

CHAPTER 33

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 33

This chapter contains an account of God's judgments upon the enemies of his people, and of the peaceable, comfortable, and happy state of the church in the latter day. The judgment denounced, (²³³⁰Isaiah 33:1) a prayer of the church for safety and protection, which it promises itself from what God had heretofore done, (²³³²Isaiah 33:2,3) an answer to it, declaring the spoil of the enemy, and the happy times the people of God should enjoy through his appearance for them, (²³³⁴Isaiah 33:4-6) though previous thereunto there would be very distressing ones, (²³³⁷Isaiah 33:7-9) when the Lord resolves to arise and exert his power in the destruction of the people, who should be burnt up like stubble, thorns, and lime, (²³³⁹Isaiah 33:10-12) persons far and near are called upon to take notice of this, (²³⁴¹Isaiah 33:13) which would issue in a different manner, in the surprise and terror of hypocrites, and in the safety and plenty of provisions for good men, who are described, (²³⁴⁴Isaiah 33:14-16) and then follow promises to them, of seeing the King in his beauty, and beholding a distant country of reflecting on past terror with pleasure, being freed from it, and in no danger of a foreign enemy, (²³⁴⁷Isaiah 33:17-19) and the chapter is concluded with a famous prophecy of the peace, prosperity, and safety of the church, and of the healthfulness of its inhabitants, under the protection of Christ, its King and Lawgiver, its enemies being also an easy prey to it, (²³⁵⁰Isaiah 33:20-24).

Ver. 1. *Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou [wast] not spoiled, &c.]* Which some understand of Nebuchadnezzar; others of Sennacherib, which is more probable; it seems best to interpret it of the Romish antichrist. Kimchi thinks that, if it respects the times of Hezekiah, Sennacherib is meant; but if the times of the Messiah, then the king of nations that shall be in those days; and he adds, this is the kingdom of Persia, in the vision of Daniel. Vatranga applies this to Antiochus Epiphanes, and the whole prophecy to the times of the Maccabees; but it best agrees with the beast of Rome, to whom power has been given over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, the Apollyon, the spoiler and destroyer of the earth, especially of the saints,

whom he has made war with and overcome; (see ⁽⁶⁶¹⁾Revelation 9:11 11:7,18 13:7) now this spoiler of man, of their substance by confiscation, of their bodies by imprisonment and death, and of their societies and families by his violent persecutions, and of the souls of others by his false doctrine; though he may continue long in prosperity and glory, and not be spoiled, or destroyed, yet not always. The Vulgate Latin version renders the last clause interrogatively, and perhaps not amiss, “shall thou not be spoiled?” verily thou shalt; the same measure he has meted to others shall be measured to him again; the spoiler of others shall be stripped of all himself; he that destroyed the earth shall be destroyed from off the earth; he that leads into captivity shall go into it; and he that kills with the sword shall be slain by it, (⁽⁶¹¹⁸⁾Revelation 11:18 13:10):

and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee; or, “shall they not deal treacherously with thee?” so the above version renders it with an interrogation; and both this and the preceding clause are thus paraphrased by the Targum,

“woe to thee that comest to spoil, and shall they not spoil thee? and who comest to oppress, and shall they not oppress thee?”

truly they shall; the kings of the earth that were in confederacy with the beast, and gave their kingdoms to him, shall hate the whore, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, (⁽⁶⁷⁶⁾Revelation 17:16):

when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled; when the time is come that antichrist shall be suffered no longer to ravage in the earth, and spoil the bodies, souls, and substance of men, then shall he himself be spoiled of his power and authority, riches and grandeur; his plagues shall come upon him at once, fire, famine, and death; for his cessation from spoiling will not be his own option, nor the fruit and effect of repentance and reformation, but will be owing to the sovereign power of God in restraining him:

[and] when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee; for the coming of antichrist was with lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; he has the appearance of a lamb, but speaks like a dragon; has used many wiles, arts, and stratagems, and treacherous methods to deceive and impose on men, and to ensnare and entrap them; and when the time is come that he will not be permitted to proceed any further and longer in his deceitful practices,

the kings of the earth, who have been deceived by him, and brought in subjection to him, will pay him in his own coin; (see <sup>^{2 Thessalonians 2:9,10} <sup>^{Revelation 13:11 17:12,13,16}).

Ver. 2. *O Lord, be gracious unto us, &c.*] This is a prayer of the church under the persecutions of antichrist, imploring the grace and favour of God in their miserable and distressed circumstances; desiring his gracious help, assistance, and deliverance; pleading not any merits of their own, but casting themselves upon the mercy and kindness of God:

we have waited for thee; time after time, year after year, in the use of means; hoping for the manifestations of thyself, and kind appearance for us; expecting help and salvation, and still continue to wait, believing the time will come when favour will be shown:

be thou their arm every morning; when they pray unto thee, the morning being the time of prayer; and also be their arm all the day long, to lean and depend upon, to support, protect, and defend them; there is a change of person from the first to the third, usual in prophetic and poetic writings: some take them to be the words of the Old Testament church, praying for the New Testament church; and others a prayer of the church for her children and members. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, “our arm”; and the Syriac version, “our helper”; and the Targum,

“our strength:”

some read the words in connection with the following clause, thus, “be thou”, who wast “their arm every morning”, referring to their forefathers, whose strength and support the Lord was,

our salvation also in the time of trouble^{f649}; the deliverer of us from the antichristian yoke of bondage, from all his persecutions and oppressions, from the last struggle of the beast, from that hour of trouble and temptation that shall come upon all the earth.

Ver. 3. *At the noise of the tumult the people fled, &c.*] The Vulgate Latin Version renders it, “at the voice of the angel”; and Jerom reports it as the opinion of the Jews, that it was Gabriel; and many interpret the words either of the noise the angel made in the air, or was made in the Assyrian camp, when the angel descended, and smote such a vast number of them, at which the remnant, being frightened, fled, (<sup>^{2 Kings 19:35,36}) but either this is to be understood as expressing what had been done in time

past, and therefore the church took encouragement that it might and would be so again; or as a continuance of her prayer, thus, “at the noise of the tumult”, or multitude^{f650}, “let the people flee”^{f651}; or as a prediction, “they shall flee”^{f652}; that is, at the noise of the multitude of saints, the faithful, called, and chosen armies of heaven, that follow Christ on white horses, and clothed in white; when he shall go forth to battle with the kings of the earth, beast, and false prophet, let the people under them flee, or they shall flee, and not be able to stand before so puissant a General, and so powerful an army; (see ^{<6174>}Revelation 17:14 19:14):

at the lifting up of thyself, the nations were scattered; so it has been in times past, when the Lord has lifted up himself, and appeared on behalf of his people, and has exerted himself, and displayed his power; and so it will be again; or so let it be: “let the nations be scattered”; the antichristian nations, as they will be, when the Lord shall lift up his hand, and pour out the vials of his wrath upon them.

Ver. 4. *And your spoil shall be gathered [like] the gathering of the caterpillar, &c.*] This is the answer of the Lord to the prayer of his church, signifying that their enemies should flee, be scattered, and perish, and that they should be victorious, and enjoy the spoils of them; which they should gather as easily as the caterpillar or locust, as some render it, gathers and consumes herbs, and every green thing; or as easily as they are gathered, and laid on heaps, being weak and unable to defend themselves: most understand it of the Jews going into the camp of the Assyrians, after the destruction of them by the angel, and gathering their spoil. The Targum is,

“and the house of Israel shall gather the substance of the people, their enemies, as they gather a locust:”

the antichristian locusts or caterpillars are here meant, whose substance shall fall into the hands of the followers of Christ, when they shall have got the victory of them; this is the flesh of the whore, her worldly substance, which the kings of the earth, the Christian kings, shall eat or enjoy, (^{<6176>}Revelation 17:16):

as the running to and fro of locusts shall he run upon them: or “upon it”; the spoil; as these locusts, of which (see ^{<618>}Revelation 9:3,4) run to and fro, and pillaged them in times past, as the creatures, to whom they are compared, run to and fro and destroy the fruits of the earth, so now

everyone of the followers of Christ shall run and seize upon the spoil of the antichristian states.

Ver. 5. *The Lord is exalted*, &c.] These are the words of the church, or of true believers, setting the praise and glory of God, on account of the victory and spoil of their enemies; by which the Lord is exalted, magnified, and honoured, as he will be in the hearts and mouths of his people when these times shall come; (see ^{f6115} Revelation 11:15) (^{f650} Revelation 15:1,2 19:1,2) this will be true of Christ, and indeed this will be the time when he, and he alone, shall be exalted, (²⁰¹⁷ Isaiah 2:17):

for he dwelleth on high; in the highest heaven, and is above his greatest enemies, and can, and will, pour down his wrath and vengeance on them:

he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness; the church of God, where Christ her King will reign in righteousness, and when all the administrations of his kingly power and government will appear to be just and true; where his word shall be faithfully preached, and his ordinances duly administered; and when all his subjects and people shall be righteous, and live soberly and righteously. The Targum is,

“with those that do true judgment and righteousness.”

Ver. 6. *And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times*, &c.] Some take these words to be directed to Hezekiah; but rather they are an apostrophe to the Messiah, and respect the later times of Christ, when many shall run to and fro, and the knowledge of him shall be increased, and the earth shall be covered with it, as the waters cover the sea; and which, as it will make these times comfortable and pleasant, so firm, durable, and lasting: or else they are the words of believers in those times, addressed to Zion the church, before spoken of, observing the great increase of spiritual wisdom and knowledge after the destruction of antichrist; by means of which there would be settled times of peace, joy, and comfort to the church:

[and] strength of salvation; or “salvations”^{f653}; or strong and lasting salvations; eternal salvation by Jesus Christ, and complete salvation from antichrist, and from every other enemy; which, together with spiritual wisdom, and experimental knowledge of Christ, and his Gospel, will be the stability of those happy times, which will make the spiritual reign of Christ. The whole may be rendered, according to the accents ^{f654}, and “he” (that is,

the Lord, before spoken of) “shall be the stability of thy times; the strength of salvations shall be wisdom and knowledge”:

the fear of the Lord [is] his treasure; either Hezekiah’s, as some, who esteemed the fear of the Lord above all his treasure; and was more zealous in settling and establishing the true worship of God than in amassing treasures to himself: or rather the Lord’s treasure, from which he receives a tribute of honour, of more value than the greatest treasure: or, best of all, the church’s treasure, and every true believer’s; this being the beginning of wisdom, or true grace, the best of riches, and which secures the saints’ final perseverance to glory, the better and more enduring substance.

Ver. 7. *Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without*, &c.] Or, “in the street”: this, and the two following verses (²³¹⁸Isaiah 33:8,9), describe the sad and desolate condition of the people of God, before the above happy times take place; “their valiant ones”, such who have been valiant for the truth on earth; or “their angels”, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melech interpret the word; these are the angels and pastors of the churches, the two witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth openly and publicly, and who will be slain, and their bodies lie unburied in the street of the great city, (⁶¹¹⁸Revelation 11:3,8):

the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly; most interpreters understand this of the ambassadors which Hezekiah sent to the king of Assyria to obtain peace, but could not succeed, on account of which they are said to weep bitterly; but the character of “ambassadors of peace” well agrees with the ministers of the Gospel, who are “ambassadors” in Christ’s stead, and whose work it is to exhort men to “be reconciled to God”, and to preach the Gospel of peace to sinful men; these now will “weep bitterly”, when they are removed into corners, and are silenced, and not suffered to deliver their messages of peace, to the comfort of the Lord’s people, and the glory of his name; which will be the case at the time of the slaying of the witnesses.

Ver. 8. *The highways lie waste*, &c.] No man walking in them, for fear of the enemy; “the ways of Zion”, which are said to “mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts”, (²¹⁰⁴Lamentations 1:4) none daring to attend the ministry of the word and ordinances; (see ²³¹⁸Isaiah 35:8):

the wayfaring man ceaseth; or, “the traveller rests”^{f655}; or stops; he does not proceed on his journey; a stop is put to a religious course and

conversation; there is an entire cessation of religious worship; a sabbath is kept, but not a religious one; he that would walk in Zion's ways is forbid, and is obliged to sit still:

he hath broken the covenant; some, as Kimchi's father, interpret this of the Jews' complaining that God had broken his covenant with them, as in (^{<1888>}Psalm 89:39) but most of Sennacherib's breaking his covenant with Hezekiah, (^{<1284>}2 Kings 18:14-17) rather this is to be understood of antichrist, whose doctrine is, that faith is not to be kept with heretics, and which will abundantly appear at this distressing time:

he hath despised the cities; as Sennacherib did the fenced cities of Judah; he despised their fortifications, and easily took them, and treated the inhabitants with disdain and contempt; and so will the reformed Protestant cities and countries be invaded, seized upon, and insulted, by the Romish antichrist:

he regardeth no man; so as to keep covenant with them, have compassion on them, and spare them, he fearing neither God nor man.

Ver. 9. *The earth mourneth [and] languisheth, &c.*] All Christendom, being now under the power, dominion, and tyranny of antichrist, and the church's faithful witnesses slain, and a stop put to all Gospel ministrations; and therefore the church must be in a very languishing condition, and great reason for mourning:

Lebanon is ashamed, [and] hewn down; being stripped of its stately cedars; as now the church of Christ, comparable to that goodly mountain Lebanon, will be deprived of its able ministers, which were like tall and spreading Cedars, for their gifts, grace, strength, and usefulness:

Sharon is like a wilderness; such parts, as Great Britain, which have been most fruitful (as Sharon was a very fruitful place) for the Gospel, and Gospel ordinances, in the purity of them, and for professors of religion, being fruitful in grace, and in good works, shall now be like a desert; there being no ministry, no ordinances, nor any, that dare to make an open profession of the true religion:

and Bashan and Carmel shake off [their fruits]; before they are ripe, or come to anything; places noted for being fruitful, and pastures for flocks; and denote, as before, such spots in Christendom where the Gospel has most flourished, but now should be like barren heaths, and desert places.

Ver. 10. *Now will I rise, saith the Lord, &c.*] At the last extremity, when things are come to a crisis; his interest at the lowest, and the kingdom of antichrist at its highest pitch; the whore of Rome triumphing over the slain witnesses, and boasting she was a queen, and knew no sorrow: this will be God's fit time to exert himself, and get him honour and glory: he before was as one lain down and asleep, as if quite negligent and careless about his honour and interest; but now he determines to arise, and show himself strong on the behalf of it; (see ^{<4926>}Psalm 12:5):

now will I be exalted; that is, in his power, by the destruction of the enemies of his church; and in the hearts and mouths of his people, on account of their deliverance and salvation:

now will I lift up myself; show himself above his enemies, higher and greater than they, and reduce them to a low estate and condition. The repetition of the word "now" has its emphasis; and is designed to observe the time of God's appearing in the cause of his people, and the fitness and propriety of it; and to quicken their attention to it, as well as to express the certainty of it, and the firmness of his resolution to do it without delay, and the vehemence and ardour with which he would set about it.

Ver. 11. *Ye shall conceive chaff, ye shall bring forth stubble, &c.*] Signifying that all the counsels, designs, and schemes, of the antichristian party, to continue themselves in their present state, and save themselves from ruin, as well as utterly to destroy the interest of Christ, would be weak, vain, and fruitless; their conceptions and actions, their purposes and attempts, would be alike; would be abortive, like chaff and stubble, and only serve as such for their own destruction:

your breath [as] fire shall devour you; or, "your spirit"^{f656}; your pride and haughtiness, in self praises, commendations, and glorying; your rage, wrath, and fury, against the saints; your blasphemy against God and Christ shall be the reason why the fire of God's wrath shall consume you. The Targum is,

"you have thought for yourselves, O ye people, thoughts of wickedness; ye have done for yourselves evil works; because of your evil works, my Word shall destroy you, as a whirlwind the stubble;"

Christ, the essential Word of God.

Ver. 12. *And the people shall be [as] the burnings of lime, &c.*] Like chalk stones that are burnt to make lime of; which may denote not only their hardness and impenitency, which brought upon them and issued in the wrath of God; but the miserable condition into which they are brought, and the torture they should be put to: perhaps this may refer to the casting of the beast and false prophet alive into the lake burning with fire and brimstone, (⁶⁶⁰Revelation 19:20):

[as] thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire; “thorns” are a fit simile to express the unfruitfulness, uselessness, and harmfulness of wicked men, particularly the sons of Belial, the followers of antichrist; and these “cut up”, and so not green and moist, but dry, and fit fuel for the fire, which burn the more easily and quickly, makes the metaphor more agreeable. The burning of Rome seems here to be pointed at, (⁶⁶⁷Revelation 17:16 18:8).

Ver. 13. *Hear, ye [that are] far off, what I have done, &c.*] Not meaning the destruction of the Assyrian, as it is commonly interpreted; but the ruin of antichrist, the beast, and false prophet, and the burning of the city and whore of Rome; for, whoever will be the instruments, the work is the Lord’s, and therefore it will be done: “she shall be utterly burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord who judgeth her”, (⁶⁶⁸Revelation 18:8) and this shall be heard of far and near, who shall applaud the mighty work, and give God the glory of it, (⁶⁶⁹Revelation 19:1,2):

and, ye [that are] near, acknowledge my might; even his omnipotence, which will be seen, observed, and owned by multitudes, who will say, “Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth”, (⁶⁶⁶Revelation 19:6) there will be some that will be nigh, that shall stand afar off, lamenting her case, and will not own the hand of God in it, (⁶⁶⁹Revelation 18:9,10,15) but others will.

Ver. 14. *The sinners in Zion are afraid, and fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites, &c.*] Meaning not persons of such a character that dwelt in Jerusalem, who had the guise and form of religion, and not the power of it, and were for fleeing to Egypt, and trusting in Pharaoh, and not in the Lord; who were seized with dread and terror, when the Assyrian army besieged them, or when it was so awfully destroyed by the angel in the night; when, observing the visible and immediate hand of God in it, they might fear the like judgment would fall upon them for their irreligion and hypocrisy; but rather formal professors, and hypocritical persons, in the reformed churches, or Protestants having only a form of godliness, without the

power of it, are meant; who, observing God's judgments upon antichrist, shall be seized with a panic, lest the like should come down upon them for their hypocrisy and deceit; unless it should be rather thought that antichrist, and his followers themselves, are designed, who himself is said to sit in the temple of God, and who claim to themselves the name of the church of God, and pretend to be Christians, though they are not; when they shall see the city of Rome in flames, and the vials of God's wrath poured on the antichristian states, shall dread the vengeance of eternal fire, which they express in the following words:

Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? that is, the wrath of God in hell, which is the fire that feeds upon and devours Christless sinners; which shall never be quenched, and is called everlasting fire, in which the followers of antichrist will be tormented for ever; and the smoke of which will ascend for ever and ever, and will be intolerable; none will be able to abide and endure it; (see ⁶⁴⁴Revelation 14:9-11). So the Targum interprets it of the place where the ungodly are to be judged and delivered into hell, an everlasting burning.

Ver. 15. *He that walketh righteously*, &c.] These are the words of the prophet, in answer to those of the hypocrites. So the Targum,

“the prophet said, the righteous shall dwell in it;”

not in the devouring fire and everlasting burnings, but in Zion, in Jerusalem, on high, in the munition of rocks, safe from those burnings; for these words are to be connected not with the preceding, but with the following verse (²³³⁶Isaiah 33:16), “thus, he that walketh righteously”, &c. “he shall dwell on high”, &c.; and such an one is he that walks by faith on Christ as his righteousness; that walks after the Spirit, and not after the flesh; that walks uprightly, according to the rule of the Gospel, and as becomes it; that walks in the ways of judgment and righteousness, in which Christ leads his people, and lives soberly, righteously, and godly:

and speaketh uprightly; or “uprightnesses”^{f657}; upright things, what is in his heart, what is agreeable to the word of God, the standard of truth; who makes mention continually of the righteousness of Christ, and that only as his justifying one: and whose tongue talks of judgment, just and righteous things, and not what is corrupt, profane, impure, and impious:

he that despiseth the gain of oppressions; that which is got by oppression and rapine; the mammon of iniquity, as the Targum calls it; but reckons the gain of wisdom, and of godliness, exceeding preferable to it:

that shaketh his hand from holding of bribes; that will not receive any, but when they are put into his hands shakes them out, and will not retain them; expressing his abhorrence of such practices, and declaring that he is not to be influenced by such methods from speaking truth, and doing justice:

that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood; or “bloods”^{f658}; from hearing those that shed innocent blood, as the Targum; who will not hearken to any solicitations to shed blood; will not converse with men about it, or enter into schemes in order to it, much less join them in shedding it:

and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; done by others; he abhors it in himself, and dislikes it in others; turns his eyes from beholding it, so far from taking pleasure in it, and in those that do it: all this is opposed to the hypocrisy, impiety, profaneness, rapine, bribery, murders, and wickedness of the church of Rome; (see ~~Rev~~ Revelation 9:21).

Ver. 16. *He shall dwell on high, &c.*] And so in safety: this is opposed to the fears of hypocrites, the grovelling life of a worldling, and the low life of many professors, and is expressive of the security of good men. It may respect the state of the saints on earth, who dwell by faith on God, as their covenant God, on his everlasting love and unchangeable grace; on Christ, as their Redeemer and Saviour; and in their thoughts and contemplations on heavenly things, where Christ is; and particularly in the spiritual reign of Christ, after the destruction of antichrist, when such shall dwell quietly and safely in God’s holy hill, the church, which shall be established upon the top of the mountains: and it may also respect the state of the saints in heaven, which is a dwelling on high, and where they will be safe from everlasting burnings, and out of the reach of all enemies:

his place of defence [shall be] the munitions of rocks; Christ is “the place of defence” to his people, against avenging justice, the curse and condemnation of the law, the wrath of God, sin and all its dreadful consequences, Satan and all enemies: and he is “the munitions of rocks”; he is “a Rock” himself, for them to build upon, and shelter in; and like “fortresses” made out of “rocks”, which can never be undermined, blown up, or broke through:

bread shall be given him: not only shall he be in safety, but shall enjoy the greatest plenty of blessings, particularly spiritual ones; above all, Christ, the bread of God from heaven, the true bread, the bread of life, which gives and supports life, and secures an eternal one; as also the word and ordinances, which are the provisions of Zion, and which all its inhabitants are favoured with; for these are all the “gifts” of divine goodness. The Targum is,

“in the house of the sanctuary his soul shall be satisfied, his food shall be sufficient:”

his waters [shall be] sure; Christ and his fulness, the Spirit and his grace, the Gospel doctrines, and ordinances of it; the believer may be assured of a supply from Christ’s fulness; the grace of the Spirit is never failing, and is persevering; and Gospel doctrines and ordinances are not deceitful brooks, but yield comfort and refreshment: compare with this, (⁴⁶⁷¹⁵ Revelation 7:15-17).

Ver. 17. *Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty*, &c.] Not merely Hezekiah in his royal robes, and with a cheerful countenance, having put off his sackcloth and his sadness, upon the breaking up of the siege; but a greater than he, even the King Messiah, in the glory of his person and office, especially as a King reigning gloriously before his ancients in Jerusalem: the apostles saw him in his glory, in the days of his flesh, corporeally and spiritually; believers now see him by faith, crowded with glory and honour, as well as see his beauty, fulness, and suitableness, as a Saviour; and, before long, their eyes shall see him personally in his own and his Father’s glory. This is to be understood of the eyes of good men, before described. The Targum is,

“thine eyes shall see the glory of the Majesty of the King of worlds in his praise;”

and Jarchi interprets it of the glory of the Majesty of God; so, according to both, a divine Person is meant, and indeed no other than Christ:

they shall behold the land that is very far off; not the land of hell, as the Targum, which paraphrases it thus;

“thou shalt behold and see those that go down into the land of hell;”

but rather the heavenly country, the better one, the land of uprightness, typified by the land of Canaan; and may be said to be “a land afar off”, with respect to the earth on which the saints now are, and with regard to the present sight of it, which is a distant one, and will be always afar off to wicked men; this now the saints have at times a view of by faith, which is very delightful, and greatly supports them under their present trials: though it may be that an enlargement of Christ’s kingdom all over the world, to the distant parts of it, may be here meant; which may be called, as the words may be rendered, “a land of distances”, or “of far distances”^{f659}; that reaches far and near, from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; which will be the case when the kingdoms of this world shall become Christ’s, and the kingdom, and the greatness of it under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the most High; a glorious sight this will be. And this sense agrees with the context, and declares what will be after the destruction of antichrist.

Ver. 18. *Thine heart shall meditate terror*, &c.] shall recollect, and think of with pleasure and thankfulness, the terror they were formerly seized with, when surrounded and oppressed by their enemies, particularly at the time of the slaying of the witnesses, which will be a terrible time to the church and people of God; but when that is over, they will call it to mind with gratitude, for deliverance from it^{f660}. This is commonly understood of the terror and consternation the Jews were in when besieged by the Assyrian army; and so the following words,

Where [is] the scribe? where [is] the receiver? where [is] he that counted the towers? are taken to be either the words of the Jews in their distress, calling for such and such officers to go to their respective posts, and do their duty; as the “scribe”, or muster master, to see that he has his full quota of men; the “receiver” or treasurer, and paymaster of the soldiers, to give the men money and wages, that they may be encouraged to fight; and “the counter of towers”, or engineer, to take care of the fortifications, and give directions about them: or else, as now insulting the Assyrians after the defeat of them, inquiring where were now such and such officers in their army, whom before they dreaded, signifying they were all perished and gone. The apostle cites these words, or at least alludes to them, (~~401~~1 Corinthians 1:20) when he says, “where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world?” triumphing over the wise doctors of the Jews, and the philosophers of the Gentiles, as not being able to face and withstand the power and wisdom of the Gospel; (see Gill on “~~401~~1

Corinthians 1:20"). So here, when the people of God will be recovered from their fright, and be brought out of their low estate, and will have ascended into heaven, or be come into a glorious church state, they will then triumph over their enemies, who will be no more, and say, where are the pope and his clergy? his cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, monks, friars, &c.; what are become of them? they are all gone, and will be no more. The Targum is,

“thine heart shall think of great things; where are the scribes? where are the princes? where are the counters? let them come, if they can count the numbers of the slain, the heads of mighty armies;”

which may well enough be illustrated by (⁶¹¹³Revelation 11:13 19:18,19).

“thine heart, which was meditating terror before this.”

Ver. 19. *Thou shalt not see a fierce people*, &c.] A people of a fierce countenance, as in (²¹⁸³Daniel 8:23) fierce in their looks, furious in their temper, cruel and bloodthirsty in their practices, confirmed and hardened in their sins, whose consciences are seared as with a red hot iron; a character given of the Papists, (⁵⁰¹²1 Timothy 4:2) these shall be no more seen nor feared:

a people of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive; than the people in common could, having their worship and devotion not in their mother tongue, but in the Latin tongue:

of a stammering tongue, [that thou canst] not understand: meaning the same as before, a barbarous language, as everyone is to those who understand it not; so the Syriac and Assyrian languages were to the Jews, (²¹⁸³2 Kings 18:26) and so the Roman language to other nations; but now no more to be used in religious worship; nor shall the church of God be any more visited by Turks or Papists, and be in any dread of them more.

Ver. 20. *Look upon Zion*, &c.] Instead of such terrible objects as before described, a very amiable and lovely one is presented to view; even Zion, the church of God, beloved by him, chosen for his habitation, a strong city, a perfection of beauty, and the joy of the whole earth. The Targum is,

“O Zion, thou shalt see their fall;”

the fall of her enemies before mentioned; as at this time the church will see the fall both of the eastern and western antichrist. But the words are an

exhortation to the saints and people of God, to behold the safety, peace, and prosperity of the church, now freed from all its enemies:

the city of our solemnities; a “city”, for its situation, foundation, walls, and building; for its number and sorts of inhabitants; for its wholesome laws and choice privileges: a city of “solemnities”, where the saints solemnly assemble together for religious worship; where the word of God is, solemnly preached, and where the ordinances are solemnly administered, and the sacrifices of prayer and praise are solemnly offered up:

thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation; or the church of God in Gospel times, and particularly in the latter day: (see ^{<3822>}Hebrews 12:22 ^{<3806>}Galatians 4:26) and by which name the church is called in its more glorious state, (^{<6210>}Revelation 21:2,10) which is the “habitation” of God, Father, Son, and Spirit; and of saints, where they dwell, or however will in the latter day, safely, quietly, pleasantly, and comfortably; for then will it be, and be “seen” and enjoyed, as a “quiet” one; for now will the saints live in peace one with another; there will be no more envy, vexations, animosities, and divisions; this will be the Philadelphian church state, when brotherly love shall everywhere prevail, and when they shall also be entirely free from the persecutions of enemies; none shall hurt and destroy in all the holy mountain, (^{<2310>}Isaiah 11:9). Some render it a “sheepfold”^{f661}; Christ is the shepherd, the saints are his sheep, the church is the fold where they are gathered, fed, and preserved, and lie in safety, and peace: and

a tabernacle [that] shall not be taken down; as the tabernacle of Moses was; or the tents of shepherds, soldiers, and sojourners are, to which the allusion may be; and so is expressive of the continuance of the church, which shall not now be removed from place to place, as it has been, but shall be fixed and settled all over the world, and so remain to the end of time, an immovable tabernacle; and especially so it will be when the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, (^{<6213>}Revelation 21:3):

not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; alluding to tents and tabernacles made of curtains, fastened by cords to stakes, by which they are supported. Not only ministers of the Gospel, but every true believer, is as a “stake” or pillar in the church of God, which shall never be removed, (^{<6812>}Revelation 3:12) never removed from the heart and love of God; nor out of the hands of Christ, and an interest in him; nor out of the family of God, or from the

privileges of it; nor from Christ's body, the church, which is his fulness. The "cords" with which these are all held together, which shall never be broken, are the everlasting love of God, electing grace, the covenant and its promises, the word and ordinances, which always remain firm and sure, and secure the stability and continuance of the church of God.

Ver. 21. *But there the glorious Lord [will be] unto us a place of broad rivers [and] streams, &c.*] Egypt had its Nile, and Babylon its Euphrates, but Jerusalem had no such river for its convenience, commerce, and defence; but God promises to be that to his Jerusalem, his church and people, as will answer to, and be "instead"^{f662} of, a river that has the broadest streams; which is expressive of the abundance of his grace, and the freeness of it, for the supply of his church, as well as of the pleasant situation and safety of it; (see ^{<940>}Psalm 46:1-4 ^{<350>}Ezekiel 47:1-4) where the Lord appears "glorious"; where he displays the glorious perfections of his nature, his power, faithfulness, truth, holiness, love, grace, and mercy; where his glorious Gospel is preached; where he grants his gracious and glorious presence; and where saints come to see his glory, do see it, and speak of it; (see ^{<100>}2 Samuel 6:20 ^{<350>}Psalm 63:1,2 29:9):

wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby: this advantage literal Jerusalem had, that, though it had no river for its pleasure, profit, and protection, yet no enemy could come up to it in that way; and the Lord, though he is indeed instead of a broad river to his people for their supply and safety, yet such an one as will not admit any enemy, great or small, signified by the "galley with oars", and the "gallant ship", to come near them; and in the New Jerusalem church state, when there will be new heavens and a new earth, there will be no sea, (^{<600>}Revelation 21:1) and so no place for ships and galleys. The design of these metaphors is to show that the church of Christ at this time will be safe from all enemies whatsoever, as they must needs be, when the Lord is not only a place of broad rivers, but a wall of fire round about them, and the glory in the midst of them, (^{<300>}Zechariah 2:5).

Ver. 22. *For the Lord [is] our Judge, &c.*] The Lord Christ, who has all judgment committed to him by the Father, who will judge his people, right their wrongs, and avenge their injuries:

the Lord [is] our Lawgiver; who has enacted wholesome laws for his church, writes them on their hearts, and puts his Spirit within them, to enable them to keep them:

the Lord [is] our King: King of saints, King of Zion, made so by his Father, owned by his church, under whose government it is in safety:

he will save us; from all sin, and from all enemies, with an everlasting salvation. The church here speaks with great pleasure of her interest in Christ under every character, and of her safety as depending upon him. The Targum is,

“the Lord is our Judge, who brought us by his power out of Egypt; the Lord is our teacher, who gave us the doctrine of the law from Sinai; the Lord is our King, he will redeem us, and take vengeance of judgment for us on the army of Gog;”

which shows that the ancient Jews understood this prophecy as referring to times yet to come.

Ver. 23. *Thy tacklings are loosed*, &c.] Or “are left”^{f663}; forsaken by the mariners, as being of no use and service:

they could not well strengthen their mast; with ropes to make it stand upright:

they could not spread the sail; upon the mast, without which they could not proceed. This is spoken to and of the enemies of the church; most interpreters understand it of the Assyrians, who are compared to a ship in great distress at sea, when its tacklings are shattered, the mast is split, and the sails cannot be spread. The metaphor is taken and carried on from (²³³²Isaiah 33:21), where mention is made of a galley with oars, and a gallant ship. Tyrannical governments are thought by some to be compared to ships; a king to the mast; princes to ropes, cords, and tackling; and their army in battle array to sails spread; but here all is in confusion, distress, and unavoidable ruin: this may very well be applied to the antichristian states, when the vials of God’s wrath shall be poured out upon them; especially when the second vial shall be poured out upon the sea, and all shipping will suffer, as under the second trumpet the third part of ships were destroyed, there being a correspondence between the trumpets and the seals, (^{448B}Revelation 8:8,9 16:3):

then is the prey of a great spoil divided: as the spoil of the Assyrian camp was by the Israelites, so will the spoil of the Papists by the Protestants; particularly when the kings of the earth shall be filled with an aversion to the whore of Rome, and shall destroy her, and make her bare and desolate

of all her riches, and shall “eat her flesh”, or seize upon her substance, which will become the prey of a great spoil unto them:

the lame take the prey; which denotes both how easily it shall be taken, and what a plenty there shall be, that even such, and who come late, shall have a share in it. The Targum of the whole is,

“at that time (when vengeance shall be taken on Gog) the people shall be broken with their own strength, and they shall be like to a ship whose ropes are broken; and there is no strength in their mast, which is cut down, that it is not possible to spread a sail on it; then shall the house of Israel divide the substance of the people, the multitude of a prey and spoil; and although the blind and the lame are left among them, they also shall divide the multitude of the prey and spoil.”

Ver. 24. *And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick, &c.*] That is, the inhabitant of Zion, or Jerusalem, the church of Christ, (²³³⁰Isaiah 33:20) and such are they that are born again in Zion, and brought up there; who are made free thereof by Christ; are brought to dwell here by the Lord himself; and, under the influence of divine grace, ask their way hither, and come willingly and cheerfully, and settle here: these, at this time the prophecy refers to, even the latter day, shall not be heard to say, not one of them, “I am sick”; either with the sickness of sin, so as to say there is no cure for them, or that they shall die of it, or even to complain of it; for all their sicknesses and diseases of this kind will be healed by the rising of the sun of righteousness upon them, with healing in his wings; or with the sickness of affliction, especially outward affliction of persecuting enemies, which will be at an end; and such joy will attend them, on account of their deliverance from them, that all their former sorrows and sufferings will be forgot; and in the New Jerusalem church state there will be neither one sickness nor another; no more sorrow, pain, or death; the leaves of the tree of life will be for the healing of the nations, (⁶²⁰⁴Revelation 21:4 22:2):

the people that dwell therein [shall be] forgiven [their] iniquity; this shows that sin is the sickness meant; the manner in which such a disease is cured, by forgiveness; and the perfect health and soundness, as well as joy, and peace, and comfort, which follows upon an application of pardoning grace and mercy. The Targum refers this to the time when the Israelites shall return to their own land; and Kimchi owns that some of their interpreters apply it to the times of the Messiah.