

The Dereliction and Restoration of the Jews.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

PARK-STREET CHURCH BOSTON, SABBATH, OCT. 31, 1819,

JUST BEFORE

THE DEPARTURE

OF THE

PALESTINE MISSION.

—
BY LEVI PARSONS, A. M.
Missionary to Palestine.
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SERMON.

HOSEA iii, 4, 5.

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a King, and without a Prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness, in the latter days.

MANY circumstances, connected with this prophecy, render it one of the most interesting and remarkable. It was left on sacred record 780 years previous to the advent of our Savior; refers, as commentators agree, to the *present* captivity of the Jews; represents, in the most impressive language, the degradation and misery which were hastening upon this once beloved people; and follows them, through a long and dreary night, to the dawn of that blessed morning, which will shed down upon them the light of an eternal day. It develops a series of events, in the system of divine providence, the most instructive and sublime: in view of which, St. Paul was led to exclaim, *O the depth of the*

riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out."

The prophecy relates exclusively to the Jewish nation, the seed of Abraham, the friend of God. It is this: *The children of Israel shall abide many days, WITHOUT A KING, AND WITHOUT A PRINCE*; predicting very evidently the utter subversion of their *civil* institutions, the extermination of their political state: *WITHOUT A SACRIFICE*; alluding to the mediatorial service of the High Priest in the Sanctuary; a service, which commanded the highest veneration, as it included all their hopes of the divine favor, and blessing: *WITHOUT AN IMAGE, AND WITHOUT AN EPHOD, and WITHOUT TERAPHIM*. This clause seems to be added to convey a more lively impression of the extent and aggravation of their ruin. It predicts a complete dissolution of their ecclesiastical establishment, a removal of all their sacred utensils, their idols, and indeed *every object* attached to their religious institutions. And is it not a remarkable fact, that during the present captivity, the Children of Israel have abode without an *image*, without any vestige of idolatry, even while urged to this sin by the most alluring temptations.

Afterwards *THEY SHALL RETURN*, be reinstated in all the privileges included in the covenant with Abraham, and be again a peculiar people, a royal priesthood, a chosen generation.

To such scenes and events this interesting prophecy refers. It must be the language of inspiration, the prediction of one, who was enabled to look through the vale of futurity, and describe, with minuteness, the designs of Jehovah. It is now more than *eighteen*

centuries since this prophecy has begun to unfold; and it will continue to unfold, to an admiring world, until its accomplishment shall be complete, and triumphant; until the Jews shall be gathered in from their present dispersions, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

But permit me to speak, more particularly, of the *present captivity of the Children of Israel, of their final restoration, and of their claims upon the Gentile church.*

I. THEIR CAPTIVITY.

After their hands were imbued in the blood of the Son of God, the judgments of heaven were not long suspended. In less than forty years, Jerusalem was given up to be plundered; the city was demolished, and a ploughshare drawn over it as a sign of perpetual desolation. On the 17th of July, A. D. 71, as testified by Josephus, *the daily sacrifices ceased*; and, as the temple was the only place for sacrificing, they have not been, and cannot be, renewed. On the 10th of August, of the same year, the Temple was wrapped in one general conflagration—the Sanctuary of God, the wonder of the world, was laid in ruins. Agreeably to the prediction of our Savior, not one stone was left upon another which was not cast down. Mount Zion was literally ploughed like a field. As Lot fled from Sodom, so the followers of Christ fled from this city devoted to destruction. No prophet raised his voice of admonition, or of prayer. The messengers of salvation preached their farewell sermon, and turned to the Gentiles. No angel was seen there with a message of mercy. The Holy Spirit departed from the maddened people forever. The God of their Fathers forsook

them. The door of hope was closed; the day of probation past; and these wretched beings were shut up in the darkness of an eternal night.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not.—BEHOLD YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT UNTO YOU DESOLATE.

The remnant, who escaped this awful catastrophe, were utterly dispersed; their political existence was annihilated; and they have ever since abode without a king, and without a prince; have been a *proverb* and a *by-word* among all the nations of the earth.

Their lands in Judea were sold. They were reduced to abject slavery; exposed, in vast multitudes, to public sale; subjected to most rigorous corporeal punishment; and, at last, they were not permitted to tread upon that spot where Jerusalem stood; nor to shed their tears upon that ground, where they crucified the Lord of glory.

From that period, the condition of the Jews in Judea has been miserable beyond description. They have waited for the Messiah, but waited in vain. They have attempted to reestablish the religion of their Fathers, but every attempt has been marked with *sword, bloodshed, and death*. To this day they remain the objects of universal abhorrence, and contempt. Thus the *blood* of *Jesus* has been upon them, and upon their *children*; thus for ages they have been suffering the vengeance of an incensed Judge.

Time will not permit a *particular* detail of their sufferings in *other* countries. It will be sufficient to notice a *few* instruments employed in the execution of this memorable prediction.

In the east, Divine Providence raised up the *Mohammedan power*, to be a tremendous scourge to the children of Israel. For a while, Mohammed gave them every token of friendship, and respect. But finding them inflexible, he changed his garb of friendship for the fury of a fiend. He filled his Koran with curses against them, armed his disciples, with the sabre to extirpate them, obliged parents to instil mortal enmity into the minds of their children, besieged their cities, demolished their synagogues, drove them into exile, and forbade them to return upon pain of death. Little did the impious man think, that he was a minister of justice to accomplish the predictions of the word of God, and thus to stamp an *eternal infamy* upon his own religion. Surely the hearts of *all* men are in the hands of God, and he will cause even the *wrath of man to praise him*.

Under the influence of such a system, the wretched condition of the Jews may be easily anticipated. So long as Mussulmauns consider it a *duty* to persecute them, every artifice will be employed to increase their wretchedness, and to add horror to despair itself. Stripped of every religious and civil privilege, compelled to perform the most *menial* services, to yield submission to the *meanest* subject, they are preserved as a spectacle to angels and to men, of the just indignation of heaven. And while one judgment has followed another in rapid succession; judgments which must have blotted out the *existence* of any *other* nation under heaven, the children of Israel have been continued by an invisible hand, as a standing monument of the veracity of God.

During this period, the condition of the Jews in the west was not less miserable, and affecting. I refer to the *Crusades*. Who can describe their consternation, when the pretended champions of the Cross waved their banners over Europe, with this motto inscribed upon them, "LET THE NAME OF ISRAEL BE NO MORE REMEMBERED." All hope of safety was lost. Parents were torn from their children, and families; their houses were consumed; their synagogues laid in ruins. Some fled to the caves and holes of the earth; others surrendered, and were immediately murdered by a furious populace; some escaped the sword by a pretended conversion to the Christian religion; others despairing of redress came to the horrid resolution of destroying themselves.

This crusade, was the commencement of a long series of inhuman and savage cruelties; the history of which, is but a detail of persecutions, proscriptions, banishments, and massacres. In Spain five hundred thousand were obliged to quit the kingdom, and leave behind them their tender children, under the age of fourteen, in the hands of their persecutors. How exactly does this correspond with the prediction recorded against them, "*Thy sons, and thy daughters shall be given to another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail for the longing for them all the day long.*" In Portugal, to reproach a man by the name of a *Jew*, was a crime punishable with death. In France, they were not permitted to appear in the streets of Paris, except by particular permission; - were sold, as beasts, at public auctions; and during two centuries were banished and recalled no less than at five different times. In England, after suffering every species of

cruelty, and torture, they requested the privilege of departing to a more friendly climate, but even *this* request was utterly rejected. In several European countries they were accused of poisoning the rivers, and streams; and in consequence of this accusation one million and five hundred thousand were murderously destroyed.

During this long and perpetual captivity, recollect that they have been deceived by more than twenty impostors; that they have spent whole months in sackcloth, and weeping for the appearing of the Messiah. And while they have been, like the bush of Horeb, *burning, yet not consumed*, they have raised to heaven the affecting inquiry, *O Lord, how long.* "*O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.*"

II. THEIR FINAL RESTORATION.

Upon this subject, the promise is explicit, and decisive, *Afterwards they shall return.*

But does this imply both a *literal* and spiritual restoration? The simple word of God is our safest guide. Let us compare the language in which the two events, their return from Babylon, and their final restoration, are recorded.

In the 29th chapter of Jeremiah, we have the following account of the return from the *Babylonish* captivity. *For thus saith the Lord, after seventy years are accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and will perform my good word towards you in causing you to return to THIS PLACE, and I will gather you from all nations and from all places, whither I have driven you, saith the*

*Lord, and I will bring you again into the place, whence I caused you to be carried away captive.**

Compare with this the description given in Ezekiel of the *final* return of the Jews. I say *final*, because it is so considered by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews. *I will take the Children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own LAND. AND THEY SHALL DWELL IN THE LAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UNTO JACOB, MY SERVANT, WHEREIN YOUR FATHERS HAVE DWELT, AND THEY SHALL DWELL THEREIN, even they and their children, and their children's children, forever and ever. And my Servant David shall be their Prince forever.*

Let these two predictions fall into the hands of a Jew, contemporary with the prophet Jeremiah. He reads the *former*, and says, 'My brethren are to be captives at Babylon, seventy years; after that they are to return to their own land, and be a beloved people.' He reads the *latter*, 'My Brethren are to go again into captivity, so long a captivity that it will be said of Jerusalem, it has *been always waste*; they shall be cast out from God, excluded from all their religious, and civil privileges even till the latter days; then they shall *return* to the land which was given to our *Father Abraham*. God himself will dwell with them, and establish with them an everlasting covenant which shall never be forgotten.'

Place the same predictions in the hands of a Christian, who has the advantage of looking back upon the accomplishment of one of them. Does he object to a literal interpretation of the latter, because there is

* Jer. xxxii, 20.

figurative language attached to it. He finds *figurative* language in the other; yet the Jews did *literally* return. Would not an impartial examination of these two predictions, recorded precisely in the same terms, constrain him to adopt the sentiment, that as one was *literally* fulfilled, the other must be. The outcasts of Israel will yet be gathered to their own land.

Besides, what was the opinion of the prophet? Did he design to inform the Jewish nation, that one prediction was literal, and the other not, and yet employ the same language in the latter, that was used in the former? How could the reader discover the *truth*, when no intimation is given of this change? Is it credible that the prophet should conceal a point of so much magnitude, as he considered this to be, in a phraseology altogether unintelligible. Would he keep the world in darkness upon a doctrine, which he designed to present in the light of day.

It will be acknowledged by all, that the prophecy relating to the present captivity of the Jews has thus far received a *literal* accomplishment. The children of Israel have literally remained without a King and without a Prince; they are carried away captive; and are strangers in a strange land. Can we adopt the opinion that it is *literal* language till the close of the captivity; and the rest of it *figurative*.

But the objection is made, if there be a literal restoration, the whole Jewish economy will be re-established. Is this a *necessary* consequence? The description given us of heaven is highly *figurative*; yet no one doubts of the existence of such a place, in distinction from the world of despair. No one will say, if there be a heaven, and an assembly of saints,

there must be there mountains, rivers, trees, and a temple a thousand miles square.

The description given us of the *millennium* is figurative; yet it will be admitted by all, that such expressions as these are literal, *The greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints. Knowledge shall be increased. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

Why may we not apply the same principle to the subject under consideration? Admit that the Jews are to be restored to their own land, and that the description given of their civil, and religious state *afterwards*, is designed to raise our conceptions of the glory and blessedness which are in reserve for them under the Gospel dispensation.

Beside, there still exists in the breast of every Jew an unconquerable desire to inhabit the land which was given to their Fathers; a desire, which even a conversion to Christianity does not eradicate. Destroy, then, the Ottoman Empire, and nothing but a *miracle* would prevent their immediate return from the four winds of heaven.

It is objected, again, that the land will not support the inhabitants. But it will be recollected, that the Jews are not now so numerous as they were when they dwelt in the land of Canaan. And is there not a promise that, when God blesses his people, he will bless the land for their sakes, and cause it to bring forth abundantly.

But I need not pursue the inquiry. There is a *better* wish, a *brighter* prospect. *The Children of Israel shall seek the Lord their God. The veil will*

then be taken from their hearts. They will look upon him, whom they have pierced, and mourn; they will return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads. Fixing their eyes upon the Cross, they will exclaim, *we have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*

This event forms an important feature in the writings of the Prophets and Apostles. They speak of it in such language as this:—*“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. Whereas thou hast been forsaken, and hated, so that no man went through thee; I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. Thy people shall be all righteous. A little cr shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation, I the Lord will hasten it in his time. Break forth into joy; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people; he hath redeemed Jerusalem. Thy watchmen shall lift up their voice, with the voice shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion.*

If the casting away of them be for the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead. Their return will be welcomed with universal rejoicing. The Angels in heaven will rejoice, to witness this new exhibition of the divine goodness, and forbearance. The holy assembly of Prophets Apostles, and Martyrs will rejoice, when they see their degenerate children returning to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. The saints on earth will rejoice, when they sit down with the outcasts of Israel at the table of our Lord. Then they will exclaim, “This our brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost

and is found." The ransomed Jew, as he ascends the hill of Zion, will mingle his songs with the whole church militant, and triumphant, saying, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

But how will this interesting work be accomplished? By the benevolence of the *Gentiles*. *Even so have these not believed*, says Paul, when addressing the Gentiles, *that through your mercy they may obtain mercy*. As they gave the Gospel to *us*, we are to give it to *them*, and how great is the privilege of reflecting back a part of that glory, which has so long beamed upon us from the holy of holies!

That there has been, for a considerable time, an increasing solicitude among the Jews with regard to the Christian's Messiah, is abundantly evident from the many facts which are daily presented to our notice. Permit me to refresh your memories with a *few* of the most important. About the middle of the seventeenth century, for the purpose of examining the question whether the Messiah had appeared in the flesh, a GENERAL COUNCIL assembled in Poland, at which were present three hundred Rabbies, and Jews out of every nation. After the council had been in session six days, a learned Rabbi insisted upon the propriety of examining the claims of the Christian religion. A Pharisee who was present remarked, that a person, who appeared in so humble and despised a character, could not be the promised Messiah. The Rabbi replied, By what power did he perform his miracles? The answer was, By magic. No power of magic, said the Rabbi, can open the eyes of the blind, and bring the dead to life. The assembly was dismissed in the greatest confusion, without a decision of this important question.

A public dispute held in Venice, in the year 1747, between two Rabbies and a convert to the Christian religion, is not less interesting. The contest was conducted with great spirit upon both sides; but the Christian convert reasoned with so much energy, and clearness from the word of God, that the Rabbi exclaimed; "I beseech you, permit us to close our books and be silent; for if we proceed to examine the prophecies further, we shall all be Christians. The prophecy of Daniel," he continues, "speaks so distinctly of the coming of Christ, that the time of his appearing must be past, but whether Jesus be that person or not, I cannot tell."

The testimony of missionaries, now in the field, affords ample encouragement for persevering efforts. Their language is this, "In *Russia* there is a great inclination prevailing among the *first* Jewish families to embrace Christianity. Several have already been received into the church. Six Rabbies, in a letter written in Hebrew, requested the New Testament for nine hundred families. It is singular to observe, that there have been many unexpected conversions from the Jewish to the blessed religion of Jesus, around the Mediterranean. And the Jews are not so obdurate as they once were, and when converted prove the most active members of the Church of Christ. In *POLAND*, within a short time, more than thirty Jews, and among these, many families of great property, have by baptism been added to the church. The same remark may extend to *Bohemia*, and to many other adjoining countries."

"Various facts," say the Committee of the London Jews Society, "have during the last year indicated that

a general movement is taking place in the Jewish mind, which can scarcely fail to be attended with the most important consequences, and this too at no distant period."

While enumerating the blessings, which have descended upon the Jewish nation, we cannot forget the unexampled benevolence of the Emperor of Russia, whom Divine Providence has raised up as a second Cyrus, to gather together the out-casts of Israel. And what is still more remarkable, and auspicious, we find among the advocates for the conversion of the Jews, the Allied Sovereigns of Europe!

With these facts before us, we cannot for a moment hesitate? Surely the day so long desired by the people of God is beginning to dawn! The darkness and gloom of this long and dismal night are retiring before the light of truth. The blessed Gospel has commenced its gradual, yet *irresistible* progress. The Holy Spirit is carrying on among them a work of grace. The sacred Scriptures are circulated, and *received*, with the most animating prospect of success. Jewish children are receiving a Christian education; and are thus secured from the most bitter prejudices against the name of Jesus.

Encouraged by these events, the Christian world are awaking from their long and criminal slumbers, and are inquiring, with deep solicitude, "Lord, what wilt thou have us to do."

This leads me to the *third* particular in the discourse,
 III. THEIR CLAIMS UPON THE GENTILE CHURCH.

If any individual, in this assembly, should inquire, what part can I bear, what duties can I discharge? To such I reply,

1. Let the Jews be the subject of your *prayers*. We ask you not to imitate the example of the crusaders, those deluded champions of the cross. The battles of the Lord are not fought with these carnal weapons. But we do request your unceasing intercessions. Most earnestly do we request you to cherish the spirit of Daniel, and of Nehemiah. Who can read the prayer of Daniel for Jerusalem, without mourning over his own unbelief. That good man prayed, because God had *promised* to build the walls of Zion. His faith was unshaken, although that city had been *seventy years* a desolation. And *every* good man will pray, because God has *promised* to restore the lost tribes of Israel. O where is the faith of Nehemiah, and of Daniel? Where do we hear the language of St. Paul, *My heart's desire, and prayer to God, for Israel is, that they may be saved*. We must forever despair of the conversion of the house of Israel, unless there be a revival of the spirit of the prophets and apostles. God will be inquired of by his people, before he accomplishes his great work.

Often did the Jewish saints pray for *us*; for our *families*, for our *churches*. They toiled, and suffered, and died, in defence of *our* holy religion. *Our* God was *their* God, *our* heaven is *their* heaven. This *Holy Bible* they faithfully handed down to us, secure from the assaults of infidelity. All our seasons of communion with God, all our hopes of glory, are come to us through the instrumentality of the Jewish saints. *Gratitude* demands a suitable return for these invaluable favors.

The duty of prayer is enjoined upon us by the great Head of the Church. Are the Jews obdurate? We will weep for them. Did they *crucify* our Lord? He

himself prayed, Father, forgive them. Every *Christian* will adopt the same prayer. In the sincerity of his heart, he will plead for their forgiveness, and restoration to the privileges of the Gospel.

As I may not again plead the cause of Israel, in this place, I earnestly commend them to your prayers in *secret*; to your prayers in your *families*; to your prayers in *this house*, consecrated to the worship of God. Do you wish to see the dispersed Tribes gathered into the fold of Christ? Pray for them. Do you wish to hear them crying, Hosanna to the Son of David? Pray for them. And let it be the resolution of every Christian, *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I do not prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy.*

But, brethren, this is not *all* we have to do. Our prayers and our *alms* must ascend together as a memorial before God.

2. The Jews have *special* claims upon our *charity*.

As a benevolent people, the Jews held a high and important station. Observe the conduct of the first Jewish Christians! They brought their substance, and laid it at the apostles feet. The love of *Christ* *constrained* them. Their religion was a religion of *benevolence*. They sought not their own, but the things which are Jesus Christ's. And, to exceed all this, behold the first Missionaries of the Cross relinquishing every earthly interest, for the salvation of the *Gentiles*. Even while we were pagans, sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, they suffered perils by land, and by sea; if by any means they might save some of us. O when shall we, Gentiles, imitate this blessed example!

When shall we repay this unmeasured benevolence? when be as faithful to them as they were to us! They who taught us the way to salvation were *Jews*. And what is more, *infinitely* more than all this, your Lord and your Savior, as concerning the flesh, was a Jew. Yes, brethren, he who now intercedes for you before the throne of God, as concerning the flesh, is a Jew! And his last command was, *Go into ALL the world and preach the Gospel.*

We do not expect the conversion of the Jews by a *miracle*. The means which God hath appointed must be employed. The millions of Jews must be furnished with the *word of God*, and with the instruction of *Missionaries*. But this cannot be done without *charity*; without the *liberal*, and *persevering* efforts of the Christian world. Say then, brethren, shall we bear a part in this work of benevolence, or must it be accomplished without us.

Our assistance is now particularly solicited. Many of the Jews are willing to receive the New Testament. Conversions to Christianity are rapidly increasing. A general movement is taking place. Every eye is fixed upon Jerusalem. There they believe the Messiah will come, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. And if our Savior should revive his work within those consecrated walls, the good resulting would, probably, surpass all calculation. The dispersed abroad, fixing their attention upon this event, might renounce their fatal delusion, and receive him, who was crucified on calvary, as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world.

Many of you expect soon to enter into the joy of our Lord. As you enter the gates of the New Jeru-

saalem, will you not be greeted by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; by Moses, and the Prophets; by Peter and Paul, and their fellow Disciples. And may you not hear the inquiry, where are our degenerate children? We toiled, and suffered for you, but our children have been left to famish for the bread of life. O my brethren, as you value the privileges of the Gospel, as you desire the universal diffusion of the word of life, let me entreat you to regard with compassion that people, *beloved for the fathers' sake*. Carry back to them the blessings which, through their hands, have been so richly conferred upon you. Take them by the hand and lead them to Mount Calvary. For Zion's sake let us not hold our peace, for Jerusalem's sake let us not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.

Finally, we beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with us, in your prayers to God for us, that we may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea, and that the service which we have for Jerusalem, may be accepted of the saints. AMEN.