

CHAPTER 59

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 59

As the former chapter declares the hypocrisy and formality of professors of religion; this expresses the errors and heresies, immorality and profaneness, which shall prevail before the spiritual reign of Christ, or the latter day glory begins; which is so fully described in the next chapter. Reasons are given of God's withdrawing his presence from a professing people, which were not want of power and readiness in him, but their own sins and transgressions, (²³⁹¹Isaiah 59:1,2) which are enumerated, such as murder, rapine, lies, &c. (²³⁹³Isaiah 59:3-8) for which the judgments of God were upon them, darkness, distress, and misery, of which they were sensible, (²³⁹⁹Isaiah 59:9-11) and confess their sins and transgressions, (²³⁹¹²Isaiah 59:12,13) and lament their wretched state and condition, which was displeasing to God, (²³⁹¹⁴Isaiah 59:14,15) who is represented as appearing for their salvation; moved to it by their want of help, and the oppression of their enemies, in which he shows his power, justice, zeal, grace, and goodness, (²³⁹¹⁶Isaiah 59:16-18) the consequence of which shall be the conversion and salvation of many, owing to the efficacy of the divine Spirit, and to the spiritual coming of the Redeemer, (²³⁹¹⁹Isaiah 59:19,20), and the chapter is closed with a promise of the continuance of the Spirit of God, and the Gospel of Christ in his church, unto the end of the world, (²³⁹²¹Isaiah 59:21).

Ver. 1. *Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, &c.*] It is not for want of power in the Lord, that he has not as yet destroyed the enemies of his people, antichrist, and the antichristian states, and saved them out of their hands, and made them to triumph over them; or brought on the glorious state of the church, and fulfilled the promises of good things, suggested in the latter part of the preceding chapter. His hand is as long as ever, and as able to reach his and their enemies in the greatest height of power, or at the greatest distance, and to do every good thing for them; his power is as great as ever, and not in the least abridged or curtailed.

Neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: the prayers of his people, their cries unto him on their fast days, of which he seemed to take no notice, complained of (^{288B}Isaiah 58:3), this is not owing to any want of attention in him, or of readiness to hear prayer made unto him; for he is a God hearing and answering prayer, and is ready to help his people in every time of need, who apply to him in a proper and suitable manner; his eyes are upon them, and his ears are open to their cries. And this is introduced with a “behold”, as requiring attention, and deserving the notice and consideration of his people. The Targum is,

“behold, not through defect of hand (or power) from the Lord ye are not saved; nor because it is heavy to him to hear, that your prayer is not received.”

Ver. 2 *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God,* &c.] Like a partition wall dividing between them, so that they enjoy no communion with him in his worship and ordinances; which is greatly the case of the reformed churches: they profess the true God, and the worship of him, and do attend the outward ordinances of it; but this is done in such a cold formal way, and such sins and wickedness are perpetrated and connived at, that the Lord does not grant his gracious presence to them, but stands at a distance from them:

and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear; or have caused him to hide himself; withdraw his gracious presence; neglect the prayers put up to him; deny an answer to them; or, however, not appear as yet for the deliverance and salvation of them, and bringing them into a more comfortable, prosperous, and happy condition.

Ver. 3. *For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity,* &c.] From a general charge, the prophet proceeds to a particular enumeration of sins they were guilty of; and idolatry not being mentioned, as Jerom observes, shows that the prophecy belongs to other times than Isaiah’s, when that sin greatly prevailed. He begins the account with the sin of shedding blood; the blood of innocents, as the Targum; designing either the sin of murder, now frequently committed in Christian nations; or wars between Christian princes, by means of which much blood is shed; or persecutions of Christian brethren, by casting them into prisons, which have issued in their death; and at least want of brotherly love, or, the hatred of brethren, which is called murder, (^{288B}1 John 3:15) a prevailing sin in the present Sardinian state; and which will not be removed till the

spiritual reign or Philadelphian state takes place: and this sin is of a defiling nature; it “defiles” the “hands” or actions; and without love all works signify nothing, (⁴⁶³⁰1 Corinthians 13:1-3): yea, even their “fingers” are said to be defiled “with iniquity”; meaning either their lesser actions; or rather those more curiously and nicely performed, and seemingly more agreeable to the divine will; and yet defiled with some sin or other, as hypocrisy, vain glory, or the like: or it may be this may design the same as putting forth the fingers, and smiting with the fist, (²⁸⁰⁴Isaiah 58:4,9), as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; and so may have respect to some sort of persecution of their brethren for conscience sake, as there.

Your lips have spoken lies: or “falsehood”^{f1154}; that is, false doctrines, so called because contrary to the word of truth, and which deceive men:

your tongue hath muttered perverseness: that which is a perversion of the Gospel of Christ, and of the souls of men; what is contrary to the sacred Scriptures, the standard of faith and practice, and that premeditated, as the word^{f1155} signifies; done with design, and on purpose: the abounding of errors and heresies in the present day, openly taught and divulged, to the ruin of souls, seems here to be pointed at. In the Talmud^{f1156} these are explained of the several sorts of men in a court of judicature; the “hands” of the judges; the “fingers” of, the Scribes; the “lips” of advocates and solicitors; and the “tongue” of adversaries, or the contending parties.

Ver. 4. *None calleth for justice,* &c.] Or, “righteousness”; not for civil justice in courts of judicature, as if there were no advocates for it there; or that put those in mind of it, to whom the administration of it belongs; or that see to put the laws against sin in execution, and to relieve those that are oppressed; though of this there may be just cause of complaint in some places: but there are none or few that call for evangelical righteousness, either that preach it, proclaim and publish it to others; even the righteousness of Christ, the grand doctrine of the Gospel, which is therein revealed from faith to faith; so the Syriac version, “there is none that preacheth righteously”; or “in”, or “of righteousness”^{f1157}; and the Septuagint version, “no one speaks righteous things”; the words and doctrines of righteousness and truth: or, “no one calls for righteousness”; desires to hear this doctrine, and have it preached to him; hungers and thirsts after it; but chooses the doctrine of justification by works. The Targum refers it to prayer, paraphrasing it thus,

“there is none that prays in truth;”

in sincerity and uprightness, in faith and with fervour; but in a cold, formal, and hypocritical way:

nor any pleadeth for truth: for the truth of the Gospel, particularly for the principal one, the justification of a sinner by the righteousness of Christ alone; few or none contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints; they are not valiant for the truth, nor stand fast in it, but drop or conceal it, or deny it: or, “none is judged by”, or “according to truth”^{f1158}; by the Scriptures of truth, but by carnal reason; or by forms and rules of man’s devising, and so are condemned; as Gospel ministers and professors of it are:

they trust in vanity; in nothing, as the Vulgate Latin; that is worth nothing; in their own strength, wisdom, riches, righteousness, especially the latter:

and speak lies; or “vanity”; vain things, false doctrines, as before:

they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity; they “conceive” and contrive “mischief” in their minds against those that differ in doctrine and practice from them: “and bring forth iniquity”: do that which is criminal and sinful, by words and actions, by calumnies and reproaches, by violence and persecution. The Targum is,

“they hasten and bring out of their hearts words of violence.”

Ver. 5. *They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider’s web, &c.]*

Invent false doctrines according to their own fancies, which may seem fair and plausible, but are poisonous and pernicious; as the “eggs [of the] cockatrice”, which may look like, and may be taken for, the eggs of creatures fit to eat; and spin out of their brains a fine scheme of things, but which are as thin, and as useless, and unprofitable, as “the spider’s web”; and serve only to ensnare and entangle the minds of men, and will not stand before the word of God which sweeps them away at once; particularly of this kind is the doctrine of justification by the works of men, which are like the spider’s web, spun out of its own bowels; so these are from themselves, as the doctrine of them is a device of man, and is not of God:

he that eateth of their eggs dieth: as a man that eats of cockatrice eggs dies immediately, being rank poison; so he that approves of false doctrines, receives them, and feeds upon them, dies spiritually and eternally; these are

damnable doctrines, which bring upon men swift destruction; they are poisonous, and eat as do a canker, and destroy the souls of men:

and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper; or “cockatrice”; so Kimchi and Ben Melech take it to be the same creature as before, which goes by different names; and the words seem to require this sense; however, it cannot be the creature we call the viper, since that is not oviparous, but viviparous, lays not eggs, but brings forth its young; though both Aristotle^{f1159} and Pliny^{f1160}, at the same time they say it is viviparous, yet observe that it breeds eggs within itself, which are of one colour, and soft like fishes. The Targum renders it “flying serpents”: the sense is, that if a man is cautious, and does not eat of the cockatrice eggs, but sets his foot on them, and crushes them, out comes the venomous creature, and he is in danger of being hurt by it; so a man that does not embrace false doctrines, and escapes eternal death by them, but tramples upon them, opposes them, and endeavours to crush and destroy them, yet he is exposed to and brings upon himself calumnies, reproach, and persecution.

Ver. 6. *Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works, &c.*] As spiders’ webs are not fit to make garments of, are too thin to cover naked bodies, or shelter from bad weather, or injuries from different causes; so neither the false doctrines of men will be of any use to themselves, or to others that receive them; particularly the doctrine of justification by works: these are not proper garments to cover the nakedness of a sinner from the sight of God, or screen him from avenging justice; but his hope which is placed on them will be cut off, and his trust in them will be a spider’s web, of no avail to him, (~~Job~~ Job 8:14):

their works are works of iniquity: both of preacher and hearer; even their best works are sinful; not only as being imperfect, and having a mixture of sin in them, and so filthy rags, and insufficient to justify them before God; but because done from wrong principles, and with wrong views, and tending to set aside the justifying righteousness of Christ, and God’s way of justifying sinners by it, which is abominable to him:

and the act of violence is in their hands; they persecuting such that preach and profess the contrary doctrine.

Ver. 7. *Their feet run to evil, &c.*] Make haste to commit all manner of sin, and particularly that which follows, with great eagerness and swiftness,

taking delight and pleasure therein, and continuing in it; it is their course of life. The words seem to be taken out of (~~3016~~ Proverbs 1:16) and are quoted with the following by the Apostle Paul, (~~4815~~ Romans 3:15-17) to prove the general corruption of mankind:

and they make haste to shed innocent blood: in wars abroad or at home, in quarrels and riots, or through the heat of persecution; which if it does not directly touch men's lives, yet issues in the death of many that fall under the power of it; and which persecutors are very eager and hasty in the prosecution of. The phrase fitly describes their temper and conduct:

their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity: their thoughts are continually devising things vain and sinful in themselves, unprofitable to them, and pernicious to others: their thoughts, words, and actions being evil; their tongue, lips, hands, and feet being employed in sin, show their general depravity:

wasting and destruction are in their paths: they waste and destroy all they meet with in their ways, their fellow creatures and their substance; and the ways they walk in lead to ruin and destruction, which will be their portion for evermore.

Ver. 8. *The way of peace they know not,* &c.] Neither the way of peace with God, supposing it is to be made by man, and not by Christ; and are ignorant of the steps and methods taken to procure it; nor do they know the way of peace of conscience, or how to attain to that which is true and solid; nor the way to eternal peace and happiness, which is alone by Christ, and the Gospel of peace reveals, to which they are strangers; nor the way of peace among men, which they are unconcerned about, and do not seek after, make use of no methods to promote, secure, and establish it; but all the reverse:

and there is no judgment in their goings; no justice in their actions, in their dealings with men; no judgment in their religious duties, which are done without any regard to the divine rule, or without being able to give a reason for them; they have no judgment in matters of doctrine or worship; they have no discerning of true and false doctrines, and between that which is spiritual and superstitious in worship; they have no knowledge of the word of God, which should be their guide both in faith and practice; but this they do not attend unto:

they have made them crooked paths: they have devised paths and modes of worship of their own, in which they walk, and which they observe, that are not according to the rule of the word; but deviate from it; and so may be said to be crooked, as not agreeable to that:

whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace; the way of peace with God, as before; or he shall not have any experience of true, solid, and substantial peace in his own conscience now, and shall not attain to eternal peace hereafter.

Ver. 9. *Therefore is judgment far from us*, &c.] These are the words of the few godly persons in those times, taking notice of prevailing sins, confessing and lamenting them, and observing that these were the source of their calamities under which they groaned; “therefore”, because of the above mentioned sins, and in just retaliation, no justice or judgment being among men; therefore, in great righteousness “judgment is far from us”; or God does not appear to right our wrongs, and avenge us of our enemies, but suffers them to afflict and distress us:

neither doth justice overtake us; the righteousness of God inflicting vengeance on our enemies, and saving and protecting us; this does not come up with us, nor do we enjoy the benefit of it, but walk on without it unprotected, and exposed to the insults of men:

we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness; or “for brightnesses”^{f1161}; for much clear light; but

we walk in mists^{f1162}; in thick fogs, and have scarce any light at all. The meaning is, they waited for deliverance and salvation; but instead of that had the darkness of affliction and distress; or they were expecting latter day light and glory, the clear and bright shining of Gospel truths; but, instead of that, were surrounded with the darkness of ignorance and infidelity, superstition and will worship, and walked in the mists and fogs of error and heresy of all sorts: this seems to respect the same time as in (³⁸⁴⁶Zechariah 14:6,7).

Ver. 10. *We grope for the wall like the blind*, &c.] Who either with their hands, or with a staff in them, feel for the wall to lean against, or to guide them in the way, or into the house, that they may know whereabouts they are, and how they should steer their course:

and we grope as if we had no eyes: which yet they had, the eyes of their reason and understanding; but which either were not opened, or they made no use of them in searching the Scriptures, to come at the light and knowledge of divine things; and therefore only at most groped after them by the dim light of nature, if thereby they might find them. This is to be understood not of them all, but of many, and of the greatest part:

we stumble at noonday as in the night; as many persons do now: for though it is noonday in some respects, and in some places, where the Gospel and the truths of it are clearly preached; yet men stumble and fall into the greatest errors, as in the night of the greatest darkness; as if it was either the night of Paganism or Popery with them:

we are in desolate places as dead men; or “in fatnesses”^{f1163}; in fat places where the word and ordinances are administered, where is plenty of the means of grace, yet not quickened thereby; are as dead men, dead in trespasses and sin, and at most have only a name to live, but are dead. Some render it, “in the graves”^{f1164}; and the Targum thus,

“it is shut before us, as the graves are shut before the dead;”

we have no more light, joy, and comfort, than those in the graves have.

Ver. 11. *We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves*, &c.] Some in a more noisy and clamorous, others in a stiller way, yet all in private: for the bear, when robbed of its whelps, goes to its den and roars; and the dove, when it has lost its mate, mourns in solitude: this expresses the secret groanings of the saints under a sense of sin, and the forlorn state of religion. The Targum paraphrases it thus,

“we roar because of our enemies, who are gathered against us as bears; all of us indeed mourn sore as doves:”

we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us; we expect that God will take vengeance on our enemies, and save us; look for judgment on antichrist, and the antichristian states, and for the salvation of the church of God; for the vials of divine wrath on the one, and for happy times to the other; but neither of them as yet come; the reason of which is as follows.

Ver. 12. *For our transgressions are multiplied before thee*, &c.] Not only an increase of immorality among the people in common, but among

professors of religion; and as their transgressions are committed against the Lord, so they are in his sight taken notice of and observed by him, are loathsome and abominable to him, and call aloud for his judgments on them:

and our sins testify against us; God is a witness against us, in whose sight our sins are done; and our consciences are witnesses against us, which are as a thousand witnesses; and there is no denying facts; our sins stare us in the face, and we must confess our guilt: or, “our sins answer against us”^{f1165}; as witnesses called and examined answer to the questions put, so our sins, being brought as it were into open court, answer and bear testimony against us; or it must be owned, our punishment for our sins answers to them; it is the echo of our sins, what they call for, and righteously comes upon us:

for our transgressions are with us; or, “on us”^{f1166}; in our minds, on our consciences, loading us with guilt; continually accusing and condemning us; are manifest to us, as the Targum; too manifest to be denied:

and as for our iniquities, we know them; the nature and number of them, and the aggravating circumstances that attend them; and cannot but own and acknowledge them, confess, lament, and bewail them; an enumeration of which follows.

Ver. 13. *In transgressing and lying against the Lord*, &c.] The word of the Lord, as the Targum; they transgress the doctrine of Christ, as well as the law of God, and deny him the only Lord God, even our Lord Jesus Christ, his proper deity, his righteousness, and satisfaction, which is notorious in our days; so the Syriac version renders it,

we have denied the Lord; the Lord that bought them: this is the case of many under a profession of Christ:

and departing away from our God: from following him, from walking in his ways, from attending his worship, word, and ordinances; so the Targum,

“from the worship of our God;”

from Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature; from him the living God, as every degree of unbelief is a departing from him; and especially he is departed from when his divine Person is denied; when neglected as the

Saviour; his Gospel corrupted; his ordinances perverted, and his worship, or the assembly of the saints, forsaken:

speaking oppression and revolt: such who are in public office, speakers in the church of God; these speak what is oppressive and burdensome to the minds and consciences of those who are truly gracious; make their hearts sad, whom God would not have made sad, by their false doctrines; and which have a tendency to cause men to revolt from the Lord, and turn their backs on him: or “speak calumny and defection”^{f1167}, as some render it; calumniate, reproach, and revile the few faithful ones, and draw off many from the truths of the Gospel, and a profession of them. The Targum renders it, “falsehood and apostasy”; false doctrine, which leads to apostasy from Christ; with which the next clause agrees:

conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood; false doctrines; such as agree not with, but are contrary to, the word of God; these are of their own conceiving and contriving; the produce of their own brains; the fruit of their own fancy and imaginations; and which, out of the abundance of their hearts, they utter, even premeditated falsehoods, studied lies, as in (~~280B~~ Isaiah 59:3), (See Gill on “~~280B~~ Isaiah 59:3”).

Ver. 14. *And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off, &c.*] Jarchi interprets this of the vengeance of God, and his righteousness in his judgments, not immediately executed; but it is to be understood of the want of judgment and justice being done among men; and therefore are represented as persons turned back, and standing afar off, rejected, neglected, and discouraged. The Targum renders it,

“they that do judgment are turned back, and they that do justice stand afar off;”

having none to take their parts, but everyone opposing them: this may respect both the want of judgment and justice in courts of judicature; no regard being had to right and wrong; no true judgment being given, or justice done, in any cause; but both banished from the bench: and also in the churches of Christ, or, however, under a profession of his name, where there is no judgment in doctrines, or discerning between truth and error; and no justice inflicted on delinquents according to the rules of Christ; no order nor discipline observed in his house; these are dismissed and discarded:

for truth is fallen in the street; where it used to be preached, exalted, established, and confirmed; but now thrown down and trampled upon, and few or none to help it up, and stand by it; and though it may have some secret well wishers, yet very few, if any, public advocates for it:

and equity cannot enter; either into civil courts, or Christian congregations; the doing of that which is just and right between man and man in things civil; and between Christian and Christian in things religious; or that which is right according to the word of God; can find no place, or cannot be admitted into assemblies that are called by his name. The Targum is,

“they that do truth stumble in the street; and they that exercise faith cannot be made manifest;”

such as are on the side of truth, in the service of it, cannot stand their ground through the violence of their opposers; and those that are faithful, and abide by the doctrine of faith, are forced to hide themselves, and cannot appear in the vindication of it.

Ver. 15. *Yea, truth faileth*, &c.] Or, “is deprived”^{f1168}; of its life and being; it not only falls in the street, and there lies, without any to show regard unto it; but it fails; it seems as if it had given up the ghost and expired; so very prevalent will error be, before light and truth spring up again and be victorious, as they will:

and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey; he that does not give in to the prevailing vices of the age in which he lives, now become fashionable, but abstains from them, and departs from doctrinal as well as practical evils; from all false doctrines, and from all superstitious modes of worship; becomes a prey to others; a reproach and a laughing stock to them; they scoff at him, and deride him for his preciseness in religion; for his enthusiastic and irrational notions in doctrine; and for his stiffness in matters of worship: or, “he makes himself reckoned a madman”^{f1169}; as some render it; and this is a common notion with profane men, and loose professors, to reckon such as madmen that are upright in doctrine, worship, and conversation; (see ~~403~~ Acts 26:24):

and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment; he took notice of all this, and resented it, though in a professing people, that there was no judgment or discretion in matters of doctrine and worship; no

order or discipline observed; no justice done in civil courts, or in the church of God; no reformation in church or state.

Ver. 16. *And he saw that there was no man*, &c.] Whose works are good, as the Targum adds; no good man, or faithful and righteous one, that had any regard to truth and justice; that was an advocate for truth, and opposed error, and set on foot a reformation; or was concerned for any of these things, and mourned over the general corruption; not that it must be thought there was not one individual person, but very few, comparatively none; since mention is made before of some that departed from evil, and made themselves a prey:

and wondered that there was no intercessor; to stand up, and pray for them, as the Targum; so it seems a spirit of prayer and supplication will be greatly wanting in the times of latter day darkness, and before latter day glory breaks out: or, “that there was no interposer”^{f1170}; none to appear on the side of truth and justice, and on the behalf of those that become a prey to others. “Wonder” is here ascribed to God by an anthropopathy, after the manner of men, as being a marvellous and surprising thing, and almost incredible, that none could be found in so good a cause, and taking the part of injured truth and righteousness; and it expresses the general corruption and defect of religion in those times; and shows that it is not for the goodness of men, or their merits, that the Lord will do what is next said he did:

therefore his arm brought salvation to him; either to himself, and which redounded to his own honour and glory; or to his people, those that became a prey to their enemies; these he rescued out of their hands, and by his own arm of power saved them; or he himself alone wrought out salvation for them, and delivered them from the insults, reproach, and persecution of men, under whatsoever name; so when antichrist, and antichristianism in every form, shall be destroyed, salvation will be ascribed to God alone, (~~6601~~ Revelation 19:1):

and his righteousness, it sustained him; his righteousness, in taking vengeance on his and his people’s enemies; and his faithfulness, in the performance of his promises, will support him in, and carry him through, his work, though attended with difficulties that may seem insuperable to men: this may be understood of Christ, as well as what follows. The Jews^{f1171} interpret this of the Messiah, who should come in an age in which are none but wicked men, as is here said.

Ver. 17. *For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, &c.*] Here the Lord is represented as a warrior clothed with armour, and as Christ is, and as he will appear in the latter day on the behalf of his people, and against their enemies, who is called faithful and true, and in righteousness will make war, (^{6691b} Revelation 19:11-13), he will proceed according to justice and equity in righting the wrongs and avenging the injuries of his people; and both in saving them, and destroying their enemies, he will secure the honour of his faithfulness and justice, and the credit of his name and character; which will be preserved by his conduct, as the breast and inward parts are by the breastplate:

and an helmet of salvation upon his head; the salvation he will work out for his people will be very conspicuous; it will be seen by all, as the helmet on the head; and he will have the glory of it, on whose head are many crowns, (⁶⁶⁹² Revelation 19:12). The apostle has borrowed these phrases from hence, and applied them to the Christian armour, (⁶⁶⁹⁴ Ephesians 6:14,17 ^{6698b} 1 Thessalonians 5:8):

and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing; or, “he clothed himself with vengeance as a garment”^{f1172}; he wrapped himself in it, and resolved to execute it on his and his people’s enemies; the time being come to avenge the blood of his servants, by shedding the blood of their adversaries, with which his garments will be stained; and therefore is represented as having on a vesture dipped in blood, (⁶⁶⁹³ Revelation 19:13):

and was clad with zeal as a cloak; with zeal for his own glory, and the interest of his people, and against antichrist, and all antichristian worship and doctrine; and therefore his eyes are said to be as a flame of fire, (⁶⁶⁹² Revelation 19:12).

Ver. 18. *According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, &c.*] As the enemies of his people have treated them, so will the Lord deal with them; as they have shed their blood, he will, according to the laws of retribution and retaliation, give them blood to drink, as they deserve. The whore of Rome shall be rewarded as the followers of Christ have been rewarded by her, and double shall be rendered to her double, according to her works, (⁶⁶⁹⁶ Revelation 16:6 18:6):

fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies: the church’s adversaries and enemies are Christ’s, and so he esteems them; and therefore his wrath and fury is poured out by way of recompence to them,

for all the ill they have done them, even the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath, (^{<6669>}Revelation 16:19):

to the islands he will repay recompence; even to those who dwell in the more distant and remote parts of the antichristian jurisdiction; for when the cup of wrath shall be given to Babylon every island will flee away, (^{<6660>}Revelation 16:20).

Ver. 19. *So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun, &c.*] The eastern and western antichrist being destroyed, way shall be made for the spread of the Gospel east and west; which shall be everywhere embraced, and the true worship of God set up; and the glorious name of the Lord, or the Lord who is glorious in his name, nature, perfections, and works, shall be feared and served from the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, or by all nations under the heavens; (see ^{<3011>}Malachi 1:11 ^{<6658>}Revelation 15:3,4) and even those that are left in the antichristian states, and escape the general ruin, shall be frightened at his judgments, fear his great and awful name, and give glory to the God of heaven, (^{<6613>}Revelation 11:13)

when the enemy shall come in like a flood; when Satan, the common “enemy” of mankind, the avowed and implacable enemy of Christ and his people, “shall come” into the world, and into the church, as he will in the latter day; and has already entered “like” an impetuous flood, threatening to carry all before him, introducing a flood of immorality and profaneness, as in the days of Noah and Lot, to which the times of the Son of Man’s coming are likened, (^{<0176>}Luke 17:26-30 ^{<5800>}2 Timothy 3:1-5) or else a flood of error and heresy of all sorts; (see ^{<6625>}Revelation 12:15) and likewise a flood of persecution, as will be at the slaying of the witnesses, that hour of temptation that will come upon all the earth, to try the inhabitants of it, (^{<6610>}Revelation 3:10 11:7,8). Aben Ezra compares this passage with, and illustrates it by, that time of trouble which will be, such as never was since there was a nation, (^{<2710>}Daniel 12:1) when this will be the case, which seems to be near at hand:

the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him; Christ and his Gospel, or Christ the standard lifted up in the ministry of the Gospel, (^{<2310>}Isaiah 11:10,12) a set of ministers shall be raised up, having the everlasting Gospel, which they shall publish to all nations, and which shall have an universal spread; and by means of which the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; and which will

be a sufficient check to the enemy's flood of immorality, error, and persecution; and which, after this, shall be no more; (see ⁶⁴⁶Revelation 14:6 ²¹⁰Isaiah 11:9). Some render the words, "when he", the glorious name of the Lord, or he who is the glory of the Lord, the brightness of his glory;

shall come like a narrow flood, that flows with great swiftness and force, and carries all before it;

the Spirit of the Lord lifting him up for a standard^{f173}, that is, in the ministry of the word; "so shall they fear", &c.; then multitudes shall serve the Lord, and worship him. The Targum is,

"they that afflict shall be as the overflowing of the river Euphrates; by the word of the Lord shall they be broken;"

and Vitringa thinks there is an allusion to the river Euphrates; interpreting the enemy of the Ottoman Turks, Tartars, and Scythians, stirred up by Satan to distress the church: all this may be applied to the case of particular believers under the assaults of Satan their grand enemy; who seeks all occasions to disturb their peace and destroy their comfort, though he cannot ruin their souls; he comes in, not only into their houses where they dwell, and gives them disturbance there; and into the house of God where they worship, and does all he can to hinder them in attending on the word and ordinances, and to prevent all usefulness, edification, and comfort thereby; but he enters into their hearts, and stirs up the corruptions of their nature, and causes these to rise like a flood, which threaten with bringing them into captivity to the law of sin and death; and attacks them with violent temptations, suggesting that they are not the people of God, the redeemed of the Lamb, or regenerated by the Spirit, but are hypocrites, and never had the work of grace on their hearts; aggravating their sins, and telling them they have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, and there is no pardon for them; and at other times filling their minds with blasphemous and atheistical thoughts; all which come upon them sometimes with so much force, that it is like an overflowing flood that threatens with utter destruction; when the Spirit of the Lord within them, who is greater than he that is in the world, lifts up Christ as an ensign or standard to them; and directs them to his blood for peace and pardon, for the cleansing of their souls and the atonement of their sins; where they may see and read, in legible characters, the free and full remission of their sins, and an entire satisfaction to the justice of God for them; and he holds up and holds out

the righteousness of Christ unto them, with which God is well pleased, his justice satisfied, and his law made honourable; and by which they are justified from all things, and secured from all charges and condemnation; and who also leads them to the person, power, and grace of Christ, to preserve them in grace to glory, to keep them from falling, and present them faultless before the throne of God; the consequence of which is a check to Satan's temptations; an antidote to the doubts and fears he injects; and an abundance of spiritual peace and comfort; as well as it engages to fear the Lord and his goodness.

Ver. 20. *And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, &c.*] Not Cyrus, as some; but the Messiah, as it is applied in the Talmud^{f1174} and in other Jewish writers^{f1175}, and as Aben Ezra rightly interprets it; and so Kimchi, who also understands by the enemy, in the preceding verse, Gog and Magog; and this must be understood not of the first coming of Christ to redeem his people by his blood from sin, Satan, and the law; but of his spiritual coming to Zion to the church of God in the latter day, at the time of the conversion of the Jews, as appears from the quotation, and application of it by the apostle, (^{<6125>}Romans 11:25,26) and with it compare (^{<6141>}Revelation 14:1):

and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord; that is, to such among the Jews, the posterity of Jacob, who repent of their sins, and turn from them; and particularly their sin of the rejection of the Messiah, and the disbelief of him, and turn to him, and believe in him as their Saviour and King. The Targum is,

“and the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to turn the transgressors of the house of Jacob to the law;”

but rather the turn will be to the Gospel of Christ.

Ver. 21. *As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, &c.*] Which shall be manifested and made good to them that repent of their sins, and, believe in Christ; and to whom the particular blessing of it shall be applied, the forgiveness of their sins; (see ^{<6127>}Romans 11:27):

my Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth; the Spirit of God, with his gifts and graces, which were upon Christ the Redeemer without measure; and the doctrines he received from his divine Father to teach others, and which he gave to his apostles; the same Spirit which in measure was put upon them, and the same truths which were delivered to them:

shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever; that is, shall always continue with the church and her spiritual seed, such as are born in her, and brought up by her, throughout all successive ages, and to the end of time; and it may be observed, that after the conversion of the Jews, to which this prophecy has a special regard, they shall no more apostatize; the Spirit of the Lord shall not depart from them; and the Gospel shall always be professed by them: and it may be further observed, that the Spirit and the word go together; and that the latter is only effectual as accompanied will, the former, and is a proof of the perseverance of the church of God, and of all such who have the Spirit and grace of God, Christ will always have a church, and that church a seed, in which the Spirit and word will always remain. The grace of the Spirit, in the hearts of God's people, never removes from them; nor his Gospel from such, in whose hearts it works effectually. The Targum interprets this of the words of prophecy; and the Talmud^{f1176} of the law not departing from the disciples of wise men; but it is best to understand it of the Gospel not departing from the disciples of Christ, and the seed of the church.