)]. Pay attention, for this has been spoken unclearly, and the meaning ought to cohere with what comes above this, as God himself grants and reveals that meaning. Therefore he is teaching us not to be disciples of any other words except good heavenly words. For there are some of those who speak about and promise true doctrine, who do not speak heavenly things, but earthly things. “He who is of the earth, speaks from the earth; he who comes from heaven is over all, he testifies to what he has seen and heard” [[John 3:31–32](#)]. He says, If someone “should say” to the “children” who believe in me, “Seek ventriloquists and those who cry out from the earth, who speak vain things, who speak out of their belly” [[Isa 8:19](#)]<sup>—</sup>as it were, “seek” demons—for he has named all demons τροπικῶς (tropologically) from one form of demon, a ‘ventriloquist’<sup>—</sup>“if they say to you, ‘Seek ventriloquists,’ ” that is, seek from demons either divination or truth or sacred contemplation, respond to them these things that I am saying.

What are the things that he teaches them? He tells us in what follows. There are indeed certain ones who send you to “ventriloquists,” but more often than not they send the catechumens. For those who want you to go to idols, concerning which it is written, “All the gods of the nations are demons” [[Ps 96:5](#)], they want you to go not only to “ventriloquists,” but to every kind of demon. But may our God, who does what he wills in heaven and on earth [cf. [Ps 115:3](#)], draw us back from demons; may he make us intimate friends of himself through our Savior Jesus Christ. Pay heed, therefore, that no one’s soul is ever deceived and still wavers and doubts, when he hears this or that man [say], “A demon cured this sickness by means of that idol; a demon divined this and that.” [For] all these idols belong to demons and to men who do not recognize truth.

Ascend in your mind to him who is Creator of all [cf. [Sir 24:8](#)], and compare that piety with everything that is declared to be piety but is not piety, and see that you are blessed. For “who is like you, O people saved by the Lord?” [[Deut 33:29](#)]. And “blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he chose as his inheritance” [[Ps 33:12](#)]. For the nation of the Jews was blessed formerly, but they lost their blessedness and were cast out of their place, because they treacherously killed him who was sent and had the Father’s testimony, not only through the law and the prophets, but also in his “signs and wonders” [cf. [Isa 8:18](#)]. Therefore, the blessedness moved on to us, the disciples of Jesus Christ, and we believe in him unshakably and firmly, living in accordance with what we have been taught.

3. “And if they should say to you, ‘Seek ventriloquists and those who speak out of the earth, who speak vain things’ ” [[Isa 8:19](#)]. He has named “empty talkers.” Every word that is said is either empty or full of truth. Every word is empty that is false, but it is full of truth that has the knowledge of the God of the universe, and teaches us to believe in God, who promises the kingdom of heaven to his saints. Consider therefore what those ones say who were not “empty

talkers” and have never been seen empty in the presence of the Lord God: “We have all received from his fullness” [John 1:16]. Those who are “empty talkers” do not “all have from his fullness,” but they are all empty of the truth, they are empty of virtue, they are empty of Christ. “If they should say to you, ‘Seek those who speak out of the earth, who speak vain things, who speak from their belly’ ” [Isa 8:19].

I also want to tell the reason why the word at this time has taken up this most powerful of the demons, that of the “ventriloquists,” so as to say, “If they should say to you, ‘seek the ventriloquists’ ” [Isa 8:19]. You shall find that all who promise and do not possess virtue serve their own belly, and in a way do everything for the sake of its pleasure and abundance. But not only pagans but also those who, though they promise religion in Christ, are heretics; and you will find some, not only among those, but also among us who are of the church, who carry out everything in view of satisfying their belly, namely, one who would be honored and would receive the gifts that are given to the church. That sort of man speaks “from the belly,” and the spring of his words is based in his belly; for the spring of his words does not flow from the heart, it does not flow from good thoughts or from the Holy Spirit. If, therefore, someone at some time promises to teach, observe whether or not his words have their point of origin “from his belly.”

But I myself shall propose something that could be raised as an objection to me, lest perhaps any of you who hears it from someone should think either that Scripture contradicts itself, or that we have not looked carefully at the question of how it is fitting to test the meaning of the words about those accusing them who “speak from the belly.” What then is this problem? He says, “If anyone believes in me, rivers shall flow *from his belly*, a spring of water welling up to eternal life” [cf. John 7:38; 4:14]. And so, let one of those who propose this tell us this: If the Savior promises a spring of water welling up to eternal life *from the belly*, the spring is proceeding from a just man. Moreover, the just man is “speaking from his belly,” if indeed the “spring of water” that the Savior promises is in his “belly.” But lest perhaps we should have two bellies, one should say that there is one that is physical,<sup>550</sup> another that is spiritual, just as is the case for the other members that appear to be named in the body, as for example the eyes. There are some that pertain to the body, others to the soul. For if it is said of the eyes, “The Lord’s command is clear, illuminating the eyes” [Ps 19:8], I do not think that this must be applied to the eyes of the body. And if it is said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” [Matt 13:9], one must not think that this is said about the ears of the body, but of those of the soul, which they possess who are pure in the hearing of their soul.

Moreover if it is said as a promise, “[That] your foot may not stumble” [Prov 3:23], it is not to be thought that this is being said about the foot of the body; for there is a certain foot of the heart that walks on him who said, “I am the way” [John 14:6]. So then, there is a “belly” of the soul, like the belly of the body. The just man “speaks from” it: “We have conceived in the belly, O Lord, because of your fear, and have been in pain and have brought forth the breath (*spiritum*) of your salvation that you have wrought upon the earth” [Isa 26:18]. But whoever has a “belly” that is full of empty words that are “from the earth,” they have the belly that subsists “from the earth,” of which it is written, “But God will destroy both this one and that one” [1 Cor

<sup>550</sup> Lit., “odily.”

[6:13](#)].

Therefore the saints have a “belly” in which they have also “conceived because of the fear of the Lord” [cf. [Isa 26:18](#)]. And their “belly” is filled from the “springs of water that well up to eternal life” [cf. [John 4:14](#); [7:38](#)]. From this “belly” that one says, “And my belly is as a skin full of sweet wine, bound up” [[Job 32:19](#)]. For he said this not about the “belly” of the body; for his physical belly was not full of divination and of things closely related to these, with “wine bound up” in a skin. These things have been said as a solution to the problem.

4. Now let us turn back to what we have begun. “If,” therefore, “they should say to you, ‘Seek ventriloquists and those who speak out of the earth, those who speak vain things, who speak out of their belly’ ” [[Isa 8:19](#)]<sup>—</sup>answer this to them: “[Is] not a nation to their God?” [[Isa 8:19](#)]; but this is said defectively: Answer this to them, “Does not a nation diligently seek to their God?” Each nation, if it seeks, it defers to its own God, what it has sought; answer this to them. But you, Israelites, who have the true God who is over all things [cf. [Rom 9:5](#)], when you seek, do not “seek ventriloquists,” nor those “speaking out of the earth,” nor “vain talkers,” but your own God. “Why do they seek after the dead from the living?” [cf. [Isa 8:19](#)] For the dead are demons deprived of the true life, which says, “I am the life” [[John 14:6](#)]. Therefore do not consult the dead concerning the business of the living, for you have received the “law.” O you, whom he was unable to convince to seek these things from “ventriloquists” and from those “speaking vain words out of the earth,” attend to the word of truth and to the law, receiving it as a “help” to your “law” [cf. [Isa 8:20](#)].

In your “law” it is written, “Do not follow idols” [cf. [Exod 20:4–5](#)]; act in accordance with the law and pay no heed to “ventriloquists,” nor to those who “speak out of the earth” [cf. [Isa 8:19](#)]. “For he gave the law as a help, that they might say, ‘not as this word for which there are no gifts to give’ ” [cf. [Isa 8:20](#)]. For the one who has received the “law,” and who knows that the “law” is “for a help” and is chiefly spiritual [cf. [Rom 7:14](#)], which forbids “ventriloquists” and the observations of omens, he, when he has understood the “law,” in admiration of it, he should speak no “word” in the world of the Greeks and barbarians of the sort that is a “word” of the “law.” For the “law” that has been given to us by God differs from every word, from every doctrine, that promises truth. For “he gave the law for a help, that they may say, ‘not as that word’ ” [[Isa 8:20](#)]. What does this mean, “not as that word”? There are many words, but they are “not as that word.” For there is no word after the “word” of Moses, after the “word” of the prophets, but much more, after the “word” of Jesus Christ and his apostles. Observe, if God’s mind has not “cried out” what has been said; for “he gave the law for a help, that those who have received the law for a help may say,” it is “not as this word,” in the way Moses has spoken in the law brought by angels through the hand of a mediator [cf. [Gal 3:19](#)]. But the church can say this much more fittingly: it is “not as this word,” which became flesh, which dwelled among us [cf. [John 1:14](#)]. We have seen his glory, not as [the glory of] Moses covered with a veil [cf. [2 Cor 3:13](#)], but glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth [cf. [John 1:14](#)]. It is “not as this word,” which the church has received, in which it believes, “through which word it will also be saved” [cf. [1 Cor 15:2](#)]. This word “was God the Word in the beginning with God” [cf. [John 1:1](#)], to whom be the glory and power in the ages of ages. Amen [cf. [1 Pet 4:11](#)]!

## Homily 8

About that which is written, “Howl, you graven images in Jerusalem and in Samaria” [[Isa 10:10](#)], up to the passage where it says, “And I will shake the cities that are inhabited.” [[Isa 10:14](#)]

1. To be sure, once, when the former people sinned, Judah “in Jerusalem” and the one who was called Israel “in Samaria” fell away from religion and fashioned “graven images” [cf. [Isa 10:10](#)]. But even now, if someone considers from the number of sinners who are gathered, he will not hesitate to say that everyone who makes a god out of that which he esteems as good, and who serves sin, is someone accursed for making a “graven image,” and for melting down the work of the hands of the craftsman, and for setting it up in a hidden place; for if we sin, we are making many idols in the hidden place of our heart.

This is why the word teaches us to repent, and to “howl” over the “graven images” and the idols that are “in Jerusalem” and “in Samaria” [cf. [Isa 10:10](#)]. And, indeed, if we who desire to belong to the church do sin, we are making “graven images in Jerusalem”; but if those ones sin who are set outside the church, like the heretics, they are making idols “in Samaria.”<sup>551</sup> But God is summoning everyone to repentance in accordance with his own goodness, and he says, “Howl, you graven images in Jerusalem and in Samaria; for as I did to Samaria and to her man-made things, so shall I do both to Jerusalem and to her idols” [[Isa 10:10–11](#)]. He is making threats, that whatever he had “done to the Samaritans,” likewise this shall happen to those who are of the church.

But “when the Lord shall have finished doing all things on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, he will bring in upon great mind the prince of the Assyrians, and upon the height of the glory of his eyes” [[Isa 10:12](#)]. We are being taught what will happen to our enemy Zabulus,<sup>552</sup> whom the prophecy has now called a certain “great mind.” For just as “the serpent was wiser than all the beasts that are upon the earth” [cf. [Gen 3:1](#)], and “the sons of this world are wiser than the sons of light in their own generation” [cf. [Luke 16:8](#)], and the steward of iniquity acted wisely according to the wisdom that is not good [cf. [Ezek 20:25](#)]; in the same way, that one that figuratively is called the prince of the Assyrians is “great mind,” and the greatness of his mind causes wonder. He misused it to instruct the wise of this world, those who with all verisimilitude and with all power exhibit in their writings the falseness of their own sects.

Therefore when God does “all things on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem” [[Isa 10:12](#)], and delivers on those things that were promised to the just, then “he will bring in upon great mind the prince of the Assyrians, and upon the height of the glory of his eyes” [[Isa 10:12](#)]. The word recognizes him as one who is mindful of high things [cf. [Rom 12:16](#)], and that the commencement of his fall began with pride. And this is why, if we become puffed up, we fall into the judgment of the devil [cf. [1 Tim 3:6](#)], into which Zabulus<sup>553</sup> himself fell.

2. But let us consider his pride and how great it is, so that we may be on guard against it and

<sup>551</sup> For Samaria as a symbol for heresy, see Origen, *Com in Jn* 23.13.81; 52 (51).343; [Hom in Ezek 10.2](#); 3.36.

<sup>552</sup> See n. above at [4.5](#).

<sup>553</sup> Cf. *ibid*.

not permit him to say true things about us. What then does he say? “I will act in strength, and in the wisdom of [my] understanding I will remove the boundaries of nations” [[Isa 10:13](#)]. He reckons that he is able to accomplish what he wants in us by his own strength. And in reality, if we are conquered and after these words we sin, if after church we go again to the circus and to the horse races and to the assemblies of the pagans, what else would be taking place but that he would possess us as those who have been conquered? And what Zabulus said, “I will act in strength” [[Isa 10:13](#)], is achieved in us who commit the sins that he threatened. Moreover, if after being chaste for a long time, we commit fornication, after living very holily, what else is happening than his being proven to have spoken true things about us who said, “I will act in strength” [[Isa 10:13](#)]?

But let us look more carefully at what else that great talker promises. “And in the wisdom of understanding, I will remove the boundaries of nations” [[Isa 10:13](#)]. He promises some “wisdom” or other, about which the prophet also speaks, “There is a certain alien wisdom among them” [cf. [Jer 8:9](#)]. There is a certain kind of wisdom outside the truth that God destroys [cf. [Isa 29:14](#); [1 Cor 1:19](#)]. Being in possession of this kind of wisdom, that one reckons that he is wise, and says, “In the wisdom of understanding, I will remove the boundaries of nations, and I will feed off their strength” [[Isa 10:13](#)]. For his working has reached to all the “nations”; but the Savior, by sending his own words to all nations [cf. [Matt 28:19](#)], has delivered those who were being held captive by Zabulus among all the nations [cf. [Heb 2:15](#)].

“And I will feed off their strength” [[Isa 10:13](#)]. He is threatening to plunder our “strength” and to hand us over to the soldiery of the enemy. And in fact it is possible to see him doing this in some people. For when someone is conquered by Zabulus, and is handed over to the very wicked demonic spirits, to the hostile powers, what else has been done, than that he who had said, “And I shall feed on their strength” [[Isa 10:13](#)], has taken our “strength” and “fed upon” us?

“And I shall shake the cities that are inhabited” [[Isa 10:14](#)]. Zabulus also threatens this: he sees that the “cities,” the churches of God that have been built upon Christ the Lord, are inhabited; he shouts out that he will “shake” them. And frequently, indeed, he has struck the “inhabited cities” by means of persecutions, frequently he has struck them by means of stumbling blocks (*scandalis*). But as those who have their foundation upon the rock [cf. [Luke 6:48](#)], let us attempt to become the type of people that, when he says, “I shall shake the cities that are inhabited” [[Isa 10:14](#)], he would not be able to “shake” us by his storms nor through opposing spirits. Instead, let us persevere steadfastly before all that befalls us, as those who have their building upon the rock, Jesus Christ [cf. [1 Cor 10:4](#)], to whom is the glory and power in the ages of the ages. Amen [cf. [1 Pet 4:11](#)]!

[Homily 9]<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> The authenticity of this homily is disputed because Origen’s discussion of Moses and Isaiah seems to contradict his earlier discussion in *Homily 6*, in which he starkly contrasted them. Yet here he reports an interpretation derived from a Hebrew man; he is not offering it as his own explanation.



Concerning that which is written, “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?’ ” [\[Isa 6:8\]](#). And skipping over a bit, he reaches the passage in which it is written, “Seek for yourself a sign from the Lord your God in the depth or in the height.” [\[Isa 7:11\]](#)

“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?’ And I said, ‘Behold, here I am; send me’ ” [\[Isa 6:8\]](#). And he says, “Go and say to this people, ‘With hearing you shall hear, but you will not understand’ ” [\[Isa 6:9\]](#), and the remaining things. Let us pray to God about the words of the prophet Isaiah that have just now been read, that he may give us grace lavishly, so that we may be able to explain things that are worthy of the prophetic spirit.

“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send?’ ” [\[Isa 6:8\]](#). After his lips were cleansed [cf. [Isa 6:7](#)], the prophet was prepared to receive the ministry of God, and he says, “Behold, here I am; send me” [\[Isa 6:8\]](#). But that he might be more prepared for this, he remembered the words of Moses. For Moses too made use of the same words, “Send me.”<sup>555</sup> He was called the ruler of the people [cf. [Exod 22:28](#)], having been appointed a judge [cf. [Exod 18:13](#)] and a servant of God [cf. [Heb 3:5](#)]. But I have heard a certain Hebrew man explaining this passage, and saying that the prophet was prepared and willing, to be sure, to receive the prophecy to the people, though he did not know what things were to be said to him. On the other hand, when he heard the grievous things that had to be declared to the people, that is, “With hearing you shall hear, but you will not understand” [\[Isa 6:9\]](#), and the rest, in what follows, he becomes more reluctant. When the voice of God says to him, “Cry out!” [\[Isa 40:6\]](#), he answered him and says, “What shall I cry out?” [\[Isa 40:6\]](#).

But I think that these things are prophesied about the Savior, that it would come about that “those hearing would not hear” and “those seeing would not see” [cf. [Matt 13:13](#)]. Furthermore, what is said will become clearer, if we consult the brief passage, “Seeing you shall perceive, and you will not see” [\[Isa 6:9\]](#). This is what it means. To be sure, at that time the Jews were seeing, looking back to the blind, but they did not know the reason for the vision; they were “hearing” the parables that the Savior unraveled in secret to his disciples [cf. [Mark 4:34](#)], but they were “not hearing,” since they did not know the things that were being said. On account of this, he testified to them, and said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” [\[Matt 13:9\]](#). For they had not been deprived of those ears, so that they did not hear, but their interior ears were heavy of hearing. On account of this, he preaches to them, and through the prophet foretells the things that are about to come, saying, “With hearing you shall hear, but you will not understand, and seeing you will perceive, but you will not see. For the heart of these people has become fat” [\[Isa 6:9–10\]](#).

Let us look into what this means: “For the heart of these people has become fat” [\[Isa 6:10\]](#). Every heart is “fat” that becomes involved in the cares of the present life. It is hardly different for those who linger in secular affairs; their “heart has become fat,” as if they are being killed off by thorns [cf. [Matt 13:22](#)]. For that reason, the heart grows fat and it is not able to receive the ideas of the thinner Spirit [cf. [Wis 7:22](#)]. Let us flee from such cares, therefore, so that our heart may be made thin and become acceptable to God. Let us flee from earthly business; for those

<sup>555</sup> Moses does not speak such words in Exodus.

are things by which the heart is “made fat.” On account of this, the words of Moses were fine (as it is written in the Exodus about him) that say, “Whoever shall be of a pure heart,” on account of thinness of this sort, “shall see God” [cf. [Matt 5:8](#)]. For God is seen with such eyes.

There are three things that are being said: “For the heart of these people has become fat,” and “they hear heavily with their ears,” and “they have shut their eyes” [[Isa 6:10](#)]. But they can also be understood more clearly in another way by things that are said in another passage. For many men think that by looking at creatures and by contemplating the world, they see these things. And what say I of men? Behold, the birds and the four-footed creatures see the sun and the moon and the entire sky at once, together with the choir of the stars, but they do not understand the reasons behind them. But only the just and the holy ones look at these things by means of those who comprehend the reason of the wisdom of God. For that reason, in the eighth Psalm, David says, “For I shall see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars, that you have established” [[Ps 8:3](#)]. For why does the prophet not see the heaven and the moon now? We will be able to understand this if we but considered what he says, “I *shall* see.”

## APPENDIX 2

### [St. Jerome's Epistle 18AB to Damasus](#)

#### TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the commentary on [Isaiah 3:3](#), Jerome reports that some thirty years earlier, while he was in Constantinople studying Scripture under bishop Gregory Nazianzus, he dictated a “brief and hastily composed treatise” on the vision recorded in [Isaiah 6:1–9](#). He says he wanted to make an experiment of his meager talent and obey his friends who commanded him. This treatise, [EEp. 18](#) to Damasus, is sometimes entitled *De seraphim* and dates to around 381. Translated here into English for the first time, it is the earliest of Jerome's expository letters. While he clearly makes heavy use of Origen's interpretive insights, as a comparison with his own translation of Origen's homilies on Isaiah demonstrates, Jerome also exercises independent thought and begins to distance himself somewhat from Origen. For instance, Jerome now rejects the interpretation of the seraphim, witnessed by his Greek and Latin predecessors, according to which they represent the Son and the Holy Spirit (cf. [4](#)). Without naming Origen, Jerome says that he does not assent to the authority of these interpreters. Fremantle observes, “At the time when he wrote it he was much under the sway of Origen. But great as was his admiration for the master, he was not afraid to discard his exegesis when, as in the case of the seraphim, he believed it to be

erroneous.”<sup>11</sup> The weakness of Jerome’s criticism is evident to the modern reader. His quotation of [John 12:39–41](#), for instance, has completely altered the original text. I have briefly discussed these matters in the introduction to appendix [1](#) and in the footnotes that are appended there.

Hopefully the presentation of these important works in English translation will stimulate scholarly research on these subjects. This translation has been made from [Saint Jérôme Lettres](#), tome I, ed. J. Labourt (Paris: Les Belles Lettes, 1949), 53–78.

## JEROME, EPISTLE 18A TO DAMASUS

[Isaiah 6:1–9](#) <sup>[LXX]</sup>: “And it came to pass in the year in which King Uzziah (*Ozias*) died: I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne, and the house was full of his majesty. ([2](#)) And seraphim stood round about him; each one had six wings.<sup>22</sup> And with two they covered the face, and with two they covered the feet, and with two they flew. ([3](#)) And they cried one to the other, and they said, ‘Holy, holy, holy [is] the Lord Sabaoth, the whole earth is full of his majesty.’ ([4](#)) And the lintel was lifted up at the voice they uttered, and the house was filled with smoke. ([5](#)) And I said, ‘O, I am wretched, for I am pricked; for being a man, and having unclean lips, I also dwell in the midst of a people having unclean lips; and I have seen with my eyes the King, the Lord Sabaoth.’ ([6](#)) And there was sent to me one of the seraphim, and he had in his hand a coal, which he had taken off the altar with the tongs. ([7](#)) And he touched my mouth, and said, ‘Behold, this has touched your lips, and will take away your iniquities, and will purge off your sins.’ ([8](#)) And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?’ And I said, ‘Behold, [here] I [am], send me.’ And he said, ‘Go, and say to this people, ([9](#)) “You shall hear with hearing, but you shall not understand; and you shall see and discern, but you shall not see.” ’ ”

1. “And it came to pass in the year in which King Uzziah (*Ozias*) died: I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne” [[Isa 6:1](#)]. Before we speak about the vision [cf. [Isa 1:1](#); [6:1](#)], it seems necessary to treat the question of who Uzziah is, how many years did he reign, and who were his contemporaries among the rest of the nations [cf. [2 Kgs 15:1–7](#)]. We read about his person in the Books of Kings and Chronicles.<sup>33</sup> He was a just man and “did right in the sight of the Lord” [[2 Chr 26:4](#)], by building the temple, constructing an aqueduct [cf. [2 Chr 26:10](#)], offering vessels, and overcoming adversaries in view of his merits [cf. [2 Chr 26:6–8](#)]. And what is the chief indication of piety, he had many prophets under his command.

This man pleased God, as long as Zechariah the priest was alive, who had the surname of “understanding,” and he entered into his shrine with all reverence. But when Zechariah passed away, he wanted to offer gifts on his own authority and rushed in upon the priestly order, not so much piously as rashly [cf. [2 Chr 26:16](#)]. And when the Levites and other priests protested, “Are you not King Uzziah, and no priest?” he refused to listen. And immediately leprosy spread to his *forehead* [cf. [2 Chr 26:19](#)]. This is in accordance with the words of the prophet, who said, “Lord,

1 NPNF2, [6:22](#).

LXX Septuagint

2 Lit., “here were six wings to one, and there were six wings to the other.”

3 *Praetertorium*, “hings omitted,” which is the LXX designation of Chronicles.

fill their faces with dishonor” [Ps 83:16]. The priest covered this part of the body with a thin sheet of gold [cf. [Exod 39:30](#)]. In Ezekiel, the Lord commands the *forehead* to be marked with the impression of the letter *tau* [cf. [Ezek 9:4](#)]. David exults over it and says, “The light of your countenance, O Lord, has been sealed upon us” [Ps 4:6]. The brash Philistine (*allophylus*) died when he was struck on the *forehead* by a stone from a sling [cf. [1 Sam 17:49](#)].

Now Uzziah (*Ozias*) reigned for fifty-two years [cf. [2 Kgs 15:2](#); [2 Chr 26:3](#)]. At that time Amulius<sup>44</sup> held power among the Latins, and Agamestor the eleventh<sup>55</sup> among the Athenians. After his death Isaiah the prophet saw this vision that we are trying to explain, that is, in that year in which Romulus, founder of the Roman Empire, was born, just as it could be clear to those who want to read the book of chronology that we translated from the Greek language into Latin.<sup>66</sup>

2. “And it came to pass in the year in which King Uzziah (*Ozias*) died: I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne” [Isa 6:1]. With the history said as a preface, the spiritual interpretation follows, the grounds for which the history itself has unfolded. While the leprous king was alive and was attempting to destroy the priesthood, to the extent that it lay within him to do so, Isaiah was not able to see a vision [cf. [Isa 1:1](#)].<sup>77</sup> As long as that man held control of the kingdom in Judea, the prophet did not raise his eyes to heaven, the heavens were not unbolted for him, the Lord Sabaoth did not appear, nor was the name of “Holy” heard three times in the mystery of faith [cf. [Isa 6:3](#)]. But when he died, everything that the subsequent words shall point out disclosed itself to the open light.

Something like this is written in Exodus as well: as long as Pharaoh was alive, the people of Israel did not groan to the Lord because of their work in mud, brick, and straw [cf. [Exod 5:7](#)].<sup>88</sup> While he ruled, no one sought the God of the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.<sup>99</sup> But when he died, the sons of Israel groaned, as the Scripture says: “And their cry went up to the Lord” [Exod 2:23]. For assuredly, while he was alive according to history, they ought to have rejoiced more then and to have groaned previously.

Also while Ezekiel was prophesying, Pelatiah (Phaltias) the son of Banaeas died, and after the death of the wicked ruler, he says, “I fell upon my face and cried with a loud voice and said, ‘Woe is me, woe is me, O Lord Adonai, you are utterly destroying the remnant of Israel’ ” [Ezek 11:13]. If, then, you understand the hostile powers in Uzziah, Pharaoh, Pelatiah and others of this sort, you will see how, while they are alive, none of us sees and groans and falls into repentance. The Apostle says, “Let not sin reign in your mortal body” [Rom 6:12]. While “sin reigns” we build cities for the Egyptians [cf. [Exod 1:11](#)], we live in ashes and filth; instead of grain we pursue chaff, instead of the solid rock, we pursue the works of mud.

3. It follows, “I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne” [Isa 6:1]. Daniel also “saw

4 Son of Procas, king in Alba who expelled his brother Numitor and ordered his grandsons Romulus and Remus to be thrown into the Tiber. Cf. [Ovid, Fasti 4.53](#); [Met 14.772](#); [Livy 1.3](#).

5 I have not been able to identify Agamestor.

6 He means his translation of Eusebius’ *Chronicle* (380–1).

7 Cf. Origen, *Hom 1.1 on Isaiah*.

8 Cf. Origen, *Hom 5.3 on Isaiah*.

9 Cf. *ibid.*.

the Lord sitting,” but not “on a high and exalted throne” [cf. [Dan 7:9](#)].<sup>110</sup> And elsewhere another divine voice promises and says, “I shall come and I shall sit and I shall judge the people in the valley of Jehoshaphat (*Josaphat*)” [[Joel 3:2, 12](#)], which means, “the Lord’s judgment.”<sup>111</sup>

He who is a sinner and is like me “sees the Lord sitting” in the “valley of Jehoshaphat” [cf. [Joel 3:2](#)], not on a hill, not on a mountain, but in a “valley” and in the “valley of judgment”; but the one who is just and is like Isaiah sees him “sitting upon a high and exalted throne” [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)]. But let me add something else: when I carefully examine with my mind that he reigns with the thrones, dominions, angels, and the other powers [cf. [Col 1:16](#)], I see his “high throne”;<sup>112</sup> but when I consider how he governs the human race and is said to descend often to the earth for the sake of our salvation, I see his throne low (*humilem*) and near the earth.

4. It follows, “I saw the Lord sitting on a high and exalted throne, and the house was full of his glory. And seraphim stood round about him” [[Isa 6:1–2](#)]. Certain ones who have interpreted this passage before me, both Greeks and Latins, explained the “Lord sitting upon a throne” as referring to God the Father, and the two “seraphim” that are proclaimed to be standing on either side, as our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.<sup>113</sup> I do not assent to their authority, even though they are very learned, since indeed it is better to publish truth in a plain fashion than false things eloquently, especially since the Evangelist John writes that in this vision it is not God the Father who was seen, but Christ. For when he was speaking about the unbelief of the Jews, immediately he explained the reasons for their unbelief: “And for this reason they could not believe in him, since Isaiah said, ‘With hearing you will hear and you will not understand, and seeing you shall perceive and you will not see’ [[Isa 6:9](#)] But he said this when he saw the glory of the only begotten and testified about him” [[John 12:39–41](#)].<sup>114</sup>

In the present Book of Isaiah, he is commanded by him who sits on the throne to say, “With hearing you shall hear and you will not understand” [[Isa 6:9](#)]. But the one who commands this, according to the Evangelist’s understanding, is Christ; this is why one infers that the seraphim cannot now refer to Christ, since Christ is the one who is sitting [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)]. And although in the Acts of the Apostles, Paul says in refutation of the Jews who were arguing among themselves,

<sup>110</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 1.1 on Isaiah*.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 1.2 on Isaiah*.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> The Greeks would have been Origen and Irenaeus (though Jerome appears to be unaware that Irenaeus also provided this interpretation). Origen’s interpretation was approved by St. Pamphilus in the *Apology for Origen* 82, where he quotes [Peri Archon 4.3](#) in defense of Origen’s orthodoxy. The Latins would have included Victorinus of Pettau (cf. [Jerome, Ep. 61.2](#), where he says that Victorinus followed Origen). Cf. Fürst, “erome Keeping Silent,” 145; P. Nautin, “e ‘e seraphim’ de Jérôme et son appendice ‘d Damasum’” in *Roma renascense. Beiträge zur Spätantike und Rezeptionsgeschichte. Festschrift für I. Opelt*, ed. M. Wissemann (Frankfurt a.M. et al., 1988), 257–3.

<sup>114</sup> The quotation does not agree at all with the current text of John. Jerome removed “e has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart” from the citation from Isaiah and reworded the rest, inserting a text from [Isa 6:9](#) rather than [6:10](#) as it reads in John. In v. [41](#), Jerome added “f the only begotten” to John’s “lory.”

“Well did *the Holy Spirit* speak through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers saying, ‘Go to this people and say, “With hearing you shall hear and you will not understand, and seeing you shall see and you will not perceive.” For the heart of this people has become fat, and they have heard with their ears with heaviness, and they have closed their eyes, lest at some time they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand in their heart and convert themselves and I would heal them’ ” [[Acts 28:25–27](#)];<sup>115</sup> nevertheless to me the difference in the persona [of the speaker] does not make the case, since I know that both Christ and the Holy Spirit are of one substance;<sup>116</sup> the words of the Spirit are no different than those of the Son; the Son has not commanded differently from the Spirit.

5. It follows, “And the house was full of his glory” [[Isa 6:1](#)]. The house of God that is on high is seen full of glory; but I do not know whether the house that is down below is filled with glory, unless perhaps, in accordance with the thought of the Psalmist who says, “The earth is the Lord’s and its fullness” [[Ps 24:1](#)], we too may say that those ones on earth are filled with glory, who are able to say, “We have all received from his fullness” [[John 1:16](#)].<sup>117</sup>

Wise women build that house [cf. [Prov 14:1](#)], and the foolish one destroys it with his hands. Isaiah also says of it, “And in the last days, the mountain of the Lord shall be manifest, and the *house* of God shall be on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills [[Isa 2:2](#)]. This is the *house* of which Paul with his sacred voice testifies as having been spoken about above, as well in another passage,

And Moses indeed was faithful in all his *house* as a servant, for a testimony of those things that had to be said, but Christ as the Son over his own *house*, whose house we are, but only if we hold fast to the beginning of his substance unto the end. [[Heb 3:5–6](#)]

He speaks of it also to Timothy: “But I write these things that you may know how you ought to behave in the *house* of God, which is the church” [[1 Tim 3:14–15](#)].

6. It follows, “And seraphim stood round about him; each one had six wings. And with two they covered the face, and with two they covered the feet, and with two they flew. And they cried one to the other, and they said, ‘Holy, holy, holy [is] the Lord God Sabaoth, the whole earth is full of his glory’ ” [[Isa 6:2–3](#)].

We want to know what the seraphim are that are standing round about God. What are the six wings of the one, that when added together, come to twelve? How do they cover the face

<sup>115</sup> A. Fürst, “Jerome Keeping Silent,” 148 says, “the combination of the passages quoted from the book of Isaiah, the Gospel of John and the Acts of the Apostles was an invention of fourth-century theologians. Against the subordinationism of the ‘rians’ these theologians were searching for Biblical testimonies in which the same features are attributed to all the persons of the trinity alike. The texts mentioned seemed to fulfill this requirement: Their subject matter is the same, though in Isaiah the motif is ascribed to the Father, in the Gospel of John to the Son, and in the Acts of the Apostles to the Holy Spirit. In his exegesis of the vision of Isaiah, Jerome took over this pattern and used it against the Trinitarian explanation of the seraphim in Origen’s homilies.”

<sup>116</sup> The Greek for this would be ὁμοούσιος.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 1.1; 7.3 on Isaiah*.



with two, and with two the feet, and with two they fly? For higher up they are said to stand round about God. Or, how do they “stand round about,” since there are two of them? What does this mean, that “one cries to the other,” and they groan the name of the Holy three times? How is it that higher up, the *house* is “full of glory” [cf. [Isa 6:1](#)] and now it is the *earth* that is said to be “full of glory” [cf. [Isa 6:3](#)]? Since these things stir up no miniscule amount of dust, and immediately at first glance raise difficulties in interpretation, let us together pray to the Lord that a coal may be sent from the altar to me as well, and when all the filth of my sins has been washed away, I may first of all be able to view the mysteries of God, and then to explain what I see.

As we discovered in the interpretation of Hebrew names,<sup>118</sup> *seraphim* means either “burning” or “beginning of their speech (*oris*).” We ask, what is this “burning”? The Savior says, “I have come to set fire to the earth, and how I wish it were burning!” [[Luke 12:49](#)]. The two disciples to whom the Lord had opened the Scriptures on the journey, beginning with Moses and all the prophets [cf. [Luke 24:27, 31](#)], after their eyes were opened, they recognized him and said to one another, “Was not our heart *burning* within us on the road when he opened the Scriptures to us?” [[Luke 24:32](#)]. And in Deuteronomy, God himself is recorded to be a consuming fire [[Deut 4:24](#)]. Moreover, in Ezekiel as well, from the loins to the feet, he appears fiery [cf. [Ezek 8:2](#)]. And “the oracles of God are pure oracles, silver examined by the fire of the earth, purged seven times” [[Ps 11:6](#)]; and there are many other things that could be drawn from the entirety of Scripture, which would take too long for me to repeat, if I wished to do so. Therefore we ask, where is this saving “burning”? No one doubts that it is found in the sacred books, from the reading of which all human vices are purged. But concerning that which follows “the beginning of their speech,” how it could be referred to the Scriptures, I am apprehensive that, if we begin to speak, we may seem not so much to be interpreting the Scriptures as doing violence to them. The whole history of ancient times handed down the “beginning of speech” and of a common utterance and all that we speak, the Hebrew language in which the Old Testament was written. But after a diversity of languages was assigned at the construction of the tower, through the offense of God, then a variety of speech spread to all nations [cf. [Gen 11:1–9](#)]. Therefore both the “burning” and “beginning of speech” are realized in the two testaments, which, not surprisingly, stand around God since the Lord himself is known by means of them.

“Each one had six wings”<sup>119</sup> [[Isa 6:2](#)]. Our Victorinus<sup>220</sup> interpreted this of the twelve apostles. We can also take it of the twelve stones of the altar, “which iron has not touched” [[Deut 27:5](#)], and the twelve gems from which the distinguished diadem of the priest was made, which both Ezekiel records [cf. [Ezek 28:13](#)] and of which the Apocalypse is not silent [cf. [Rev 21:19–20](#)]. Which of these is true, God sees; what is likely, let us explain in what follows.

7. “And with two they covered the face, and with two they covered the feet, and with two they flew” [[Isa 6:2](#)]. “They covered the face,” not their own but God’s.<sup>221</sup> For who can know his

<sup>118</sup> Cf. PL 23:830.

<sup>119</sup> Lit., “ix wings to one, and six wings to the other.”

<sup>220</sup> On Victorinus of Pettau see bk. 1, n. 1.

<sup>221</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 1.2 on Isaiah*.

beginning, what there was in the eternity of things before he created this world, when he made the thrones, dominions, powers, angels, and all the heavenly service? “And with two they covered the feet,” not their own but God’s.<sup>222</sup> For who can know his last things? What will there be after the consummation of the world, what will there be after he has judged the human race, what life follows, whether there will be another earth again, and after the transformation will there be other elements again, or must another world and sun be made? “Declare the former things to me, and what shall be at the end, and I will say that you are gods” [[Isa 41:22–23](#)]. When Isaiah says this, he is indicating that no one can describe what existed before the world and what shall be after the world. “And with two they flew” [[Isa 6:2](#)]. We know only the things in the middle, which are disclosed to us from the reading of the Scriptures: when the world was made, when man was formed, when the flood came, when the law was given, so that from one man all the spaces of the lands were filled, and in the last time the Son of God assumed flesh for our salvation. But the two seraphim have covered the other things that we have mentioned, which are in his face and feet.

“And they cried one to the other” [[Isa 6:3](#)]. He has nicely recorded, “one to the other.” For whatever we read in the Old Testament, we have found this same thing also in the gospel, and what has been read and reread in the gospel is derived from the authority of the Old Testament. There is no dissonance [between them], there is no difference.

“And they said, ‘Holy, holy, holy [is] the Lord God Sabaoth’ ” [[Isa 6:3](#)]. The Trinity is proclaimed in both Testaments. But that our Savior as well may be said to be “Sabaoth,” take the example in the twenty-third Psalm: the powers (*virtutes*) that were ministering to the Lord were proclaiming to the other heavenly powers (*fortitudines*) to open the gate for the returning Lord: “Lift up your gates, you princes” [[Ps 24:9](#)], or as Aquila translates, “Lift up your heads, O gates, and the king of glory shall enter” [[Ps 24:9](#)]. They in their turn, because they see him clothed in flesh, utterly amazed by the new mystery, ask, “Who is this king of glory?” [[Ps 24:10](#)], and they receive the response, “The Lord of powers (*virtutum*) himself is the king of glory” [[Ps 24:10](#)]. In Hebrew this is written as “Lord Sabaoth.” And one should know that whenever the Septuagint translators expressed “Lord of powers” and “Lord almighty,” in Hebrew it is recorded as “Lord Sabaoth.” Aquila translates this “Lord of armies.” “Lord,” too, is itself here recorded with the four letters that are uniquely God’s: *iod, he, iod, he*, that is, with two *ia* s, which when repeated make that ineffable and glorious name of God.<sup>223</sup>

“The whole earth is full of his glory” [[Isa 6:3](#)]. This is still being said by the seraphim concerning the coming of the Lord, how the proclamation about him is extended to all the earth and the sound of the apostles penetrates to the ends of the world [cf. [Ps 19:4](#)].

8. Then follows, “And the lintel was lifted up at the voice they uttered” [[Isa 6:4](#)]. We read in the Old Testament that the Lord always spoke to Moses and Aaron at the gate of the tabernacle

<sup>222</sup> Cf. *ibid*.

<sup>223</sup> In [Exod 3:14](#), God reveals his name to Moses by the four letters of the tetragrammaton, YHWH. These four letters are translated “ORD” (with all caps) in the RSV, as *Kurios* (“ord” in the LXX. Jews did not pronounce this name, which in Hebrew might have been expressed as “ahweh” or “ehovah.” Instead, when they read the name orally, they substituted the Hebrew word *Adonai* (Lord).

[cf. [Lev 1:1](#)], as if he did not yet bring them into the Holy of Holies before the gospel, as the church later was brought in, saying, “The king brought me into his chambers” [[Song 1:4](#)]. When therefore our Lord descended to earth, that “lintel,” that is, some sort of obstacle, as it were, to those desiring to enter, was removed and this whole world was “filled with smoke” [[Isa 6:4](#)], that is, with the “glory” of God [cf. [Isa 6:3](#)]. But where in Latin we read “lifted up,” in Greek this is recorded as “removed.” But because the ambiguous word can be translated in both ways, our people have translated it “lifted up” instead of “removed.”

“And the house was filled with smoke” [[Isa 6:4](#)]. God is a fire [cf. [Deut 4:24](#)], as we said above. When he came down upon Mount Sinai to Moses, lights were seen at his advent dashing around, and the whole mountain was full of smoke [cf. [Exod 19:9, 18](#)]. This is why it is said in the Psalms, “You who touch the mountains and they shall smoke” [[Ps 104:32](#)]. From the fire, then, since we are incapable of taking in his whole substance, a certain lighter, and so to speak, thinner, nature of smoke is dispersed into the whole world. By receiving it we would say, “We know in part and we prophesy in part” [[1 Cor 13:9](#)], and “now we see through a glass darkly” [[1 Cor 13:12](#)].

9. “And seraphim stood round about him; each one had six wings” [[Isa 6:2](#)]. One of the Greeks, a man exceptionally learned in the Scriptures,<sup>224</sup> explained that the seraphim are certain powers in heaven that attend at the tribunal of God and praise him, and are sent for various ministries, and especially to those who require purification and punishments, in some measure, on account of past sins. He says, “But that the lintel was removed and the house was filled with smoke, is a sign of the destruction of the Jewish temple and of the burning of all of Jerusalem.” But some who agree with the former things dissent about the last part. For they declare that the lintel was removed at that time when the curtain of the temple was torn [cf. [Matt 27:51](#)] and the whole house of Israel was in confusion because of the clouds of error, when Josephus relates that the priests heard the voice of heavenly powers from the sanctuary of the temple, “Let us move on from this residence.”<sup>225</sup>

10. But there is a certain person from whom I rejoice that I have learned a great deal and who is so perfect in his knowledge of the Hebrew language that he is reckoned to be a Chaldean by their scholars. He entered by a different road. For he says that none of the prophets but Isaiah saw the seraphim standing around God, and that these very seraphim are not even read about elsewhere. In the next place, he says that the sign of the end and of the captivity of Jerusalem that occurred under Nebuchadnezzar has been spoken ahead of time.

For from Uzziah (*Ozia*), under whom the prophesying originated [cf. [Isa 1:1](#)], until Zedekiah, who was the last to reign and who was led blind to Babylon [cf. [2 Kgs 25:1–7](#)], there were eleven kings. The twelfth was Gedaliah (*Godoliam*), whom the king of Babylon appointed over the land [cf. [2 Kgs 25:22](#)]. Ishmael son of Nathaniah killed him in the midst of a feast [cf. [2 Kgs 25:25](#)], a parricide of the remnant of his native country. [My Hebrew teacher said] that these are the twelve wings [cf. [Isa 6:2](#)] of which four cover their own face, as is found in some manuscripts, with four they fly, and with four they cover their own feet. For from these twelve kings, only four were just kings: Uzziah, Joatham, Hezekiah, and Josiah, who nobly dare to glorify God in

<sup>224</sup> Labourt suggests possibly St. Gregory Nazianzus, if not Origen.

<sup>225</sup> Cf. [Josephus, De Bello Iud. 5.3](#).

the midst of every captivity: “Holy, holy, holy Lord Sabaoth” [[Isa 6:3](#)]. But the rest [of the wings] cover the face because of sins, and the others cover the footprints, because they were led to captivity. But he explained the lintel being removed and the house being filled with smoke, as we have said above, as referring to the overthrow of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple.

11. And since I began at one point to refer to his opinion, in order that I *might* make contact with those things that have not been touched yet, he claimed that the tongs from which the coal from the altar was seized [cf. [Isa 6:6](#)], and the purging of his lips [cf. [Isa 6:7](#)] referred to the passion of Isaiah himself, whereby he was killed by King Manasseh.<sup>226</sup>

And then he truly said to the Lord with purged lips, “Behold, here I am, send me” [[Isa 6:8](#)], and he said, “O I am wretched, for I am pricked!” [[Isa 6:5](#)]. As long as Uzziah is alive, you do not understand, Isaiah, that you are “wretched,” you are not “pricked,” you are not moved; but when he died, then you notice that you have unclean lips [cf. [Isa 6:5](#)], then you know that you are unworthy of the vision of God. But would that I too might be pricked, and after being pricked, I might become worthy of the preaching of God because, since I am a man and I have unclean lips, I live in the midst of a people who have unclean lips! [cf. [Isa 6:5](#)].<sup>227</sup> Isaiah, as a just man, had sinned only in his speech;<sup>228</sup> therefore, only his lips were unclean; but I, who both look with my eyes in order to lust [cf. [Matt 5:28](#)] and stumble with my hand [cf. [Matt 5:30](#)] and transgress with my foot and with every part of my members, have everything unclean. And since I have once been baptized with the Spirit, I have defiled my tunic; I need the purging of a second baptism, that is, the baptism of fire [cf. [Matt 3:11](#)].

12. In the Scriptures, the words are not simply literal, as some think. A great deal lies concealed in them. The letter bears one meaning, the mystical words signify something else. Behold, in the Gospel, the Lord is girded with a towel [cf. [John 13:4](#)]; he prepares a basin to wash the feet of the disciples; he carries out the duty of a slave [cf. [John 13:5](#)].<sup>229</sup> So be it, let him teach humility, that we may serve one another: I do not say no, I do not refuse.

What does he say to Peter who does refuse? “If I do not wash your feet, you shall have no part with me” [[John 13:8](#)]; and he responded, “Lord, not only the feet, but also the hands and the head” [[John 13:9](#)].<sup>330</sup> When the Lord was about to ascend to heaven, since the apostles still had feet that were defiled by the filth of sins, being men who were dwelling on earth, he wants to deliver them completely from their transgressions, so that the prophetic word could be appropriate: “How beautiful are the feet of those preaching the good tidings of peace!” [[Isa 52:7](#)], and so that they would be able to imitate the words of the church that say, “I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?” [[Song 5:3](#)].<sup>331</sup> Thus, even if later on some dust cleaves to them, after the resurrection, they should shake it off against that impious city as a testimony of their labor [cf. [Matt 10:14](#)]. For they have so exerted themselves for the sake of the salvation of all, having been made as the Jews to the Jews, as the Gentiles to the Gentiles [cf. [1 Cor 9:20](#)],

<sup>226</sup> Cf. [1.14](#).

<sup>227</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 4.3 on Isaiah*.

<sup>228</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 5.2 on Isaiah*.

<sup>229</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>330</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>331</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 6.3 on Isaiah*.

that they have defiled even their footprints in some measure.

Therefore, let us return to our theme. Just as the apostles required the cleansing of their feet, so, since Isaiah had sinned only in speech, he had unclean lips. Moreover, if my opinion counts for anything, he also had unclean lips because he did not rebuke Uzziah for rushing into the temple [cf. [2 Chr 26:16](#)], nor did he mark him out as an impious man with frank language, the way Elijah had done [cf. [1 Kgs 21:19](#)].

“And I dwell in the midst of a people having unclean lips” [cf. [Isa 6:5](#)]. Since Isaiah was pricked and testifies that he is wretched [cf. [Isa 6:5](#)], he becomes worthy of purification; but the people not only do not repent, but do not even know they have unclean lips; thus they do not deserve the remedy of purification.<sup>332</sup> One must take precautions, therefore, on the occasion of this example, not only that we be just, but that we not linger with sinners, since the prophet regards even this as a part of sin and misery.

13. Then follows, “And I saw the King, the Lord Sabaoth” [[Isa 6:5](#)]. The Jews say that Isaiah was killed by their own elders because, though Moses saw God from behind [cf. [Exod 33:23](#)], this man writes that he “saw the Lord Sabaoth” with his fleshly eyes, though God says of this, “No one shall see my face and live” [[Exod 33:20](#)].<sup>333</sup> We shall ask them this question: How is it that God says in the law that he is shown to other prophets in a vision and dream, but to Moses he speaks face to face [cf. [Deut 5:4](#); [34:10](#)]? And how does this statement stand, “No one shall see my face and live” [[Exod 33:20](#)], since he admits that he spoke to Moses face to face? Surely they shall respond that God was seen in accordance with the human capacity, not as he is, but as he willed himself to be seen. And we shall say to them that he was seen by Isaiah, with his essence being kept back in reserve, in the same fashion as Moses either saw or did not see God. He saw; therefore Isaiah also was killed by you impiously for saying that he saw him, for God *can* be seen. He did not see; then kill Moses too, along with Isaiah, since he is guilty of the same falsehood, when he says that he saw him, who cannot be seen. Whichever interpretation they shall hold to respecting Moses, as an explanation of this passage, we likewise shall adapt it to Isaiah’s vision.

14. Then follows, “And there was sent to me one of the seraphim, and it had in its hand a coal, which it had taken off the altar with the tongs. And it touched my mouth, and said, ‘Behold, this has touched your lips, and has taken away your iniquities and has purged your sins’ ” [[Isa 6:6–7](#)]. According to all the versions that we have set forth above, you will want to understand the seraphim here either of the two testaments, or of certain preparing powers in the heavens, or as a sign of the captivity, a certain prefiguring shadow of the truth to come. Since we follow the first view, we claim that the evangelical testament was sent to the prophet. Since it had commandments of both within it, that is, both its own and those of the Old Testament, it embodied a word of God that was on fire [cf. [Prov 30:5](#)] with a double edge of precepts [cf. [Heb 4:12](#)]. When it touched his lips, it expelled by the truth of its purging whatever had pertained to ignorance, if indeed we translate this as “unclean lips” [cf. [Isa 6:5](#)].

Jacob sees this pair of tongs in the ladder [cf. [Gen 28:12–13](#)]; this is the sword that cuts twice [cf. [Rev 1:16](#)]; these are the two pennies that the widow woman puts in with the gifts of

<sup>332</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 1.4 on Isaiah*; Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah* 1.14 n.

<sup>333</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 1.5 on Isaiah*.

God [cf. [Mark 12:41–44](#)]; this is the stater that comprises two denarii that was found in the mouth of the fish and is paid on behalf of the Lord and Peter [cf. [Matt 17:24–27](#)]; by means of this twofold power (*virtute*) that is preserved in a single large pearl [cf. [Matt 13:46](#)], the coal was taken and sent to the prophet. It was also spoken about in the [119th Psalm](#). When the prophet asked God and said, “Lord, deliver my soul from unjust lips and from a deceitful tongue” [[Ps 120:2](#)], after he is questioned by the Holy Spirit, “What should be given to you or what should be added to you for [your] deceitful tongue?” [[Ps 120:3](#)], it was said, “Sharpened arrows of the mighty with *coals* of the desolations” [[Ps 120:4](#)]. We know that these were granted to the prophet. For truly the desolating coal that cleanses the tongue from sin is the divine word, of which it is also said in Isaiah, “You have coals of fire, you shall sit upon them; they shall be to you for a help” [[Isa 47:14–15](#)].

15. “And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?’ And I said, ‘Behold, here I am, send me.’ And he said, ‘Go, and say to this people’: “You shall hear with hearing, but you shall not understand” ’ ” [[Isa 6:8–9](#)]. The words are those of the Lord questioning, not commanding, whom he should send and who will go to the people.<sup>334</sup> The prophet responded readily to him, “Behold, here I am, send me.” And after the promise, he is commanded to say, “Go, and say to this people, ‘You shall hear with hearing, but you shall not understand; and you shall see and discern, but you shall not see,’ ” and the other things that the words of this prophecy have composed.

In respect to this passage, I heard no insignificant discussion of my Hebrew [teacher].<sup>335</sup> I will record a few things from it so that you may pay attention to the thoughts of this man. He used to say, “Let us ask who acted more nobly between Moses and Isaiah? Was it Moses, who though he was sent by God to the people, says, ‘I pray, Lord, I am not worthy’ [cf. [Exod 4:10–11](#), [13](#)], and again, ‘Provide another whom you may send’ [cf. [Exod 4:13](#)]? Or was it Isaiah, who, though he was not chosen, offered himself of his own accord, saying, ‘Behold here I am, send me’ [[Isa 6:8](#)]”?<sup>336</sup>

[The Hebrew] said,

I am not unaware that it is dangerous to dispute about the merits of holy men and to wish to claim something less or more about one whom the Lord has crowned. But because the Lord himself said, “Seek, and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you” [[Matt 7:7](#)], we too ought to inquire about what is able to make the case. This is not in order to detract from anyone, but in order to know the meaning of Scripture and to align ourselves with his examples.

He said,

The one who is Moses’ defender proclaims his humility and meekness [cf. [Num 12:3](#)], that by judging himself unworthy of God’s service, he became greater. Isaiah, on the

<sup>334</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 6.1 on Isaiah*.

<sup>335</sup> Here Jerome appears to adopting Origen’ Hebrew teacher as his own! Cf. Origen, *Hom 9.1 on Isaiah*.

<sup>336</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 6.1 on Isaiah*.



other hand, since he offered himself of his own accord, when he started to prophesy, began with curses: “You shall hear with hearing and you will not understand, and seeing you will perceive and you will not see” [[Isa 6:9–10](#)].<sup>337</sup> For this reason, having suffered many things, and having been regarded by all the people as insane, when the divine voice once again spoke to him, “Cry out” [[Isa 40:6](#)], knowing what he had endured by offering himself by his previous readiness, he does not say, “Behold, here I am, send me” [cf. [Isa 6:8](#)]. Instead, he asked what it was that he ought to cry out. He says, “And I said, what shall I cry out?” [[Isa 40:6](#)].<sup>338</sup>

The following statement of Jeremiah is similar to this: “Take the cup of this unmixed wine from my hand, and you shall cause all the nations to drink to whom I shall send you. And they shall drink and vomit and be mad and fall before the sword that I shall send among them” [[Jer 25:15–16](#)]. When the prophet heard this, he did not refuse; he did not say in accordance with the example of Moses, “I pray, Lord, I am not worthy” and “Provide another whom you may send” [[Exod 4:10, 13](#)]. Instead, being a lover of his own people, and thinking that the enemy nations would be killed by drinking from the cup and that they would fall in ruin, he gladly took the cup of unmixed wine, not understanding that Jerusalem was included among all the nations. After all, among the other nations, he says, “So I took the cup from the Lord’s hand, and made all the nations to whom the Lord sent me drink it, both Jerusalem and the cities of Judah and its kings and its princes, to make them a desolation and a waste and a hissing” [[Jer 25:17–18](#)]. I grant that in many manuscripts the arrangement is mixed up; nevertheless, hear what he likewise says in another passage in place of this prophecy: “You have deceived me, Lord, and I have been deceived; you have held me and made me drink; I have become a laughingstock, all day I have acted in mockery” [[Jer 20:7](#)].

“On the other hand,” he used to say,

the one who is Isaiah’s defender cites the following. The prophet was trusting not so much in his own merit as in the mercy of God, after he heard the seraphim: “Behold, this has touched your lips and has removed your iniquities and has purged your sins” [[Isa 6:7](#)]. He was unwilling to be motionless and idle, and of his own accord he offered himself, out of zeal and faith to God’s service, as one who was free from sins. Moses, on the other hand, because he had been educated in secular learning and had killed an Egyptian [cf. [Acts 7:22–23](#)], his conscience was partially defiled.<sup>339</sup> This is also why the voice came to him from the bush, “Do not approach here. Remove your sandals from your feet; for the place where you are standing is holy ground” [[Exod 3:5](#)]. And he knew that a contest was coming against the magicians, against Pharaoh, a wicked king, and he excused himself, saying, “I pray, Lord, I am not worthy” [[Exod 4:10; 6:12, 30](#)]. In Hebrew, this reads as, “I do not have circumcised lips” [cf. [Exod 6:12, 30](#)], for the Septuagint translators expressed the meaning, rather than word for word. From this, it can be clearly understood that Isaiah too rightly offered himself for God’s service after his lips

<sup>337</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 9.1 on Isaiah*.

<sup>339</sup> Cf. Origen, *Hom 6.2 on Isaiah*.

were circumcised, and Moses refused such a great ministry while his lips were still uncircumcised.

16. “You shall hear with hearing, but you shall not understand; and you shall see and discern, but you shall not see” [Isa 6:9]. According to what the Savior says in the Gospel, this whole passage relates to that time when he himself deigned to come down to earth and carried out signs for the Jews who did not “understand” [cf. [Matt 13:14–15](#)].

But since a complicated explanation follows all the way down to the end of the chapter, and by leaving it out, we have already filled up the pages, let it suffice to have dictated our discussion up to this point.<sup>440</sup> For an oration that is not polished by one’s own hand and pen, since it is unrefined in and of itself, it becomes much more laborious, if it doubles the tedium by its prolixity. Moreover, my eyes are extremely sore, and I am applying myself only with the use of my ears and tongue.

#### EPISTLE 18B TO DAMASUS

1. (17.) Septuagint: “And there was sent to me one (*unum*) of the seraphim”; [Isa 6:6] Aquila and Theodotion have, “And one (*unum*) of the Seraphim flew to me”; Symmachus has, “And one (*unus*) of the seraphim flew to me.”<sup>441</sup> Daily a seraphim is sent to us, daily the mouths are purged [cf. [Isa 6:7](#)] of those who groan and say, “O I am wretched, for I am pricked” [Isa 6:5], and when they have been delivered from sins, they prepare themselves for God’s service. But the other translators said that it “flew” in place of “was sent.” Understand this of the swift advent of the divine word upon us who are judged worthy of fellowship with him.

There is also a difference in the gender. The Septuagint, Aquila, and Theodotion translated *seraphim* in the neuter gender, Symmachus in the masculine. One must not think that there is gender among the powers of God, since even the Holy Spirit himself is set forth as *ruach* in the feminine gender, in accordance with the unique features of the Hebrew language. In Greek this is expressed in the neuter as τὸ πνεῦμα, in Latin by the masculine word *spiritus*. From this one must understand that when there is a discussion about the higher things, and something masculine or feminine is recorded, it is not so much gender that is being indicated as the unique properties of the language. For indeed God himself, invisible and incorruptible, is set forth in nearly all languages in the masculine gender, even though gender does not apply to him. The error of those too needs to be exposed (I grant that it is a pious error), who dare to say in their prayers and oblations, “You who sit upon the cherubim and seraphim.” For it is written that God sits upon the cherubim, as for instance in this passage: “You who sit upon the cherubim, show yourself” [Ps 80:1]; but no Scripture records that God sits upon the seraphim. Moreover, we have not even found the seraphim themselves standing around God in any Scripture with the exception of the present passage.

<sup>440</sup> Labourt concludes from this statement that [Ep. 18A](#) and [Ep. 18B](#) are two distinct letters. A complete discussion of this question is found in Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme: Sa Vie et son Oeuvre*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1922), 1:71 and 2:21.

<sup>441</sup> The difference is that *unum* is neuter, *unus* is masculine.

2. (18.) Septuagint: “And he had in his hand a coal, which he had taken off the altar with the tongs. And he touched my mouth” [[Isa 6:6–7](#)]. Aquila has, “And in his hand [there was] a pebble in the tongs, which he had taken off the altar, and he touched my mouth”; Theodotion: “And in his hand [there was] a pebble in the tongs, which he had taken off the altar, and he touched my mouth”; Symmachus: “And in his hand [there was] a pebble in tongs<sup>442</sup> that he had taken up from the altar, and he brought it to my mouth.” As far as relates to history, God is seen sitting in the temple of Jerusalem, and before him, according to the Septuagint, a “coal” is seen to be brought from the altar to Isaiah, from the true altar of incense, or of burnt offerings. But as far as relates to the mystical understanding, that fire is sent to him that Jeremiah was unable to bear, which, when it penetrates into the hidden parts of our soul, so dissolves and melts us from the state of being the old man into becoming the new man, so that we can break forth in that voice, “But I no longer live, but the grace of God that is in me” [cf. [Gal 2:20](#); [1 Cor 15:10](#)]. We ought to interpret the plural form of “tongs” as well, according to the other translators. Although pairs of tongs were always among the priestly utensils, they refer to the diverse forms of graces and to the multiple ways God once spoke to our fathers in the prophets [cf. [Heb 1:1](#)].

Since in Hebrew “pebble” is read for “coal,” and since the rest are also in agreement on this point, the divine word seems to me to be signified by the term “pebble.” For just as a pebble is a kind of very hard stone, round and very light, with all purity, so the word of God is called a pebble, which can succumb neither to the opposition of heretics nor of all adversaries. From this “pebble,” Zipporah circumcises her son [cf. [Exod 4:25](#)], and Jesus<sup>443</sup> purges the people from vices [cf. [Josh 5:2–3](#)]. Moreover, in the Apocalypse the Lord promises to those who conquer that they receive a “pebble” and a new name is written upon it [cf. [Rev 2:17](#)]. Now it also seems to me that the Septuagint, in what they translated as ἄνθρακα, meant the same thing as the others; for ἄνθραξ, which we translate as “carbuncle,” is a kind of bright and luminous stone that we have likewise found among the twelve stones [cf. [Exod 28:17](#); [39:10](#)]. Therefore, we shall interpret either “pebble” or “carbuncle stone”: in the “pebble,” the truth and rigidity of the divine word is shown; in the “carbuncle” is shown luminous and clear doctrine. For the “Lord’s oracles are pure oracles, silver tested on earth by fire, purged sevenfold” [[Ps 12:6](#)] and elsewhere “the command of the Lord is clear, illumining the eyes” [[Ps 19:8](#)].

But what he says, “In his hand he had a coal” [[Isa 6:6](#)], by “hand” we should understand an operation, as for instance in this passage: “Death and life are in the *hand* of the tongue” [[Prov 18:21](#)]; and in the Psalm, “They shall fall by the *hand* of the sword” [[Ps 63:10](#)]. Or at any rate, a hand truly appeared, so that through the likeness of human form, while the hand is perceived of the one extending it, the prophet would not be afraid. This would accord with the fact that we have seen God himself and his angels changed into human forms, when fear is owed to those who see them.

3. (19.) Septuagint: “And he said, ‘Behold, this has touched your lips and shall remove your iniquities and shall purge your sins’ ” [[Isa 6:7](#)]. Aquila has, “Behold, this has touched your lips, and your iniquity shall depart and your sin shall be propitiated.” The other translators agree

<sup>442</sup> The word is now plural in Latin (*forcipibus*) whereas it was previously singular (*forcipe*). English knows only the plural, “ongs.”

<sup>443</sup> Heb = Joshua.

with the words of Aquila. First it is necessary that our lips be touched; then, when they have been touched, let iniquity be put to flight, and when iniquity has been escaped from, the Lord is propitiated. For there is a propitiation with him also, according to the Apostle: "He is the propitiation for our sins" [[1 John 2:2](#)]. But when our sins have been purged, we will hear the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send?" and we shall respond, "Behold, here I am, send me" [[Isa 6:8](#)].

4. (20.) Septuagint: "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?' " [[Isa 6:8](#)]. Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus translated this, "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go *for us*?' " In another passage, we have discussed the comparison between Isaiah and Moses, how one of them refused the ministry, the other offered himself of his own accord and suffered harsh things.<sup>444</sup> But lest we seem to have omitted any of those things that the Jews call *δευτερωσεις*,<sup>445</sup> and in which they place all knowledge, we shall now briefly touch upon this question. Why is it recorded in Hebrew, "And who shall go for us"? For just as it is said in Genesis, "Let us make man in our image and likeness" [[Gen 1:26](#)], so too do I think this has been said, "Who shall go *for us*?" But for which other "us" must one reckon with here except the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit? Whoever obeys their will "goes" for them. And indeed, because the persona of a single speaker is set forth, there is unity in the divine nature (*divinitatis*); but because it is said, "for us," a diversity of persons is being indicated.

In the Song of Songs, we read the voice of the bridegroom saying to his bride, "Rise up, come, my companion, my bride, my dove; for behold, the winter is past, the rain is gone" [[Song 2:10-11](#)]. For when the soul has become settled in the tranquility of its thoughts, when it has been founded upon the rock, and its faith is fixed with deep roots, all the waves of temptations pass through it, and they do not penetrate the one who is tempted. But one should note how the prophet has given a partial response to that which the Lord had said: "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" [[Isa 6:8](#)]. The prophet says, "Behold, here am I, send me" [[Isa 6:8](#)], but he was silent about the following matter. For he understood that no man is worthy who would go straight on for God; his whole journey comes from him who sent him. Taking notice of this humility, that Isaiah considered himself unworthy of the second part, the Lord commanded the things that follow, saying, "Go" [[Isa 6:8](#)].

5. (21.) Septuagint: "And I said, 'Behold, I am (*ego sum*), send me" [[Isa 6:8](#)]. Aquila and Theodotion have, "Behold, I am here (*adsum*), send me"; Symmachus has, "Behold, send me." God, who called things that are not as if they are [cf. [1 Cor 1:26-28](#)], and who said, "I am who I am" [[Exod 3:14](#)], and elsewhere, "He who is has sent me" [[Exod 3:14](#)], he immediately causes to exist whomsoever he calls. For nothing exists apart from him. This is why the prophet, when he was purged of his vices, dared to say, "Behold, I am (*ego sum*)," although "I am" is not recorded in the Latin manuscripts, on account of the variety of translators. Some think that one should notice to which prophets the word of the one sending or of the one sent is being said. In Greek this is the word *apostle*. They think that there is this difference, that those who are "sent" are

<sup>444</sup> Cf. [Ep. 18A, 15](#). This statement is evidence that originally [Epp. 18A](#) and [18B](#) were distinct letters.

<sup>445</sup> Cf. n. at [2.17](#).

both prophets and apostles equally; but those to whom the word of the one sending is recorded, they are only prophets.<sup>446</sup> I think that this is superfluous. And since we have once and for all come to the treatment of this word, one should know that “Silas,” the companion of Paul who writes some letters with him [cf. [1 Thess 1:1](#); [2 Thess 1:1](#)], is expressed in the Hebrew language as *apostle*. His name is read corruptly as “Silvanus” instead of “Silas,” since we do not read of a Silvanus in the Acts of the Apostles.

## APPENDIX 3

### [St. Jerome’s Epistle 120.10 to Hedibia](#)

#### TRANSLATOR’S INTRODUCTION

In the [Commentary on Isaiah 17.32](#) (on [Isa 63:17–19](#)), Jerome refers to an earlier treatment he has written of the problems raised by St. Paul’s words in [Romans 9:14–29](#), since Paul’s discussion of God’s hardening human hearts is reminiscent of the language used in [Isaiah 63](#), and Paul actually cites [Isaiah 10:22–23](#) and [Isaiah 1:9](#) in his argument. Thus it seems worthwhile to append a translation of the relevant portion of [Jerome’s Epistle 120.10](#) to Hedibia. I regard it to be of great significance that Jerome appears to be relying on Origen’s *Commentary on Romans* as the source of his exegesis. This has been proven beyond doubt in the case of [Jerome’s <sup>EEp.</sup> 121](#),<sup>11</sup> and it therefore seems highly probable in the case of [EEp. 120](#) as well. I have tried to show in the footnotes some of the parallels with Origen’s exegesis.

The letter’s addressee was a woman in Gaul who had corresponded with Jerome, then in Bethlehem, in 405.<sup>22</sup> Hedibia was descended from a well-known family. Her grandfather Patera and father Delphidius were public figures. Jerome reports in his *Chronicle*, at the year 339, that Patera was a very famous orator and teacher of rhetoric in Rome. Delphidius was a writer in prose and verse and a celebrated advocate, mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus ([18.1](#)) as one who pled a case before the Emperor Julian. They each in turn became professors at Bordeaux, and are celebrated by Ausonius (310–395) in two short poems. Delphidius’s wife (Euchrocia) and daughter (Procula) became entangled in the Zoroastrian teaching of Priscillian, and suffered death in the persecution of his followers.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>446</sup> Cf. [Jerome, Commentary on Galatians 1.1](#).

[E](#)*Ep. Epistle*

1 Cf. C. P. Hammond Bammel, “[Philocalia IX, Jerome, Epistle 121, and Origen’s Exposition of Romans VII](#),” *JTS* 32 (1981): 50–1.

[E](#)*Ep. Epistle*

2 I have relied on Fremantle’s article “edibia,” in *DCB* [2:875](#).

3 Cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Hist. Sac.* 2.63–4; Prosper Aquitaine, *Chron*; Ausonius, *Carmen* 5.

Hedibia was a diligent student of Scripture. Evidently finding no one in her homeland who could help her, she sent, by the hand of her friend Apodemius, a list of questions to Jerome, begging him to answer them. He did so in a long letter, <sup>EEp.</sup> [120](#), dated in 406 or 407. Chapter [10](#) deals with the matters referred to by Jerome in his commentary on Isaiah. I have translated from Labourt's edition.

#### JEROME, <sup>EEp.</sup> 120.10 TO HEDIBIA

10. What does that mean that the Apostle Paul discusses when writing to the Romans, "What then do we say? Is there injustice with God? By no means!" [[Rom 9:14](#)], down to that passage where he says, "Unless the Lord Sabaoth had left us seed, we would have been like Sodom, and we would have become like Gomorrah" [[Rom 9:29](#)].

Now the entire Epistle to the Romans requires interpretation, and is wrapped up with such great obscurities that in order to understand these things, we need the assistance of the Holy Spirit, who dictated these very things through the Apostle; but this is especially the case for this passage, in which certain ones who want to preserve the justice of God say that Jacob was chosen in Rebecca's womb, and Esau was rejected on the basis of antecedent causes [cf. [Rom 9:10–13](#)], just as Jeremiah and John the Baptist are chosen in the womb [cf. [Jer 1:5](#); [Luke 1:15](#)]; and the Apostle himself is predestined in the gospel before he is born [cf. [Rom 1:1](#); [Gal 1:15](#)]. But nothing pleases us except what is ecclesiastical, and we are not afraid to say publicly in the church, Let us not say in accordance with Pythagoras, Plato, and their disciples, who under the Christian name introduce pagan dogma,<sup>44</sup> that souls have fallen from heaven into these or those bodies, as a punishment for truly ancient sins, a punishment that corresponds to the diversity of their merits. It is far better simply to admit our ignorance and, among the other things we do not know, to flee from the obscurity of this passage as well, than, while we want to prove God's justice, to defend the heresy of Basilides<sup>55</sup> and Manichaeus, and to follow Spanish dirges and Egyptian portents.<sup>66</sup>

Therefore let us speak as we are able, and by following the tracks of the apostolic will, not draw back from his views even for a moment and by a finger's breadth, as they say. Above he had wept, and out of his grief he had even invoked the Holy Spirit as a witness to his conscience [cf. [Rom 9:1–2](#)], because his own brothers and kinsmen according to the flesh, that is, the Israelites, had not received the Son of God [cf. [Rom 9:3](#)]. Theirs was "adoption, and glory and

*E*[Ep.](#) Epistle

*EEp.* Epistle

<sup>4</sup> Origen may be Jerome's referent here since he did conjecture about the preexistence of souls and about prior sins being the cause of embodiment, which he interpreted as a punishment. See H. Crouzel, "[Theological Construction and Research: Origen on Free-Will](#)," in *Scripture, Tradition and Reason: A Study in the Criteria of Christian Doctrine: Essays in Honor of Richard P. C. Hanson*, ed. R. Bauckham and B. Drewery (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), 239–5.

<sup>5</sup> This is not the Gnostic Basilides of the second century, but another one who was the teacher of Marcus the Egyptian in the fourth century. See notes at 17.34.

<sup>6</sup> See the explanatory notes at 17.34 on [Isa 64:4–a](#).



the covenants and the legislation and worship, and the promise” [[Rom 9:4](#)]; from them, too, Christ himself was born from the Virgin Mary according to the flesh [cf. [Rom 9:5](#); [1:3](#); [Gal 4:4](#)]. Moreover, he is so tormented by unceasing grief of heart that he himself would wish to be anathema from Christ, that is, to perish alone, in order that the whole Israelite race might not perish [cf. [Rom 9:3](#)]. And since he had said this, he at once foresees a question coming from the opposite direction. What then are you saying? [cf. [Rom 9:14](#)]. Have all who are from Israel perished? But how is it that you yourself and the other apostles, and a countless number of Jewish people, have received Christ, the Son of God?

He solves this question as follows: In Holy Scripture, Israel is identified in two ways, and is divided into two sons, one who is “according to the flesh” and another who is “according to the promise” and “the Spirit.” Abraham had two sons [cf. [Gal 4:22](#)], Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was born according to the flesh, and did not receive the inheritance of his father [cf. [Gal 4:23](#), [29–30](#)]. Isaac, who was born from Sarah as a result of a promise, is called God’s seed. For it is written, “ ‘In Isaac shall your seed be named’ [[Gen 21:12](#)]. That is to say, it is not the sons of the flesh who are God’s sons, but those who are sons of the promise are reckoned as seed” [[Rom 9:7–8](#)]. Moreover, we are convinced that this occurred not merely in respect to Ishmael and Isaac; but also in the two sons of Rebecca, Esau and Jacob. One of them was rejected, the other was chosen. And he says all this in order to signify that in the two older brothers, Ishmael and Esau, the Jewish people were rejected; but in the younger brothers, that is, in Isaac and Jacob, the people of the Gentiles were chosen, or those who would believe in Christ from the Jews.

And since in his desire to prove this, he had set forth a testimony of the twins who were born, Esau and Jacob, of whom it is written, “The elder shall serve the younger” [[Rom 9:10–13](#)], and we read in Malachi, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” [[Mal 1:2–3](#)], according to his custom he proposes and discusses a question that arises from the side; and when this has been solved, he returns to that point from which he had begun his investigation. If Esau and Jacob had not yet been born, had not done anything good or evil, either to become worthy of God, or to offend him, and their choice or rejection points not to the merits of each man, but to the will of the one who chooses or rejects, what then do we say? Is God unjust? [cf. [Rom 9:14](#)]. According to that example that he says to Moses, “I shall have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I shall have compassion upon whom I have compassion” [[Rom 9:15](#); [Exod 9:16](#)]. If we accept this, he says, that God does whatever he wants, and apart from merit and works either chooses someone or condemns him, “therefore it is not of the one who wills, nor of the one who runs, but of God who shows mercy” [[Rom 9:16](#)]. This is especially so since the same Scripture, that is, the same God, says to Pharaoh, “For this very thing I have raised you up, to show in you my power, and that my name may be declared in all the earth” [[Rom 9:17](#)]. If this is so, and for the sake of his own will he shows mercy to Israel, and he hardens Pharaoh, then one complains and pleads in vain that we have either not done good, or that we have done evil. For it would lie in *his* power and will, apart from good and evil works, either to choose someone or to reject him, particularly since human frailty is unable to resist his will [cf. [Rom 9:19](#)].<sup>77</sup>

<sup>77</sup> A comparison with [Origen’ Commentary on Romans 7.16](#) shows that Jerome has followed him carefully here. Origen understands [Rom 9:14–9](#) not as Paul’ own words but the explanation of his imaginary opponent, who cites vv. [15](#) and [17](#) in order to conclude vv. [16](#) and [18](#). Paul

The apostle has dissolved this powerful and nearly insoluble question, which was composed with reasoning drawn from the Scriptures, with the brief expression that says, "O man! Who are you to answer back to God?" [[Rom 9:20](#)]. And the meaning is, From the fact that you are answering back to God, and you make a false accusation, and you examine such great matters in the Scriptures that you speak against God, and are inquiring about the justice of his will, you are showing that you have free choice, and that you are doing what you want, whether being silent or speaking. For if you think that God created you like vessels of clay, and that you cannot resist his will, consider this: A vessel of clay does not say to a potter, "Why did you make me this way?" [[Rom 9:20](#)]. For the potter has authority over the same clay and over the same lump, "to make one vessel for honor, another for dishonor" [cf. [Rom 9:21](#)]. But God has produced everyone with the same destiny, and has given freedom of choice, so that each one does what he wants, either good or evil.

But so much so has he given authority to all that an impious voice disputes against its own Creator, and searches carefully for the causes of his will.

But if God, wanting to show his wrath and to make known his power, endured with much patience the vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction, to show the riches of his glory in the vessels of mercy, which he prepared for glory, whom he also called, not only us from the Jews, but also from the Gentiles, just as Hosea says, "I have called not my people, 'my people'; and not beloved, 'beloved'; and there shall be in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they shall be called sons of the living God" [[Rom 9:22–26](#)],

and the rest that follows.

If, he says, the patience of God hardened Pharaoh, and for a long time postponed Israel's punishments, so that it could more justly condemn those whom he had endured for such a long time, God's patience and limitless clemency must not be accused, but the hardness of those who have abused God's goodness leading to their own perdition. In any case, the sun's heat is one, and according to the substances that underlie things, it melts some things, hardens others, loosens up others, causes others to contract. For wax melts, but mud is hardened, and yet the nature of the heat is not diverse. So too the goodness and clemency of God: it hardens the vessels of wrath, which are prepared for destruction, that is, the people of Israel; but the vessels of mercy, which it has prepared for glory, which it has also called, that is, us, we who are not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles, it saves, but not contrary to reason and not apart from the truth of judgment, but from antecedent causes: for some did not receive the Son of God, others willed to receive him of their own accord.

But these vessels of mercy are not only the people of the Gentiles, but also those who willed to believe from the Jews; and one people of believers have been brought into being. From this it is shown that it is not nations that are chosen, but the wills of human beings; and thus it has come about that that was fulfilled that was written through Hosea: "I have called not my people 'my people,' that is, the people of the nations; and those to whom it was formerly himself, according to Origen, does not represent this view but rather rejects the entire objection in vv. [20–4](#).

said, ‘you are not my people,’ now let them be called sons of the living God” [[Rom 9:26](#); [Hos 1:10](#)]. In order that he not appear to be saying this about the Gentiles only, he calls even those who have believed from the multitude of Israel vessels of mercy and election. For Isaiah cries out on behalf of Israel, “If the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant will be saved” [[Rom 9:27](#); [Isa 10:22–23](#)]; that is, even if the multitude does not believe, yet a few shall believe. For God has balanced the consummated and shortened word by his own justice [cf. [Rom 9:28](#)], so that by means of the humility and incarnation of Christ, he would save those who were willing to believe in him.

Isaiah says this very thing also in another passage: “Unless the Lord Sabaoth had left us seed, we would have been made like Sodom, and we would have become like Gomorrah” [[Rom 9:29](#); [Isa 1:9](#)]. And when he had set forth testimonies by which the twofold calling is predicted, both of the Gentiles and of the Jewish peoples, he passes on to a closely related discussion. And the reason he says that the Gentiles, who were not pursuing justice, have received justice [cf. [Rom 9:30](#)], is because they were not puffed up, but they believed in Christ. But he says that the majority of Israel fell away, because they were offended by the stone of offense and the rock of stumbling [cf. [Rom 9:32](#)], and they did not know the justice of God [cf. [Rom 9:31](#)], but seeking to establish their own justice, refused to submit to the justice of God [cf. [Rom 10:3](#)], which is Christ [cf. [Rom 10:4](#); [1 Cor 1:30](#)].

I have read in someone’s commentary that the Apostle responded in this way so that he implicated rather than solved the question.<sup>88</sup> For he speaks to that which the questioner had proposed, “What then do we say? Is there injustice with God?” [[Rom 9:14](#)]. And, “It is not of the one willing nor of the one running, but of God who shows mercy” [[Rom 9:16](#)]; and, “He has mercy on whom he wills, and he hardens whom he wills” [[Rom 9:18](#)]; and, “Who can resist his will?” [[Rom 9:19](#)]. The Apostle responded as follows:

O man, you who are earth and ash [cf. [Sir 10:9](#); [17:32](#)], do you dare to question God? And do you, a weak clay vessel, rebel against your own potter? Can what is molded say to him who molded it, “Why did you make me this way?” Or does the potter not have authority over the clay to make from the same lump, one thing as a vessel of honor, but something else as a vessel of dishonor? [[Rom 9:20–21](#)]

Be silent, therefore, with an eternal silence; and know your frailty, and do not provoke God with your questions, who made what he willed, so that he might stand forth as clement to some, severe toward others.

<sup>88</sup> This must refer to Origen, who says in [Commentary on Romans 7.17](#), “In his response he has confounded the arrogance of the questioner, for he says, ‘ho are you, O man, that you should reply against God?’” Jerome’s exegesis here follows Origen’s precisely. See previous note.

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.FOTC Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947–

.FOTC Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947–

.NPNF2 Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, second series

.NPNF2 Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, second series

.FOTC Fathers of the Church (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1947–

I This five-volume critical edition provides the Latin text translated in the present volume.

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## GENERAL INDEX

Jerome's eighteen-book commentary is referenced by the book/section number of the commentary (not by the chapter/verse lemma to Isaiah).

### Abbreviations

OrHom = Origen's *Homilies on Isaiah* (appendix [1](#))

JerEp18 = Jerome's *EEp.* 18 to Damasus (appendix [2](#))

JerEp120.10 = Jerome's *EEp.* 120 to Hedibia (appendix [3](#))

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*EEp. Epistle*

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