

CHAPTER 35

INTRODUCTION TO EZEKIEL 35

This chapter is a prophecy of the destruction of Edom, which is threatened, (^{<35:1>}Ezekiel 35:1-4), the cause of it, their hatred and slaughter of the Israelites, (^{<35:5>}Ezekiel 35:5-9), their claim of the lands of Israel and Judah for possession, (^{<35:10>}Ezekiel 35:10,11), their blasphemies against the people of God, and the Lord himself, (^{<35:12>}Ezekiel 35:12,13), the aggravation of their ruin, which was irretrievable; that when it was well with others, it should go ill with them; by way of just retaliation, (^{<35:14>}Ezekiel 35:14,15).

Ver. 1. *Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, &c.*] After the prophecy concerning the shepherds of Israel, and the goats of the flock, and of their oppressions of the sheep and lambs, the weak of the flock; and concerning the Messiah, and the blessings of grace promised the church in the latter day; came another concerning the destruction of her enemies, under the name of Seir or Edom:

saying: as follows:

Ver. 2. *Son of man set thy face against Mount Seir, &c.*] Which had its name from Seir the Horite, who first possessed it; and was succeeded in it by Esau and his posterity, the Edomites; (see ^{<13:8>}Genesis 36:8,9,20 14:6) (^{<2:12>}Deuteronomy 2:12), so that the country of Edom or Idumea is here intended, and the inhabitants of it; who are put for the enemies of the church and people of God in general, as these were the enemies of Israel and Judah; and particularly for Rome, which, as it was spiritually called Egypt and Sodom, so it may be called Edom, as it often is by the Jews: now the prophet is bid to turn his face towards this mountain or country, and look sternly at it, and severely threaten it. The Targum is,

“take up a prophecy against it;”

which is expressed in the next clause:

and prophesy against it; foretell things contrary to it, which relate to its destruction, as follows:

Ver. 3. *And say unto it, thus saith the Lord God, &c.*] The prophet was not upon the spot, and could not direct his speech immediately to the Edomites; but he might send this prophecy to their ambassadors at Babylon; or in a letter to them in their own land, in the name of the Lord:

behold, O Mount Seir, I am against thee: not the face of the prophet only, but the face of God himself was against them; and a terrible thing it is for any to have God to be against them, whether a nation, or a particular person. The Targum is,

“behold, I send my fury upon thee:”

and I will stretch out mine hand against thee; which was able to reach them wherever they were: and which, being stretched out, cannot be turned back; and, where it lights, falls heavy indeed; namely, his mighty hand of power and wrath. The Targum is,

“and I will lift up the stroke of my power upon thee;”

that is, lift up his hand and strike powerfully; the consequence of which must be as follows:

and I will make thee most desolate; their land, cities, towns, and villages, all should be utterly laid waste; (see ^{<6676>}Revelation 17:16 18:8), so it follows:

Ver. 4. *I will lay thy cities waste, &c.*] Such as Dedan, Teman, Bozrah, and other cities of Idumea mentioned in Scripture; and figuratively may design all within the jurisdiction of Rome, the several cities of the antichristian states, called “the cities of the nations”; which will fall at the pouring out of the vials, (^{<6668>}Revelation 16:19):

and thou shalt be desolate; thoroughly and entirely, and remain so:

and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; that has done all this; that the hand of God was in it; and that this is a punishment inflicted by him, for their sins after mentioned; but not that they should know the Lord spiritually and savingly, and so as to yield obedience to him, and own and acknowledge him to be their God; though this may be the case of a remnant among them; (see ^{<6613>}Revelation 11:13 18:4).

Ver. 5. *Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, &c.*] There was an old grudge and enmity subsisting in the posterity of Esau against the posterity

of Jacob, because the latter supplanted the former, and got the birthright and blessing from him; and which was discovered in all ages, and at all opportunities, and on all occasions which offered; and such has been the hatred of the church of Rome against the true professors and followers of Christ, as their bloody persecution of them in all ages have shown:

and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity: when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans, the Edomites not only rejoiced at it, and took part of the spoil, but stood in the crossways, and slew those that made their escape; or drove them back upon the sword of the enemy; or delivered them into their hands; which was barbarous and inhuman usage of their neighbours and brethren; (see Obidiah 1:10,11). The Targum is,

“and thou didst deliver the children of Israel into the hands of those that slay with the sword, in the time of their destruction:”

in the time that their iniquity had an end; when either the measure of that was full; or when they received for it full correction and chastisement; at the consummation of that.

Ver. 6. *Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord God, &c.*] The form of an oath; the Lord swears by himself, because he could swear by no greater; and which he never does but in matters of importance, and for the confirmation of them, as the following is:

I will prepare thee unto blood; prepare them for war, which will issue in slaughter and blood, such as the battle at Armageddon, (⁶⁶⁴Revelation 16:14,16 19:18,19): or, “I will make thee blood”⁵⁹³; nothing else but blood; a mere “Aceldama”, a field of blood; turn thee into blood, as the sea, rivers, and fountains will be, at the pouring out the second and third vials, (⁶⁶³Revelation 16:3,4):

and blood shall pursue thee; the guilt and vengeance of blood; or the avengers of the blood of the saints; the angels that shall pour out the vials of wrath on Rome; the ten kings that shall hate the whore. So the Targum;

“they that slay with the sword shall pursue thee;”

or the shedders of blood, as Ben Melech:

saith thou hast not hated blood; Jarchi reads it; “hast hated blood”: which he interprets of the blood of the sacrifices; as others, mentioned by him, of

the blood of circumcision; and others, of his brother, who was his flesh and blood, and hated by him; but it is a figurative phrase, by which less is expressed than is intended. The sense is, thou hast loved blood; thou hast delighted in shedding blood; hast thirsted after it, and drank plentifully of it, and even been drunk with it, as the whore of Rome is said to be, (~~6616~~ Revelation 17:5):

even blood shall pursue thee; this is repeated for the confirmation of it; and this was measure for measure; a just retaliation; having shed blood, it was but right that blood should pursue, and be given, (~~6616~~ Revelation 16:5,6).

Ver. 7. *Thus will I make Mount Seir most desolate, &c.*] By shedding the blood of the inhabitants of it; and as Rome will be, when it will be utterly burnt with fire, as that city will, and the flesh of the whore also, and made desolate; and when all the vials shall be poured out on the antichristian states under her jurisdiction, (~~6616~~ Revelation 16:1 17:16 18:8):

and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth: every traveller that passeth to and fro; it shall no more be frequented by merchants; nor will there be any merchandise any more in it, (~~6611~~ Revelation 18:11).

Ver. 8. *And I will fill his mountains with his slain men, &c.*] Not only Mount Seir, but all the rest of the mountains, in Idumea; where they shall flee for refuge, and the enemy shall pursue them, and slay them; and where their carcasses will fall in such numbers, as to cover the mountains with them; compare with this (~~6618~~ Revelation 19:18,19):

in thy hills, and in thy valleys, and in all thy rivers, shall they fall that are slain with the sword: expressive of the greatness and universality of the slaughter, that it should be a general one everywhere; hence rivers and fountains are said to become blood, through the number of the slain, (~~6616~~ Revelation 16:3,4).

Ver. 9. *I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return, &c.*] To their former dignity and glory; should not be built and inhabited again, but lie waste for ever: this agrees with what is prophesied of Edom, (~~3004~~ Malachi 1:4) and will be true of Rome or Babylon when destroyed; it will never rise more, but be like a millstone in the midst of the sea, (~~6621~~ Revelation 18:21):

and ye shall know that I am the Lord; (See Gill on “~~2604~~ Ezekiel 35:4”).

Ver. 10. *Because thou hast said, these two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it, &c.]* Meaning either Idumea he was now possessed of, and Israel he hoped to be, upon the people of it being carried captive; or rather the two nations of Israel and Judah, and their countries; which he pleased himself with would fall into his hands, as next heir to them; the posterity of his brother being dispossessed of them. This may denote the claim that Rome makes upon each of the Protestant nations and countries; and which she will think all her own, and that she is in the possession of them, upon the slaying of the witnesses; and when she will say, “I sit a queen, and am no widow”, (⁶⁸⁷Revelation 18:7).

Whereas the Lord was there; and heard their words, as Kimchi; and knew their thoughts, as Jarchi; so the Targum,

“and before the Lord the thoughts of the heart were manifest.”

The land of Judea was Immanuel’s land; and as the Lord had been in it, and granted his gracious presence in the tabernacle and temple, so he still continued his powerful presence in it, to protect and keep it for his people; who should return to it after their captivity, and inhabit it until the Messiah came, who was to be born in it. Or it may be rendered, “though the Lord was” or “dwelt there”^{f594}; denoting the great impiety and daring wickedness of the Edomites, to think and talk of possessing a country that was the Lord’s, and where he was: and this holds good of the true reformed churches of Christ; the Lord is there, and therefore, though they may be brought very low, and antichrist may triumph over them, and imagine he has got them under his power again, where they shall continue; yet on a sudden his destruction will come, and their deliverance. Or, “where the Lord was”^{f595}; but he has now departed, and will never return more, the temple being destroyed; so they said, encouraging themselves.

Ver. 11. *Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord, &c.]* An oath, as before in (³⁸⁶Ezekiel 35:6):

I will do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them: as thou hast been angry with them, and hated them, and done mischief to them, so will I be angry with thee, and hate thee, and inflict punishment on thee; I will retaliate all the anger, envy, and hatred showed unto my people, and punish thee according to thy just demerits. So the Romish antichrist shall be dealt with; he who has led into captivity shall go into it, and he that has killed with the sword

shall be killed by it. Babylon shall be rewarded double, as she has rewarded, others, (⁶¹³⁰Revelation 13:10 18:6).

And I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee; the Targum is,

“and I will reveal myself to do good unto them, when I shall have taken vengeance on thee:”

after the destruction of antichrist, the knowledge of God, and of Christ, will be spread among Jews and Gentiles, even all the world over, so universally, so clearly and distinctly, as never was before, (²⁷¹⁴Daniel 12:4 ²³¹⁰Isaiah 11:9).

Ver. 12. *And thou shall know that I am the Lord,* &c.] By the judgments executed upon Edom, and so upon antichrist; for God is known by the judgments he executes, both by good and bad men, (⁴⁹⁰⁶Psalms 9:16):

and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel; the people of Israel and Judah literally, and the churches and people of God figuratively: so antichrist is said to open his mouth in blasphemies, and to blaspheme the tabernacle of God, and them that dwell in heaven; that is, the church of God, and the saints of the most High; which are heard and observed by the Lord, and resented by him, and for which he will punish, (⁶¹³⁶Revelation 13:6):

saying, they are laid desolate, they are given up to consume; or, “for food”^{f596}; to possess and live upon; the inhabitants of them being carried captive or slain, so that there were none to enjoy the fruits of them; and therefore the Edomites concluded that the Israelites were forsaken of God, and that he would no more regard them, and that their land was theirs, which gave them great joy; (see ⁶¹¹⁰Revelation 11:10).

Ver. 13. *Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me,* &c.] Or, “magnified against me”^{f597}; spoke great swelling words of vanity, or had a mouth opened to speak great things and blasphemy against God, as antichrist is said to do, (⁶¹³⁵Revelation 13:5,6), what is spoken against the Lord’s people is taken by him as spoken against himself:

and have multiplied your words against me; not in prayer, by deprecations or supplications, as the word^{f598} used sometimes signifies; but in reproaches

and calumnies, vilifying expressions and hard speeches, against his people, in great numbers; which is all one as if they were directed against him:

I have heard them; these the Lord takes notice of, and will call to an account for, either here or hereafter; (see ⁶⁰¹⁵Jude 1:15).

Ver. 14. *Thus saith the Lord God, when the whole earth rejoiceth, &c.]* When it shall go well with the world in general, and the inhabitants of it; when they shall enjoy great peace and prosperity. Jarchi has a very good note upon this clause,

“when I shall take my kingdom; for then the earth will rejoice, as it is said, the Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice;”

so when Christ takes to himself his great power, and reigns, his church and people will rejoice, (⁶⁰¹⁶Revelation 11:16,17), as well as at the destruction of antichrist, as follows:

I will make thee desolate; for so some render it, “the whole earth rejoiceth when I make thee desolate”; or, “so shall all the earth rejoice in the desolation which I shall make for thee”^{f599}; (see ⁶⁰¹⁸Revelation 18:20 19:1,2) and which agrees with what follows:

Ver. 15. *As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, &c.]* So Edom rejoiced at the destruction of Jerusalem, (Obadiah 1:12), and so the followers of the man of sin will rejoice at the slaying of the witnesses, (⁶⁰¹⁰Revelation 11:10), which is resented by the Lord, and therefore adds,

so will I do unto thee; make thee desolate, as is explained in the next clause:

thou shall be desolate, O Mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it; not that mount only, but all the land of Edom, called Idumea; the destruction shall be general, as it was, and irretrievable; and so not Rome only, but all the antichristian states, will be destroyed, when God comes forth in his wrath against them:

and they shall know that I am the Lord; the Lord God omniscient and omnipotent; who, having foretold all this, shall accomplish it.