

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

multiplied connections of Greek and Latin, one with the other, as well as of their connection with the Sanscrit before them, and with the modern languages behind them; to make no use, or but little use of these great facts, enlightening and inspiring as they are, in the work of instruction, should entitle him who thus dishonors his high calling, to exchange at once his false position, as a professed guide to others, for the true one, of a learner for himself in respect to its first principles. With the educated men of the country are lodged its fortune and its fate. And republicanism of the highest form claims as one of its chief supports a broad and columnar style of scholarship among them.

ARTICLE VI.

COMPARISON OF JEREMIAH 23: 5, 6, AND 33: 14—16.

BY S. A. WORCESTER, MISSIONARY TO THE CHEROKEES.

To see clearly the mutual relation of these two passages, let us place the corresponding parts side by side.

| CHAP. XXIII. | CHAP. XXXIII. |
|---|--|
| <p>5 הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻמ־יְהוָה</p> <p>וְהִקְמֹתִי לְדָוִד צִמְחָה צְדִיקָה וַיִּסְלַח מֶלֶךְ וְהַשְׂפִּיל וְאִשָּׁה מִשָּׁפֶט וְצִדְקָה בְּאֶרֶץ 6 בְּיָמָיו הִנְשֵׂעַ רְהוּלָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל הַשִּׁבּוֹן לְבַשָּׁה וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרָא וְהָיָה צִדְקָתִי:</p> <p>5. Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah,</p> | <p>14 הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נְאֻמ־יְהוָה וְהִקְמֹתִי אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתִּי אֶל-בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל-בֵּית יְהוּדָה: 15 בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם יִבְקַע הַיָּא אֲצִמִּיחַ לְדָוִד צִמְחָה צְדִיקָה וְאִשָּׁה מִשָּׁפֶט וְצִדְקָה בְּאֶרֶץ 16 בְּיָמֵים הָהֵם הִנְשֵׂעַ רְהוּלָה וְיִרְוּשָׁלַם הַשִּׁבּוֹן לְבַשָּׁה וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרָא-לָהּ יְהוּדָה וְצִדְקָתִי:</p> <p>14. Behold the days come, saith Jehovah,</p> |

that I will raise up unto David
a Righteous Branch,
and a King shall reign and prosper,
and shall execute judgment and
justice in the earth [or land].

6. In his days Judah shall be saved,
and Israel shall dwell safely;
and this is his name, whereby
he shall be called:
Jehovah our Righteousness.

that I will perform that good thing
which I have promised unto the
house of

Israel, and to the house of Judah.

15. In those days, and at that time
I will cause to grow up unto David
a Branch of Righteousness,

and he shall execute judgment and
justice in the earth [or land].

16. In those days Judah shall be
saved,
and Jerusalem shall dwell safely;
and this is what
she shall be called:
Jehovah our Righteousness.

Where the words are the same in the original of both passages, we have made them the same in the translation. On the two passages, thus collated, we remark:

1. It is obvious that the passage in the 33d chapter is simply a repetition of that in the 23d, with some addition in the former part, and the omission of one short sentence. The few verbal differences do not affect the sense.

2. The passage thus repeated is evidently a prophecy of the reign of the Messiah. The BRANCH and the KING are CHRIST; and *Judah* and *Israel* in the 23d chapter, and *Judah* and *Jerusalem* in the 33d, represent THE CHURCH; i. e. the people of God under the Christian dispensation.

3. The two passages being thus identical, it is obvious that, if any clause in one is ambiguous, and the corresponding clause in the other unambiguous, then that which admits but one interpretation must be allowed to explain that which admits two.

4. In chapter 23: 5, in the clause "this is his name, whereby he shall be called," the pronouns *his* and *he* may grammatically relate either to the next preceding noun, *Israel*, or to the word *Branch*, or *King* in the preceding verse. If the same were true in 33: 16, we suppose all would agree in referring the pronouns in both passages to the *Branch*, as their antecedent; and so in regarding the name *Jehovah our Right-*

eousness, as applied by the prophet to Christ. But in ch. 33d the use of the feminine pronoun utterly precludes this construction, and compels us to admit that it is to Jerusalem that the name is there applied. And as the name *Israel* stands in precisely the same connections in the 23d chapter, as *Jerusalem* in the 33d, the conclusion is irresistible, that *Israel*, and not the *Branch* is the antecedent of the pronouns *his* and *he*; and that to *the people of God*, and not to *the Messiah*, the name in question is applied, as well in the 23d chapter, as the 33d. This is the prophet's own interpretation of his own words. And if commentators have not been led to this conclusion, it would seem that it must be because they have neglected carefully to collate the two passages, so as to observe their identity; for it would be strange to observe their exact correspondence in other respects, and not to infer the identity of their meaning in this also.

5. As in the name, יהוה צדקה, the last words of the prophecy of Ezekiel, the verb *is* is implied — *Jehovah is there* — so in the name before us, *Jehovah is our Righteousness*.¹

6. In most cases where, in Hebrew the name *Jehovah* is made the subject, and an abstract noun the predicate, the abstract is plainly used for the concrete; as *Jehovah is my Light*, i. e. *my Enlightener*; *my Strength — Strengtheners*; *my Salvation — Saviour*. And so in the present case, almost beyond a doubt, *Jehovah is our Righteousness* is equivalent to *Jehovah is our Justifier*; ² and the thought intended to be conveyed by saying that *Israel* or *Jerusalem* shall be called by this name is, that, in the days of the *Messiah*, his people shall be distinguished as *a people justified by Jehovah*. This shall be their triumph and their joy.

¹ Thus many Hebrew names of persons; as, *Abijah, My Father [is] Jehovah*; *Elijah, My God [is] Jehovah*; *Adonijah, My Lord [is] Jehovah*; *Zuriel, My Rock [is] God*; etc.

² *Jehovah is our Justifier*. I suppose this is the rendering which any one versed in Hebrew, but not in technical theology, would at once give. A musician in the United States' Army, a Swede by birth and education, was once at my house. He had studied Hebrew as a classic, and asked to see a Hebrew Bible. I asked him if he could translate Hebrew. "Into Latin I can," he replied, "not into English." I opened the Hebrew Bible, and pointed to Jer. 23: 5, which he readily translated into Latin, rendering the name, without the least hesitation, "*Jehovah Justificator noster*."

7. But does not this interpretation militate against the doctrine of Justification by Faith? Far from it. The sentiment which the name, thus interpreted, expresses, was uttered by the Apostle Paul in the exultant exclamation: "It is God that justifieth." And does *that* militate against the doctrine of Justification by faith? On the contrary that very doctrine is the sole ground of the apostle's triumph. Justification by Faith had been the great burden of all the preceding part of his epistle. And now to the words: "It is God that justifieth," he adds: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us."¹ Of this triumph the name before us is prophetic. "Jehovah is our Justifier." This shall be the glory of Israel. When? When Christ shall have come, and died, and risen again, and shall sit on the right hand of God to intercede for his people, that they may be justified. "It is God that justifieth." How? Through "Christ that died." "Through faith in his blood." This is the sole ground of the Christian's triumph in a justifying God. Although, therefore, he may not be able to say, that the name thus interpreted, expresses, in itself, the doctrine of Justification by faith, yet there is no room to doubt, that this ground of our triumph, no less than the triumph itself, was in the mind of the prophet, or rather of the Spirit that dictated the words of the prophet, as the reason why this should be regarded as an appropriate appellation for the Church of Christ, the true Israel of God. Christ died for us, therefore Jehovah justifies us. This is our triumph. The Prophet foretold it. "Jehovah is our Justifier." The Apostle uttered it. "It is God that justifieth." From age to age the church of the Redeemed re-echoes it. "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us!"

¹ I use the common version. To translate all the clauses interrogatively would not change the force of the argument.