

CHAPTER 26

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 26

This chapter contains a song of praise for the safety and prosperity of the church, and the destruction of its enemies. The church is represented as a strong city, whose walls and bulwarks are salvation, (²³⁰¹Isaiah 26:1) it is said to have gates which are to be opened to a righteous nation, (²³⁰²Isaiah 26:2) its inhabitants, being such who trust in the Lord, are promised perfect peace, (²³⁰³Isaiah 26:3) hence the saints are exhorted to trust in him, (²³⁰⁴Isaiah 26:4) then follows an account of another city, described as lofty, and its inhabitants as dwelling on high, who are brought down, and trampled on, by the feet of the poor and needy, (²³⁰⁵Isaiah 26:5,6) when the prophet returns to the righteous, and asserts their way to be uprightness, because their path is weighed or levelled by God the most upright, (²³⁰⁷Isaiah 26:7) and in the name of the church declares that they had waited for the Lord in the way of his judgments; and that the desire of their souls was to his name, and the remembrance of it; and that they continued, and would continue, to desire him, and seek after him, seeing righteousness was to be learned by his judgments, (²³⁰⁸Isaiah 26:8,9) and though the wicked would not be brought to repentance and reformation by the goodness of God, nor take notice of his hand, yet they should see and be ashamed, and destroyed at last, (²³¹⁰Isaiah 26:10,11) but notwithstanding these judgments of God in the earth, the church professes her faith in the Lord, that he would give her peace and prosperity, from the consideration of what he had wrought for her, and in her, (²³¹²Isaiah 26:12) and rejects all other lords but him, (²³¹³Isaiah 26:13) who were dead, and should not live again, but were visited and destroyed, and their memory made to perish, (²³¹⁴Isaiah 26:14) but the righteous nation should be increased, though they should meet with trouble, which would cause them to go to the throne of grace, and there pour out their complaints, express their pain and distresses, and the disappointments they had met with, (²³¹⁵Isaiah 26:15-18) to which an answer is returned, promising a glorious resurrection, (²³¹⁹Isaiah 26:19) and calling upon the people of God to retire to their chambers for protection in the mean while, until the punishment to

be inflicted on the inhabitants of the earth for their sins was over,
(^{233D}Isaiah 26:20,21).

Ver. 1. *In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah, &c.]*

When great things shall be done: for the church and people of God; and when antichrist and all their enemies are destroyed, as mentioned in the preceding chapter (^{233D}Isaiah 25:1-12); then this song shall be sung expressed in this throughout; which the Targum calls a “new” song, an excellent one, as the matter of it shows; and which will be sung in the land of Judah, the land of praise in the congregation of the saints, the professors and confessors of the name of Jesus: in Mount Zion, the church of God below, (^{149D}Psalms 149:1 ^{64D}Revelation 14:1-3 15:1-4 19:1-6):

we have a strong city; not an earthly one, as Jerusalem; so the Jewish writers, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi, interpret it; nor the heavenly city, which God has prepared and built, and saints are looking for, and are citizens of: but rather the holy city, the New Jerusalem, described in (^{62D}Revelation 21:2,10,11) or however, the church of Christ, as in the latter day; which will be a “strong” one, being of the Lord’s founding, establishing, keeping, and defending; and whose strength will greatly lie in the presence of God, and his protection of it; in the number of its citizens, which will be many, when Jews and Gentiles are converted; and in their union one with another, and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ; when a “small one”, as the church is now, shall become a “strong nation”, (^{232D}Isaiah 60:22):

salvation will [God] appoint [for] walls and bulwarks; instead of walls, ditches, parapets, counterscarps, and such like fortifications; what they are to cities, that is salvation to the church and people of God; it is their safety and security: as God the Father is concerned in it, it flows from his love, which is unchangeable; it is by an appointment of his, which is unalterable; is secured by election grace, which stands not upon the works of men, but the will of God; and by the covenant of grace, ordered in all things, and sure; and by his power the saints are kept unto it: as Christ is concerned in it, it is as walls and bulwarks; he is the author of it, has completely finished it, and has overcome and destroyed all enemies; his righteousness is a security from all charges and condemnation; his satisfaction a bulwark against the damning power of sin, the curses of the law, and the wrath of God; his mediation and intercession are a protection of saints; and his almighty power a guard about them. As the Spirit is concerned in it, who is

the applier of it, and evidences interest in it; it is a bulwark against sin, against Satan's temptations, against a spirit of bondage to fear, against error, and a final and total falling away; particularly the church's "walls" will be "salvation", and her "gates" praise, of which in the next verse (^{<2340>}Isaiah 26:2), in the latter day glory; to which this song refers; (see ^{<2340>}Isaiah 60:18).

Ver. 2. *Open ye the gates*, &c.] Not of Jerusalem, literally understood, nor of heaven; rather of the New Jerusalem, whose gates are described, (^{<6212>}Revelation 21:12,13,21) at least of the church in the latter day; the gates or door into which now should be, and then will be, open; Christ the door, and faith in him, and a profession of it, without which none ought to be admitted, and whoever climbs up another way is a thief and a robber, (^{<4910>}John 10:1,9) these words are the words of the prophet, or of God, or of Christ by him, directed not to the keepers of the gates of Jerusalem, or of the doors of the temple, though, they may be alluded to; nor to any supposed doorkeeper of heaven, angels, or men, there being none such; rather to the twelve angels, at the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem, (^{<6212>}Revelation 21:12) or to the ministers of the Gospel, who have the key of knowledge to open the door of faith, and let persons into the knowledge of divine things; to admit them to ordinances, and receive them into the church by the joint suffrage of the members of it. The phrase denotes a large increase of members, and a free, open, and public reception of them, who are after described; (see ^{<2341>}Isaiah 60:11,18):

that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in; not all the world, for there is none righteous, not one of them naturally, or of themselves; nor the Jewish nation, for though they sought after righteousness, did not attain it, unless when they will be converted in the latter day, and then they, and all the Lord's people, will be righteous, and appear to be a holy nation, and a peculiar people, (^{<2342>}Isaiah 60:21 ^{<4010>}1 Peter 2:9) and being made righteous by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and sanctified by the Spirit, will be fit persons to be admitted through the gates into the city; (see ^{<4939>}Psalms 118:19,20 ^{<6214>}Revelation 22:14) and because there will be great numbers of such, especially when a nation shall be born at once, hence they are so called: and these will be a set of men that "will keep the truth"; not, as the Targum renders it,

"who keep the law with a perfect heart;"

for no man can do that; but rather the ordinances of the Gospel, as they were first delivered by Christ and his apostles, and especially the truths of it; and the word here used is in the plural number, and may be rendered “truths”; the several truths of the Gospel, which will be kept by the righteous, not in memory only, but in their hearts and affections, and in their purity, and with a pure conscience; and they will not part with them at any rate, but hold them fast, that no man take their crown, (~~661~~ Revelation 3:11).

Ver. 3. *Thou wilt keep [him] in perfect peace, &c.*] Peace with God in Christ through his blood, in a way of believing, and as the fruit and effect of his righteousness being received by faith; this is not always felt, received, and enjoyed in the soul; yet the foundation of it always is, and is perfect; and besides, this peace is true, real, and solid; in which sense the word “perfect” is used, in opposition to a false and imaginary one; and it will end in perfect peace in heaven: moreover, the word “perfect” is not in the Hebrew text, it is there “peace, peace”; which is doubled to denote the certainty of it, the enjoyment of it, and the constancy and continuance of it; and as expressive of all sorts of peace, which God grants unto his people, and keeps for them, and them in; as peace with God and peace with men, peace outward and peace inward, peace here and peace hereafter; and particularly it denotes the abundance of peace that believers will have in the kingdom of Christ in the latter day; (see ~~977~~ Psalm 72:7 ~~2307~~ Isaiah 9:7):

[whose] mind [is] stayed [on thee]; or “fixed” on the love of God, rooted and grounded in that, and firmly persuaded of interest in it, and that nothing can separate from it; on the covenant and promises of God, which are firm and sure; and on the faithfulness and power of God to make them good, and perform them; and on Christ the Son of God, and Saviour of men; upon him as a Saviour, laying the whole stress of their salvation on him; upon his righteousness, for their justification; upon his blood and sacrifice, for atonement, pardon, and cleansing; on his fulness, for the supply of their wants; on his person, for their acceptance with God; and on his power, for their protection and preservation; (see ~~2307~~ Isaiah 10:20 50:10 ~~9837~~ Psalm 112:7,8):

because he trusteth in thee; not in the creature, nor in any creature enjoyment, nor in their riches, nor in their righteousness, nor in their own hearts, nor in any carnal privileges: only in the Lord, as exhorted to in the

next verse (²³⁰⁴Isaiah 26:4); in the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, that is, in Christ.

Ver. 4. *Trust ye in the Lord for ever, &c.*] In the Word of the Lord for ever and ever, as the Targum again; that is, at all times, in every state and condition, in times of affliction, temptation, and darkness; for he will support under, and in his own time deliver out of every trouble, and cause all things to work together for good; and trust in him always, for everything, for all temporal blessings, and for all spiritual ones, and for eternal life and happiness; for he has them, has promised them, and will give them:

for in the Lord JEHOVAH [is] everlasting strength; Christ is the Lord JEHOVAH, which is, and was, and is to come, self-existent, eternal, and immutable; and in him is strength, as well as righteousness for his people; and that for everything it is wanted for, to bear up under temptations and afflictions, to withstand every spiritual enemy, to exercise every grace, and discharge every duty: and this strength is everlasting; it always continues in him, and is always to be had from him; he is the “eternal” God, who is the refuge of his people, and his “arms” of power and might “underneath” them are “everlasting”: the words may be rendered, “for in Jah” is “Jehovah, the Rock of ages”^{f503}; Jehovah the Son is in Jehovah the Father, according to (⁶¹⁰⁸John 10:38 ⁶¹⁴¹John 14:11) or “Jah Jehovah” is “the Rock of ages”, so Vitranga; he is the “Rock” on which the church and every believer is built, against which “the gates of hell cannot prevail”; and he has been the Rock of his people in ages past, and will be in ages to come: or “of worlds”; this world, and that to come; and so it is explained in the Talmud^{f504}, he that trusts in the Lord has a refuge in this world, and in the world to come.

Ver. 5. *For he bringeth down them that dwell on high, the lofty city, &c.*] That dwell on high in the high city, so the accents require the words to be rendered; and accordingly the Targum is,

“for he will bring low the inhabitants of the high and strong city;”

such that dwell in a city built on high, and in the high towers and palaces of it; or that sit on high thrones, are spiritual wickednesses in high places, and are of proud and haughty dispositions and conduct; as the pope of Rome and his cardinals, &c.; for not the city of Jerusalem is here meant, as Jerom thinks, whose destruction he supposes is foretold, as both by the

Babylonians and Romans; and therefore, he observes, the word is doubled in the next clause; nor the city of Nineveh; nor Babylon, literally taken; but mystical Babylon is here meant. Jarchi interprets them that dwell on high of Tyre and Greece; but Jerom says, the Jews understand by the lofty city the city of Rome; and this seems to be the true sense; a city built upon seven hills or mountains; a city that has ruled over the kings of the earth, and whose present inhabitants are proud and haughty:

he layeth it low: he layeth it low, [even] to the ground; he bringeth it [even] to the dust; all which expressions denote the utter destruction of it; (see ^{<2352>}Isaiah 25:12 ^{<6807>}Revelation 18:7,8,21).

Ver. 6. *The foot shall tread it down,* &c.] Trample upon it when brought down, laid low, and level with the ground, as mire is trodden in the streets, and straw for the dunghill; as grapes in the winepress, or grass by the feet of cattle: not the foot of a prince, as Aben Ezra observes, or of mighty men; but, as follows,

[even] the feet of the poor, [and] the steps of the needy; these are not the Israelites in a literal sense, as Kimchi explains it; but the spiritual Israel of God; the righteous, as the Targum paraphrases it; the saints of the most High, to whom the kingdom and dominion under the whole heaven will now be given, and who will be just come out of great tribulation; for the words suggest, that the people of God will be a poor and afflicted people, and very feeble, and sore distressed, a little before the destruction of antichrist; but as God has been always used to do his work by the poor and weak things of this world, by mean and feeble instruments, so he will now, and raise his poor and needy ones to a very high and exalted estate; all their enemies shall be subdued and crushed under their feet; (see ^{<3013>}Malachi 4:3 ^{<2072>}Daniel 7:27) Jarchi interprets the feet of the poor of the feet of the King Messiah, according to (^{<3109>}Zechariah 9:9).

Ver. 7. *The way of the just [is] uprightness,* &c.] Or, “the way for the just is uprightnesses”,^{f505} most upright; the way which is appointed for him, and which he is directed to walk in, is a way of righteousness and holiness, and in which he does walk; he walks uprightly, according to the rules of the word, becoming the Gospel of Christ, and worthy of his calling: or, it is “evennesses”; a most plain and even way, in which men, though fools, shall not err, (^{<2318>}Isaiah 35:8) or, “the way” of the Lord “to the just is uprightnesses”, or “evennesses”; most upright, or most even; there is no inequality in it, though sometimes so charged, (^{<2825>}Ezekiel 18:25,29) it is

entirely agreeable to justice, equity, and truth; regular and even, and suited to all his perfections of wisdom, goodness, &c.^{f506}:

thou most upright; these words are addressed to God, and contain an appellation and description of him, who is upright, just, and true, and loves upright and righteous persons; so Kimchi and Ben Melech take the word to be in the vocative case, and as an address to God; though some render them, “he is upright”^{f507}; that is, the just man is upright, whose way is uprightness; but the former sense best agrees with what follows:

dost weigh the path of the just; observe, consider, and approve of it, as being according to rule, and agreeable to his mind and will, (~~15006~~ Psalm 1:6) or, “thou dost level” or “make even the path of the just”^{f508}; remove all impediments and obstructions out of it, direct his goings, order his steps, and cause him to walk in a straight way, wherein he shall not stumble, (~~23100~~ Jeremiah 31:9) and so this is a reason given why the way of the just is even, because it is made so by the Lord himself.

Ver. 8. *Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee, &c.*] Meaning by “judgments” either the ministration of the word and ordinances, called statutes and judgments, (~~39279~~ Psalm 147:19,20 19:9,10) an attendance on which is the right way of waiting upon God, and where it may be expected he will be found and manifest himself, and favour with his gracious presence; or else the corrections and chastisements, which are done in wisdom and with judgment, in measure and in mercy, and in a fatherly way, and for good; and so the sense is, that they had not only followed the Lord in a plain and even way, but even in the more rugged paths of afflictive dispensations; nor did these things at all move them from their duty to him, and worship of him:

the desire of [our] soul [is] to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee; to God himself, and to a remembrance of his nature, perfections, and works; to Christ, whose name is as ointment poured forth, and whose person is desirable, because of his glory, beauty, and fulness, because of his offices, and blessings of grace; and to his Gospel, which publishes and proclaims him, his grace, and salvation; and to his ordinances, which refresh the memory of his people concerning him, and his love to them shown in what he has done and suffered for them.

Ver. 9. *With my soul have I desired thee in the night, &c.*] Either literally, when others were asleep: or figuratively, in the captivity; which, as Jarchi

says, was like unto the night; or in the time of Jewish and Gentile darkness, preceding the coming of Christ; or rather in the time of latter day darkness, when the church is represented as heartily desirous of, and importunately praying for, the latter day glory, the rising of the sun of righteousness, the spiritual reign of Christ, the spread of his Gospel, and the setting up of his kingdom and glory in the world; so the Targum,

“my soul desireth to pray before thee in the night;”

her desires were expressed by prayer:

yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early; she determines to continue seeking the Lord night and day, with the greatest intenseness of spirit, and eagerness of soul, until she obtained and enjoyed what she sought for; namely, the presence of Christ, communion with him, the discoveries of his love, and larger measures of his grace, light, and knowledge;

for when thy judgments [are] in the earth; such as pestilence, famine, sword, and the like; especially the judgments of God on antichrist, and the antichristian states, which will be just and righteous; (see ^{<660>}Revelation 19:2):

the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness; not the wicked inhabitants of the world, for the contrary is suggested in the following verses; but the saints that are in the world, the upright ones, the righteous before mentioned, the church and her members; these, by the judgments of God in the world, learn what a righteous Being he is, how unrighteous men are, on whose account these judgments come, and themselves too, as in his sight; and they learn the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them before him, and their need, the worth and value, of the righteousness of Christ: and also learn hereby to live soberly, righteously, and godly, (^{<136>}Psalm 119:67,71 94:12) they learn to ascribe righteousness to God, and to fear and worship him, (^{<65>}Revelation 15:3,4 16:5,6).

Ver. 10. *Let favour be showed to the wicked, &c.*] As it often is in a providential way; they have the good things of this life, and sometimes more than heart could wish for; nor are they in trouble as other men; they have many mercies, and many deliverances; they have their portion here, and are filled with hidden treasure, and are spared when others are cut off; and, besides sparing mercy and providential goodness, sometimes enjoy the means of grace, have the word and ordinances:

[yet] will ye not learn righteousness; neither repent of sin, nor reform from it; though “the goodness of God” should, yet it does not, “lead” him “to repentance”; he neither learns the righteousness of God, nor of Christ, nor the insufficiency of his own righteousness, nor to live a truly righteous and godly life; all means and mercies will not do, without the efficacious grace of God:

in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly; in the land of Judea, where were the laws and statutes of God, which were just and equitable, the word and worship of God, and many good men, who lived uprightly, and set good examples; and yet wicked men went on in their sinful courses. Jarchi interprets it of Jerusalem, and the temple, and of men’s spoiling, plundering, and destroying there; and the Talmud^{f509} of wicked Esau, by whom the Romans are meant, that should destroy Jerusalem, and the land of Israel. It seems best to understand it of any land or country in later times, or present ones, where there is a good polity, good and wholesome laws are enacted, vice is corrected and punished, and virtue encouraged, and where also the Gospel is preached, and the ordinances of it administered; and yet, notwithstanding all laws, instructions, precepts, and precedents, such men will go on to live unrighteous and ungodly lives and conversations:

and will not behold the majesty of the Lord; visible in the government of the world; in the dispensations of his providence, in protecting and defending his own people, and in punishing of the wicked; in the Gospel, and in the success of it: in the effusion of the Spirit; and in the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in greater glory in the latter day.

Ver. 11. *Lord, [when] thy hand is lifted up, they will not see*, &c.] Or, “thy high hand they will not see”^{f510}; when it is exalted, and become glorious in power, in punishing wicked men; though the punishment is visible, yet they will not consider that it comes from the hand of God, but attribute it to chance, misfortune, or second causes, (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 28:5) or when the hand the Lord is manifest in doing good to his own people, in delivering them out of their oppressions, and the hands of their oppressors; in reviving his cause and interest, and enlarging the kingdom of his Son; they will not see, own, and acknowledge the power and glory of it. The Targum favours this latter sense,

“Lord, when thou shall be revealed in thy power to do good to them that fear thee, there will be no light to the enemies of thy people:”

[but] they shall see; whether they will or not; the judgments of God will be manifest, both in his vengeance on antichrist, and in glorifying his own people:

and be ashamed for [their] envy at the people; their envy at the happiness and prosperity of the Lord’s people; their malice towards them, and persecution of them: or, “for the zeal of thy people”^{f511}; not for the zeal of the people to God, but for the zeal of the Lord to them; when they shall see him zealously affected to them, and concerned for them; as they shall see it, whether they will or not; they will then be confounded and ashamed, when he will vindicate his own people, and right their wrongs, and avenge their enemies; so the Targum,

“the revenge of thy people shall cover them:”

yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them: or, “fire shall devour them, thine enemies”^{f512}; the wrath of God, which is like unto fire; or, fire out of the mouth of the witnesses, (~~6115~~ Revelation 11:5).

Ver. 12. *Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us*, &c.] Dispose, order, give it to us, outward and inward, spiritual and eternal: chiefly respect is had to that peace and prosperity the church will have in the latter day, which the zeal of the Lord of hosts, before mentioned, will perform for her, (~~4978~~ Psalm 72:8 ~~2307~~ Isaiah 9:7) and which she expresses her faith in, when it goes ill with the wicked, and that for the following reason:

for thou also hast wrought all our works in us; or “to us”, or “for us”^{f513}; all that had been done for them before were done by the Lord, came of his hands, were owing to his goodness, grace, and power and not to be ascribed unto themselves; all their mercies and deliverances, all that had been done for them in nature, providence, and grace; all that had been done for the church and people of God in all ages and periods of time, the glory of all was due to him; and since he had done so many and such great things for them, they had reason to believe he would grant them that peace and prosperity promised and expected in the latter day. The work of grace upon the heart is peculiarly the work which God works in his people, and is thought by some to be here meant; this is God’s work, and not man’s; and it is an internal one, something wrought in the heart, and which, being

begun, will be performed; and may be expressed in the plural number, because of the excellency of it, it is the work of works; it includes others, and from whence all good works done by good men spring; and, besides, it consists of various parts, each of which is a work; as the work of faith, the labour of love, and perfect work of patience; and the fruit of this is peace here, and men on account of it may expect eternal peace hereafter; for this is the saints' meetness for glory, and which is inseparably connected with it. Abarbanel^{f514} interprets this "peace" of the times of the Messiah, and of the redemption wrought out by him; and "our works", of the troubles that came upon the Jews in captivity, which were all from the Lord, as well as their mercies and deliverance.

Ver. 13. *O Lord our God, [other] lords besides thee have had dominion over us, &c.*] Sin and Satan have the dominion over the Lord's people, in a state of unregeneracy; before the good work of grace is wrought in them, every lust is a lord, and is served and obeyed: and Satan is the god of this world by usurpation, and leads men captive at his will. Some think that the idols the Jews had served and worshipped, called "Baalim" or lords, are meant, and that this is a confession of their sin; but that word is not here used. The Targum interprets it of the Jewish governors ruling over them, without the Lord; rather the Assyrians and Babylonians are designed; but it is best of all to understand it of persecuting tyrants, of antichristian kings and states that have exercised a tyrannical power over the people of God:

[but] by thee only will we make mention of thy name; that is, by thy strength, and through grace received from thee, we will be only subject to thee, our King and Lawgiver, and obey thy commands, serve and worship thee, knowing that it is right to obey God rather than man; or through the influence of thy grace, and by the assistance of thy Spirit, we will celebrate thy name, give thee thanks for our deliverance from the servitude, bondage, and oppression of other lords.

Ver. 14. *[They are] dead, they shall not live; [they are] deceased, they shall not rise, &c.*] The above tyrannical lords, the kings of the earth and their mighty men, associates of the Romish antichrist, who shall be gathered together, and slain at the battle at Armageddon; these shall not live again in this world, nor rise from their graves, and return to their former state, power, and authority; or tyrannise over, molest, disturb, oppress, and persecute the people of God any more; though they shall live again at the end of the thousand years, and shall awake to everlasting

shame and contempt, and come forth to the resurrection of damnation. The Targum is,

“they worship the dead, who do not live; and their mighty men, who shall not rise;”

and are opposed to the worshippers of the only Lord God:

therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish; or, “because thou hast visited”, &c. ^{f515}; for these words are a reason why they are irrecoverably lost, and shall not live in eternal life, or rise in the resurrection of the just; because God has visited them in wrath, destroyed them in and for their sins, with such an utter destruction, that they shall be remembered no more. This visitation will be at Armageddon, when the kings, and captains and great men will be slain; the beast and false prophet taken, and cast alive into the furnace of fire; and the rest will be killed by the sword, proceeding out of the mouth of Christ, (~~f698~~ Revelation 19:18-21). The Targum interprets it of God’s casting the wicked into hell.

Ver. 15. *Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation, &c.*] The righteous nation, (~~z380~~ Isaiah 26:2) the church of God, by the numerous conversions of Jews and Gentiles; when the nation of the Jews shall be born at once, and the fulness and forces of the Gentiles are brought in; when the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ: this increase is repeated, to denote the certainty of it, and because a matter of great moment and importance:

thou art glorified; as by the destruction of the antichristian powers, so by the enlargement of the church and kingdom of Christ; for now will the voices be heard in heaven, giving praise and glory to God: even those that are frightened with his judgments, as well as those that are affected with his goodness, will give glory to the God of heaven, (~~f613~~ Revelation 11:13, 17 19:1-6):

thou hadst removed [it] far [unto] all the ends of the earth: not the Jewish people now scattered throughout the world, but the righteous nation increased and enlarged, which now will be spread to the ends of the world; for Christ’s kingdom will be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, (~~4978~~ Psalm 72:8) it may be rendered, “thou hast removed afar off all the ends of the earth”: so Deuteronomy Dieu, who interprets it of the great men of the earth, the excellent in it, the cornerstones of it; but

perhaps it may be better to understand hereby every island and mountain fleeing away at the destruction of antichrist, and the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, (^{<3361>}Revelation 16:20).

Ver. 16. *Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, &c.*] This, and the two following verses (^{<23317>}Isaiah 26:17,18), represent the troubles and disappointments of the church and people of God, before the destruction of antichrist; in which time of trouble they will visit the Lord, frequent the throne of grace, as saints in afflictions are wont to do; and sometimes this is the end to be answered by afflictions, (^{<3315>}Hosea 5:15):

they poured out a prayer; or “muttering”^{<516>}; they will pray with a low voice, in an humble and submissive way, as persons in dejected circumstances; not a few words, but many, will they use; their petitions will be numerous; they will continue praying, and be constant at it, and out of the abundance of their hearts their mouth will speak; and they will pour out their souls and their complaints to the Lord, though privately, and with a low voice, and with groans unutterable:

[when] thy chastening [was] upon them; the afflicting hand of God, not as a punishment, but as a fatherly chastisement upon them; so all their persecutions from men are considered as permitted by the Lord for their instruction and correction; and these will not drive them from God, but bring them to him to seek him by prayer and supplication.

Ver. 17. *Like as a woman with child, &c.*] By this simile are set forth the great distresses and afflictions the church of Christ will be in, before redemption and deliverance from the antichristian yoke comes:

[that] draweth near the time of her delivery; when her burden is great and very troublesome:

[is] in pain, [and] crieth out in her pangs; for her friends to come about her, and give her all the help and assistance they can:

so have we been in thy sight, O Lord; in great distress and trouble, and crying to him for salvation and deliverance, all which were well known unto him.

Ver. 18. *We have been with child, &c.*] Like women with child; we have been full of hopes and expectations of great things, of deliverance from our enemies, and of the kingdom of Christ being at hand:

we have been in pain; in great distress and anxiety, and in fervent and frequent prayer, travailing in birth, which we looked upon as forerunners of a happy issue of things:

we have as it were brought forth wind; all our hopes have proved abortive, and we have been disappointed in our expectations:

we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth: or, “salvations” have “not been wrought in the earth”^{f517}; this explains what is meant by bringing forth wind; salvation and deliverance out of the hand of the enemy not being wrought, as was expected:

neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen; worldly men, the great men, the kings of the earth; particularly such as commit fornication with the whore of Rome, Popish persecuting princes; these as yet are not fallen, though they shall in the battle of Armageddon.

Ver. 19. *Thy dead [men] shall live*, &c.] These are the words of Christ to his church and people, promising great and good things to them after their troubles are over, thereby comforting them under all their trials and disappointments; as that such things should come to pass, which would be as life from the dead; as the conversion of the Jews, and of great numbers of the Gentiles, dead in trespasses and sins; and a great reviving of the interest of religion, and of professors of it, grown cold, and dead, and lifeless; and a living again of the witnesses, which had been slain. And, moreover, this may refer to the first resurrection, upon the second coming of Christ, when the church’s dead, and Christ’s dead, the dead in him, will live again, and rise first, and come forth to the resurrection of life, and live and reign with Christ a thousand years:

[together with] my dead body shall they arise; or, “arise my dead body”; the church, the mystical body of Christ, and every member of it, though they have been dead, shall arise, everyone of them, and make up that body, which is the fulness of him that filleth all in all, and that by virtue of their union to him: there was a pledge and presage of this, when Christ rose from the dead, upon which the graves were opened, and many of the saints arose, (^{<425>}Matthew 27:51-53) (see ^{<382>}Hosea 6:2), or, “as my dead body shall they arise”^{f518}; so Kimchi and Ben Melech; as sure as Christ’s dead body was raised, so sure shall everyone of his people be raised; Christ’s resurrection is the pledge and earnest of theirs; because he lives, they shall live also; he is the first fruits of them that slept: or as in like manner he was

raised, so shall they; as he was raised incorruptible, powerful, spiritual, and glorious, and in the same body, so shall they; their vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body. This is one of the places in Scripture from whence the Jews^{f519} prove the resurrection of the dead; and which they apply to the times of the Messiah, and to the resurrection in his days.

Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; this is a periphrasis of the dead, of such as are brought to the dust of death, and sleep there; as death is expressed by sleeping, so the resurrection by awaking out of sleep; which will be brought about by the voice of Christ, which will be so loud and powerful, that the dead will hear it, and come out of their graves; and then will they “sing”, and have reason for it, since they will awake in the likeness of Christ, and bear the image of him the heavenly One:

for thy dew [is as] the dew of herbs; the power of Christ will have as great effect upon, and as easily raise the dead, as the dew has upon the herbs, to refresh, raise, and revive them; so that their “bones”, as the prophet says, “shall flourish like an herb”, (²³⁶⁴Isaiah 66:14):

and the earth shall cast out the dead; deliver up the dead that are in it, at the all powerful voice of Christ; (see ⁶⁶¹³Revelation 20:13). The Targum is,

“but the wicked to whom thou hast given power, and they have transgressed thy word, thou wilt deliver into hell;”

(see ⁶⁶¹⁴Revelation 20:14,15).

“I greatly wonder at it, how he (the prophet) should call the bodies of the pure righteous ones a carcass; no doubt there is a reason for it, known to the wise men and cabalists, which I am ignorant of.”

But the words are spoken of one who did not die a natural, but a violent death, even the Messiah Jesus; and so just according to the Rabbin’s own observation.

Ver. 20. *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, &c.*] These words are either to be connected with the preceding verse (²³⁶⁹Isaiah 26:19), and considered as a part of the song; and then the design of them is, to let the people of God know that there would be times of great trouble and distress, previous to that glorious one before mentioned; whether it is to be understood of a spiritual resurrection, the conversion of Jews and Gentiles in the latter day, which the judgments on antichrist will antecede,

(~~689D~~ Revelation 19:2,7) or of the first resurrection, upon the coming of Christ, (~~723B~~ Daniel 12:1,2) and therefore should expect such a time of trouble, and concern themselves for shelter and security: or else, the song being finished, as is generally thought; in the last verse (~~2339~~ Isaiah 26:19), these words begin a new subject, and should a new chapter, in which it is foretold what punishment would be inflicted on a wicked world; and therefore, to comfort the Lord's people that should dwell among them, and to let them know what provision was made for their retreat and safety, and where they might be secure during the storm, these words are delivered out; in which the Lord addresses his people in a very kind and tender manner, claiming an interest in them, and expressing great affection for them, and concern for their welfare: "my people", whom I have loved with an everlasting love, chosen to be a special people above all people, made a covenant with them in my Son, and redeemed them by his blood, and called them by my Spirit and grace; "come", away from the wicked, be separate from them, have no fellowship with them; much the same with that in (~~689B~~ Revelation 18:4) and referring to the same time, "come out of her, my people", &c. or "come" to me, who have been the dwelling place of my people in all generations, a strong habitation, to which they may continually resort, (~~390E~~ Psalm 90:1 71:3) or "come" along with me, I will lead you to a place where you may be safe; as he did Noah and his family into the ark, to which there may be an allusion, (~~000E~~ Genesis 7:1,16),

enter thou into thy chambers; alluding to persons abroad in the fields, who, when they perceive a storm coming, make haste home, and get into their houses, and into the more retired and safer parts of them, till it is over; or to the Israelites, who kept within the doors, while the destroying angel passed through the land of Egypt; or to Rahab and her family being within her house, when Jericho was destroyed: these "chambers" may be taken literally for places of prayer and devotion; prayer being very proper to have recourse unto in times of trouble, and which as it should be performed by single persons privately, (~~406B~~ Matthew 6:6) which text is a comment on this; and perhaps respect may be had to the manner of the performance of it by societies, in times of great persecution; so it is the safety of God's people; and there is nothing better for them, in times of trouble, than to commit themselves to God in prayer, and to his divine protection: and it may be that God himself, and the perfections of his nature, are here meant by "chambers"; his name is a strong tower, whither the righteous run and are safe, (Pro 18:10) and every perfection in him is as a chamber in this

tower, where the saints betaking themselves may securely lodge, till the trouble is over; as the everlasting love of God, which changes not, and therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed; the faithfulness of God, in his covenant and promises, which never fails; and his power, in which they are kept, as in a garrison, (~~6065~~1 Peter 1:5) and these chambers may not be unfitly applied to Christ and to his blood and righteousness, who is a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the storm, a strong hold for prisoners of hope; in whose person are rest, peace, and safety in the midst of trouble; whose righteousness secures from condemnation and wrath; and not good works, as the Targum, which it says will protect in a time of distress; but the righteousness of Christ will, as also his precious blood; which was typified by the blood of the passover lamb, sprinkled on the door posts of the Israelites, whereby they were preserved by the destroying angel; and was signified by the scarlet thread in Rahab's window, the token by which her house was known, and so all in it saved. The general design of the words is to exhort the people of God to a composed and tranquil state of mind; to calmness, quietness, and rest, while the judgments of God were upon the earth; to be still and easy, whatever hurly burleys there were in the world; to commit themselves to God, and look upon themselves safe and secure, under his providence and protection. Some of the ancients, by "chambers", understand the graves, and not amiss; especially if the words are to be considered in connection with the preceding, thus, since the dead saints will arise as sure as Christ is risen, and in like manner as he, and those that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake and sing, then do not be afraid of death and the grave; enter here, as into your bedchambers; where, being taken away from the evil to come, you will enter into peace, lie down and rest on your beds, in the utmost secrecy and safety, until the resurrection morn; while storms of divine wrath fall upon a wicked and ungodly world; (see ~~2501~~Isaiah 57:1,2 ~~18413~~Job 14:13):

and shut thy doors about thee; a phrase expressive of safety and secrecy, and may be applied to the several things above mentioned:

hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast; not the indignation of Satan, or of wicked persecutors against the saints, but the indignation of God; and that not upon his own people, or on the Jewish nation, but on a wicked world; not in hell, for that will be everlasting, and never over, and much less be only for a little moment; but as it will be in time, and fall upon all the nations of the world, and especially the Romish antichrist, and the antichristian states; and refers

chiefly to the seven vials of God's wrath, which will be poured forth upon them; which, when they begin, will soon be over; (see ^{<234D>}Isaiah 34:2 ^{<661D>}Revelation 16:1) and so will be the burning of the world, the last instance of God's indignation on earth, it will soon be at an end; and, in the meanwhile, the saints will be with Christ in the air; and those troubles, in which the people will be involved before happy times come, will be very short; as indeed all their afflictions are but for a moment, a little moment; the temptation that will come upon all the earth, to try the inhabitants of it, will be but an hour; and the slaying of the witnesses, and their lying slain, will be but three days and a half; this time of trouble will be shortened for the elect's sake, (^{<422D>}Matthew 24:21,22 ^{<618D>}Revelation 3:10 11:7-11) compare with this (^{<457D>}Psalm 57:1).

Ver. 21. *For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place,* &c.] God, as omnipresent, is everywhere, and cannot be properly said to quit one place, and go to another; but as heaven is the seat of his majesty, and where he more manifestly displays his glory, when he is said to do anything remarkable on earth, he is said to come out of his place, and come down thither, (^{<330D>}Micah 1:3) especially in the exertion of his power and justice, in a way of punishment of sin; which is his act, his strange act; and comes off from his throne of grace and mercy, in which he delights: the allusion is to a king leaving his throne and palace, to go forth against an enemy abroad, or to quell and punish rebellious subjects: some reference may be had to the Lord's dwelling in the temple secretly, in the inward part of it, and coming out from thence in the display of his perfections, as Calvin thinks; with which may be compared (^{<614D>}Revelation 14:15,18 ^{<615D>}Revelation 15:6 16:1):

to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; not the same as in (^{<233D>}Isaiah 26:10) for those are distinguished from the Lord's people; but carnal, worldly, and earthly men, particularly the followers of antichrist, called the inhabitants of the earth, who have committed fornication with the whore of Rome, (^{<617D>}Revelation 17:2 18:3) these the Lord will punish for their iniquity; for he punishes none but for sin, even for their idolatries, adulteries, sorceries, thefts, and murders, particularly their shedding of innocent blood, as follows; and therefore their punishment will be just, God will remember their iniquities, and retaliate; (see ^{<612D>}Revelation 9:20,21 18:5 19:2):

the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain; when God shall make inquisition for blood, the blood of all his saints and prophets will be found in mystical Babylon, and what was hid and covered, or thought to be so, will now be discerned, and brought to light, and just punishment inflicted for it, (~~61824~~ Revelation 18:24 16:5-7) unless this should rather denote the great effusion of blood and carnage that will be made, so that the earth will not be able to drink it in, and the slain will lie unburied on it; (see ~~61113~~ Revelation 11:13 14:20 19:17,18). The Targum favours the former sense,

“and the earth shall reveal the innocent blood that is shed on it, and shall no more cover her slain.”