

CHAPTER 63

INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 63

This chapter contains a prophecy of the vengeance of Christ upon the enemies of his church in the latter day, whereby complete salvation would be obtained for them; and this illustrated by the mercies of God to the people of Israel of old; and is concluded with the church's prayer to him. The account of the vengeance taken by Christ on his enemies is introduced by a colloquy between him and his church; who puts a question, in which he is described by the places from whence he came, by his apparel, and by his manner of walking; to which he returns an answer, (^{2361b}Isaiah 63:1), then a second question is put, about the colour of his garments; for which he gives a reason, (^{2361c}Isaiah 63:2,3) it being the time of his vengeance on his enemies, and of the redemption of his people, (^{2361d}Isaiah 63:4) the manner in which he performed both is observed, (^{2361e}Isaiah 63:5) and the thorough work he would make; and the entire riddance of all his enemies is determined upon, (^{2361f}Isaiah 63:6), which puts the prophet, or the church, in mind of former mercies bestowed upon Israel of old, the peculiar people and children of God, the Lord had a great opinion of, and favour for, whom he dealt very tenderly with, and redeemed, and saved, and preserved, (^{2361g}Isaiah 63:7-9) though they acted an ungrateful part to him, which is aggravated by the various kind steps of Providence, in leading them through the Red sea, guiding them in the wilderness, and bringing them to rest safely in Canaan's land, for his own glory, (^{2361h}Isaiah 63:10-14) and all is closed with the church's prayer to God, imploring his grace and mercy; pleading relation to him; expostulating with him about their present case, and observing the difference between them and their enemies, (²³⁶¹ⁱIsaiah 63:15-19) and which prayer is continued in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?* &c.] These are not the words of the angels at the time of Christ's ascension to heaven; or of the people of Israel; but rather of the prophet, or of the church he represents; by whom this question is put, not concerning Michael the archangel returning from fighting the king of Persia, for what has Edom and Bozrah to do with Persia? nor concerning Judas

Maccabaeus, in whose times it seems a victory was obtained over the Edomites: the description is too grand and august to agree with any mere man; rather therefore it is to be understood of God himself taking vengeance on the wicked, many of the characters agreeing with the description of him in (~~23916~~ Isaiah 59:16-18) though it seems best of all to interpret it of the Messiah. Aben Ezra observes, that there are some that say this is the Messiah; others that it is Michael; but, says he, it is right that it respects the glorious name, that is, Jehovah himself; the first sense he gives is most correct. Several Jewish writers, ancient as well as modern, interpret this of the Messiah, whom they yet expect to come from Rome to the land of Israel, which they suppose is meant by Edom. So says one^{f1222} of their writers,

“when the King Messiah shall come, he will be clothed in purple, beautiful to look at, which in colour shall be like to wine for the clothing of the King Messiah shall be silk, red as blood; and it shall be worked with the needle in various colours, and he shall be the Head of Israel; and this is what is said in (~~23911~~ Isaiah 63:1) “wherefore art thou red in thy apparel?””

And, say others of their ancient writers^{f1223}, the Ishmaelites or Turks shall fight three battles in the latter day; one in the forest of Arabia; another in the sea; and a third in the great city Rome, which shall be greater than the other two; and from thence shall spring the Messiah, and he shall look upon the destruction of the one and of the other, and from thence shall he come into the land of Israel, as it is said, “who is this that comes from Edom?” &c. So Abarbinel^{f1224} asserts, that the Ishmaelites or Turks shall come against Rome, and destroy it; and then shall be revealed the Messiah, the son of David, and shall complete the redemption of the Lord, according to (~~2711~~ Daniel 12:1) and then quotes the above passage of their wise men; and upon it observes, that from thence it appears that Messiah, the son of David, shall be of the Jews that are in the captivity of Edom (or Rome), for so they explain (~~23911~~ Isaiah 63:1) “who is this that comes from Edom?” &c.; and so Kimchi interprets the prophecy of time to come: but though the Messiah is intended, this is to be understood not of his first coming, which was out of Zion, out of the tribe of Judah, and out of Bethlehem Ephratah; nor of his ascension to heaven, after his bloody sufferings and death, and the victory he had obtained over all our spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, the world, death, and hell; for that was from the land of Judea, from Mount Olivet, near to Jerusalem, the place of his sufferings and death; but of his

spiritual coming, which is yet future, to take vengeance on antichrist, and all the antichristian powers. It is usual in Scripture for the enemies of the church and people of God in Gospel times to be expressed by such who were the known and implacable enemies of the people of Israel; and such were the Edomites, the inhabitants of Idumea, of which Bozrah was a principal city; (see ^{<4970>}Psalm 137:7) (^{<2512>}Ezekiel 25:12,13 ^{<1000>}Amos 1:11,12 Obidiah 1:10-14) and were a lively emblem of antichrist and his followers, for their relation to the people of Christ, their cruelty to them, and contempt of them; from the conquest and slaughter of which Christ is here represented returning as a victorious and triumphant conqueror; (see ^{<2345>}Isaiah 34:5,6) hence he is said to come from thence “with dyed garments”, or “stained”^{f1225}; that is, with the blood of his enemies; so Jarchi interprets it dyed in blood, or dipped in it; to which agrees the apparel of Christ in (^{<6908>}Revelation 19:18), where he is said to be clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; which chapter is the best commentary upon this passage, referring to the same time and case: it follows,

this that is glorious in his apparel; for though it was thus stained and discoloured with the blood of his enemies, yet was glorious to himself, having gotten such a complete victory over all his and his church’s enemies, and so was glorious to them to behold; and especially, since on this vesture, and on his thigh, is a name written, “King of kings, and Lord of lords”, (^{<6916>}Revelation 19:16):

travelling in the greatness of his strength? marching in great stateliness and majesty at the head of his victorious troops, he nor they having nothing to fear from their enemies, being all vanquished and destroyed. Strength, and the greatness of it, may well be ascribed to Christ, who is the mighty God, yea, the Almighty; the mighty man, made strong by the Lord for himself; and the mighty Mediator, having all power in heaven and earth: he travelled in the greatness of his strength from heaven to earth, by the assumption of our nature; while here he went about continually doing good; with the utmost intrepidity he went forth to meet his foes, and death itself, at the proper time, and without fear passed through the valley of the shadow of death; when raised again, in his ascension to heaven, he marched through the territories of Satan, the air, in great triumph, dragging him and his principalities and powers at his chariot wheels; and when he had poured down his Spirit plentifully, he went forth into the Gentile world in the ministration of the Gospel, conquering and to conquer; and in the latter day he will come and take vengeance on all the antichristian states,

and return in triumph, to which this passage refers; (see ^{¶¶714}Revelation 17:14 19:14 11:17) the answer to the question follows,

I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save; these are the words of Christ describing himself, by his speech and by his power, by his word and by his works: he “spoke in righteousness”, at the making of the covenant of grace in eternity, some things by way of request for his elect, others by way of promise for them; all which he has faithfully and righteously performed: under the Old Testament dispensation, he spake many things in righteousness by his prophets, and by his Spirit in them; yea, he often appeared in a human form, and spoke to the patriarchs and others: when here on earth, he spoke “in” or “of righteousness”^{¶1226}; of the righteousness of God he came to declare; of his own righteousness he came to bring in; and of the happiness of those who sought it, and were justified by it; and of the insufficiency of man’s righteousness to bring him to heaven: here it seems to have a more especial respect to the promises made to the church, of her salvation from her enemies, and of the destruction of them; which will now be accomplished, and appear to be the true and faithful sayings of Christ, (^{¶¶809}Revelation 19:9 21:5 22:6) and that he is “mighty to save” appears from the spiritual salvation of his people he has already wrought out: God laid help on one that is mighty, and he being mighty undertook it, and has accomplished it; and which work required strength, even almighty power, since sin was to be atoned for by bearing it, the law to be fulfilled, justice to be satisfied, the wrath and curse of God to be endured, and innumerable enemies to be engaged with; and of such a nature was that salvation, that neither angels nor men could ever have effected it: and this his power to save will be further manifest, when the beast and false prophet, antichrist, and all the antichristian powers, shall be destroyed by him, and his people entirely delivered out of their hands, (^{¶¶118}Revelation 11:18 19:20,21). The Targum of the whole is,

“who hath said these things that shall bring the blow upon Edom, the strong vengeance on Bozrah, to execute the vengeance of the judgment of his people, as he hath sworn unto them by his word? he saith, behold I appear as I spake in righteousness, much power is before or with me to save”

(see ^{¶¶818}Revelation 18:8).

Ver. 2. *Wherefore art thou red in thy apparel*, &c.] Christ having satisfied the church as to her first question, concerning his person, who he was; she

puts a second to him, about the colour of his garments, which was red, and the reason of it. His garments at his transfiguration were white as snow, whiter than any fuller on earth could whiten them; his robe of righteousness is fine linen, clean and white; the garment of his human nature, or his form as man, was white and ruddy; but this, through his bloody sufferings, became red, being all over bloody through the scourges he received, the crown of thorns he wore, the piercing of his hands, feet, and sides, with the nails and spear; but here it appears of this colour not with his own blood, but with the blood of his enemies, as is hereafter explained:

and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? or winepress, into which clusters of grapes are cast, and these are trodden by men, the juice of which sparkles on their garments, and stains them, so that they become of a red colour.

Ver. 3. *I have trodden the winepress alone*, &c.] This is an answer to the question before put, and confirms what was observed, that his garments were like one that treadeth in the winepress; this was very true, he had trodden it, and trodden it alone, and that was the reason his garments were of such a hue; what others did by their servants, he did by himself, alone and without them. The winepress is a symbol of the wrath of God; not of what Christ bore himself as the sinner's surety, for then he was trodden as a vine, or the clusters of it, himself; but of what he executed on others. Wicked men are compared to clusters of the vine; the winepress into which they are cast is the wrath of God, and Christ is the treader of it; particularly he will be in the latter day, when antichrist and his followers will be destroyed by him; (see ~~66418~~ Revelation 14:18-20 19:15).

And of the people there was none with me; either fighting with him, that could oppose him, any more than the clusters of grapes can resist the treaders of them; or to assist him in taking vengeance on his enemies: for though the armies of heaven follow him in white, these are little more than attendants and spectators, at most but instruments; all the power to conquer and destroy is from himself, and owing to the twoedged sword proceeding out of his mouth, (~~66414~~ Revelation 19:14,15) even as when he stood in the legal place and stead of his people there were none of them with him; he alone was the author of salvation, none could bear the wrath of God but himself, or engage with spiritual enemies, or work out salvation for them. But of this the texts speaks not, only of the destruction of the enemies of Christ and his church:

for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; with great eagerness, with all his might and strength; and this is the reason why his garments were so stained, even with the blood of his enemies, trodden and trampled under foot by him in this furious manner; as a person in a winepress alone, and treading it with all his might, has his garments more sparkled and stained with the juice of the grape, than when there are many, and these tread lightly. The words being in the future tense show that they respect time to come; and the manner of speaking ascertains the accomplishment of them, and which is further confirmed by what follows:

and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment; just as the garments of those that tread in the winepress are sprinkled and stained with the juice of the grape; this will have its accomplishment when he shall appear in a vesture dipped in blood, or shall be as bloody, with the blood of his enemies, as if it was dipped in it, (^{669B}Revelation 19:13).

Ver. 4. *For the day of vengeance is in my heart, &c.]* Resolved on with him, fixed by him, and which is desirable to him; he has it at heart, and longs as it were till the time is come to avenge the blood of his saints on the Romish antichrist, whom he will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming; (see ^{588B}2 Thessalonians 2:8) and when he shall pour out all his vials on the antichristian states, and revenge the cause and quarrel of his people, (^{660E}Revelation 16:1,6,7 18:20 19:2):

and the year of my redeemed is come; the time when those who are already redeemed by the blood of Christ, and so are his property, whom he claims as his own, being the purchase of his blood, shall be redeemed again from antichristian bondage and slavery, shall be called and brought out of Babylon; and when those, who have led them captive, shall go into captivity themselves: this will be a jubilee year to the saints; a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; when, being rid of all their persecuting enemies, they will enjoy the utmost peace, prosperity, and safety; (see ^{660D}Revelation 13:10 18:4 19:20,21).

Ver. 5. *And I looked, and there was none to help, &c.]* As, in the first redemption and salvation by Christ here on earth, there were none among the angels, nor any of the sons of men, to help him and assist him therein, none but Jehovah the Father; so, in this latter salvation, the church and people of God will be reduced to such a low, helpless, and forlorn condition, that there will be none to lend an assisting hand; their

deliverance will appear most manifestly to be the sole work of almighty power:

and I wondered that there was none to uphold; not the Saviour and Redeemer, he needed none; but his people under their sufferings, trials, and exercises, and his sinking, dying, cause and interest: this is spoken after the manner of men, and to make the salvation appear the more remarkable, distinguishing, and great, and solely his own work; for otherwise expectation and disappointment, consternation and amazement, as the word^{f1227} signifies, cannot be properly ascribed to this great Redeemer:

therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; to himself, his mystical self, his church and people, and for his own glory; a salvation which his own omnipotent arm could only effect; (see Gill on “⁻²³⁹¹⁶Isaiah 59:16”),

and my fury it upheld me; his zeal for his church and people, and his indignation against their enemies, excited his almighty power on their behalf, and carried him through the work of their deliverance and salvation he engaged in; (see ⁻²³⁹⁰⁷Isaiah 9:7).

Ver. 6. *And I will tread down the people in mine anger, &c.*] (See Gill on “⁻²³⁶¹⁸Isaiah 63:3”),

and make them drunk in my fury; or with it^{f1228} the wrath of God is signified by a cup, which he gives wicked men to drink, and which is an inebriating one to them, (⁻⁴⁹⁷⁸Psalms 75:8 ⁻²³¹¹⁷Isaiah 51:17-23 ⁻²⁴²¹⁵Jeremiah 25:15), and here it signifies the cup of the wine of the fierceness of God’s wrath, which shall be given to mystical Babylon, to antichrist and his followers, (⁻⁶¹⁴⁰Revelation 14:10 16:19):

and I will bring down their strength to the earth; their strong kingdoms, fortified cities, and mighty men, their wealth and riches, of which they boasted, and in which they trusted; (see ⁻²³⁰¹⁵Isaiah 26:5). The eighteenth chapter of the Revelation is a commentary on these words.

Ver. 7. *I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, &c.*] These are the words of the prophet, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe; who, having heard what the Lord would do for his church and people in later times, by avenging them on their enemies, calls to mind the favours bestowed on Israel of old; and determines to make mention of them, and put the saints in mind of them, as types, earnest, and pledges of what would be done for them; and to encourage their faith and hope in the performance of what

was promised them: these he calls “the lovingkindnesses of the Lord”; meaning not only the instances of his providential goodness in bringing them out of Egypt, leading them through the Red sea and wilderness, and settling them in Canaan’s land, after particularly mentioned; but also those of his special grace and goodness to the chosen of God among them; called in the plural number “lovingkindnesses”, being the acts of all the three Persons displayed in election, redemption, and sanctification; and because these are many and various, and an abundance of grace and love is manifested in them:

and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us; which are due to him from all creatures, angels and men, and especially the saints; and which belong to each divine Person, according to the various gifts of grace freely bestowed by them; such as the gift of God himself to his people; the gifts of his Son, and of the blessed Spirit, with all his graces, faith, hope, love, repentance, &c.; and all the blessings of grace; as pardon, justification, adoption, and eternal life; a right unto it, and meetness for it all which call for praise and thankfulness: and the

great goodness towards the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses; the gifts of grace are bestowed, not according to the merits of men, for then they would not be free grace gifts; and, besides, there is no merit in a creature; the best works of the best of men are not meritorious, of anything at the hand of God; but all they have flow from mere sovereign mercy, pure grace, and free unmerited love, which is abundant, yea, boundless, and even infinite. A heap of words is here made use of, and all little enough to express the wonderful kindness of God in the acts of his grace and goodness to his church and people; which ought always to be had in sight and mind, and to be remembered and spoken of in private and in public.

Ver. 8. *For he said, surely they are my people*, &c.] Not in common with the rest of mankind, being his creatures, and the care of his providence; but his special people, whom he had chosen to be such, and had made a covenant with; he had avouched them for his people, and they had avouched him to be the Lord their God; and this covenant interest was the ground and foundation of the actual donation and application of all the blessings of grace and goodness to them before mentioned. These are the words of Jehovah himself, related by the prophet; and are applicable to all

the elect of God, whom he has chosen in Christ; taken into the covenant of grace made with him; and who appear manifestly to be his peculiar people by their effectual calling; when it is a sure and certain thing, that they, who were not known by themselves or others to be the people of God, are evidently so; and the Lord himself makes no scruple of acknowledging them as such, even though their conduct and behaviour towards him is not altogether as it should be, and which was the case of the people of Israel; however, he is willing to hope well of them, as parents do of their children, speaking after the manner of men, and that they will behave better for the future, being by fresh mercies laid under obligation to him, as he did of Israel of old:

children that will not lie; not the children of Satan, as liars are, who was a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies; as wicked men are, who go astray from the womb, speaking lies; but children of God by adopting grace, and through faith in Christ; and therefore should not lie to God, nor to men, nor to one another, as being unbecoming their relation as children: this opinion the Lord entertains of his children, speaking after the manner of men, that they will not deal deceitfully and hypocritically with him, but serve him in sincerity, and worship him in spirit and in truth; that their hearts will be right with him, and they steadfast in his covenant: thus he hoped well of Israel of old, and so he does of all his spiritual Israel, his special people, and dear children:

so he was their Saviour; in this view and expectation of things, as he is of all men in a providential way, and especially of them that believe; he was the Saviour of literal Israel in a temporal manner, in Egypt, the Red sea, and wilderness; and of his chosen people among them, in a spiritual manner, as he is of all his elect in Christ Jesus; and even though they do not entirely answer the just expectations expressed concerning them.

Ver. 9. *In all their affliction he was afflicted*, &c.] That is, God, who said the above words; not properly speaking; for to be afflicted is not consistent with his nature and perfections, being a spirit, and impassible; nor with his infinite and complete happiness; but this is said after the manner of men, and is expressive of the sympathy of God with his afflicted people, and his tender care of them, and concern for them under affliction, as one friend may have for another: afflictions belong to the people of God; they come to them, not by chance, but according to the will of God; and are not in wrath, but in love; they are many and various; there is an “all” of them, yet

not one too many, and in everyone of them God is afflicted, or sympathizes with them: as he looked upon the affliction of the people of Israel, in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, and had compassion upon them, and saved them, so he visits all his people when afflicted, and pities them, and speaks comfortably to them; knows and owns their souls in adversity; makes known himself to them; grants them his gracious presence; puts underneath them his everlasting arms; makes their bed in their affliction, and supplies their wants; and this sympathy arises from their union to him, from his relation to them as a Father, and from his great love to them. There is a double reading of these words; the marginal reading is, “in all their affliction there is affliction to him”^{f1229}; or, “he was afflicted”; which our version follows: the textual reading is, “there is no affliction”; or, “he was not afflicted”^{f1230}; he seemed to take no notice of their affliction, or be concerned at it, that he might the sooner bring them to a sense of themselves and their sins, (^{<38f5>}Hosea 5:15). The Targum follows this reading, and renders it actively, “and he afflicted them not”^{f1231}: they were indeed in affliction, but they, and not he, brought it upon them, and by their sins. Some render it, “he was no enemy”^{f1232}; though he afflicted them, yet not in wrath, but love; or, “in all their straits there was no strait”^{f1233}; the Israelites were in straits when Pharaoh’s army pursued them behind, the rocks were on both sides them, and the sea before them, and yet there was no strait as it were, they were so soon delivered out of it; and so it may be read, “in all their afflictions there was no affliction”; there is so much love in the afflictions of God’s people, and they work so much for their good, and they are so soon delivered out of them, that they scarce deserve the name of afflictions; and so both readings may be taken in, “in all their afflictions there was no affliction to him”; or to them, to Israel, to the people of God:

and the Angel of his presence saved them; not Michael, as Jarchi; but the Messiah is here meant; the Angel of the covenant, the Angel which went before the Israelites in the wilderness, (^{<1231>}Exodus 23:20-23) not a created angel, or an angel by nature, but by office; being sent of God, as the word signifies, on the errand and business of salvation; called “the Angel of God’s presence”, or “face”, because his face was seen in him; his name, and nature, and perfections were in him; he is the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person besides, the presence of God was always with him; he is the “Ithiel”, the Word that was with God, and with whom God always was; who lay in the bosom of his Father, and was

ever with him; and who also, as Mediator, introduces his people into the presence of God, and always appears in it for them as their advocate and intercessor: now to him salvation is ascribed; he saved Israel out of Egypt, and out of the hands of all their enemies in the wilderness; and which salvation was typical of the spiritual, eternal, and complete salvation, which is only by Christ, and issues in eternal glory:

in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; Israel out of Egyptian bondage, and from all their enemies, which was owing to his great love to them, which operated in a way of mercy, pity, and compassion, (^{<310>}Hosea 11:1 ^{<015>}Exodus 15:13), and it is he who has redeemed the spiritual Israel of God, not by power only, but by price, from sin, Satan, and the law, death, and hell, with a spiritual and eternal redemption, and which flows from his love to those persons; hence he undertook to be their Redeemer; came in their nature to redeem them; and gave himself for them for that purpose; which love is wonderful and matchless, and showed itself in pity and compassion; he became a merciful as well as a faithful high priest; he saw them in their low estate, pitied them, and delivered them out of it:

and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old; he bore them in his bosom, and in his arms, as a nursing father his child; he carried them, as on eagles' wings, from the time of their coming out of Egypt, to their settlement in Canaan's land, (^{<041>}Numbers 11:12 ^{<020>}Exodus 19:4) he bore with their manners for forty years, and carried them through all their trials and difficulties, and supported them under them, and brought them out of them all, (^{<438>}Acts 13:18) and so he bears all his people on his heart, and in his hands, and bears them up under all their temptations and afflictions; and, from the time of their conversion, carries on his work in them, and carries them safe to heaven, as the great Captain of their salvation, and never leaves them, nor forsakes them; (see ^{<348>}Isaiah 46:3,4).

Ver. 10. *But they rebelled*, &c.] Against the Lord, notwithstanding he thought so well of them; did so many good things for them; sympathized with them, and showed them so many favours; wretched ingratitude! they rebelled against the Lord in the times of Moses, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, by their murmurings, unbelief, and idolatry; wherefore he calls them a rebellious people, and says they were such from the day he had been with them; and so in later times, in the times of the judges, and of the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel, they rebelled against God their Parent, Protector, and King; (see ^{<697>}Deuteronomy 9:7,24 ^{<302>}Isaiah 1:2 ^{<315>}Ezekiel

2:5-7) and so they did in the times of Christ, whom they rejected as the Messiah, and disowned as their King, and still continue in their rebellion, (^{<2194>}Luke 19:14):

and vexed his Holy Spirit; the Spirit of God the Father, who pitied them in all their afflictions; or the Spirit of the Angel of his presence, that redeemed and saved them; for the Spirit is both the Spirit of the Father and of the Son; and he is holy in his nature and operations, and the author of sanctification in the hearts of his people; him they vexed and provoked to anger against them, speaking after the manner of men, by their sins and transgressions; rejecting his counsels and instructions by Moses, and by the prophets in later times, in and by whom he spake unto them, and by the apostles in Gospel times; for the Jews, as their fathers before them ever did, resisted the Holy Spirit of God in the evidence he gave of the Messiah, which must be very provoking, (^{<4175>}Acts 7:51 ^{<4183>}Ephesians 4:30). The Targum paraphrases it, the word of his holy prophets; and so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; and according to some, in Aben Ezra, the Angel of glory is meant, who went before the people of Israel, whom they were charged not to provoke, (^{<10231>}Exodus 23:20,21):

therefore he was turned to be their enemy; not that there is any change in God, or any turn in him from love to hatred; but he may, and sometimes does, so appear in his providential dispensations towards his people, as to seem to be their enemy, and to be thought to be so by them, (^{<13134>}Job 13:24 ^{<23114>}Lamentations 2:4,5). The Targum is, and his Word became their enemy; compare with this (^{<2197>}Luke 19:27):

and he fought against them; as he threatened he would when they behaved ill towards him; and as he actually did when he brought the sword upon them, gave them up into the hands of their enemies, as often in the times of the judges, and particularly when the king of Babylon came against them; (see ^{<13125>}Leviticus 26:25 ^{<32115>}Jeremiah 21:5-7) and as the Messiah did when he brought the Roman armies against them, and destroyed their city, to which times this prophecy is thought by some to have respect, and not without reason.

Ver. 11. *Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, &c.]* Which may be understood either of the Lord, who remembered his lovingkindnesses towards these people, and his tender mercies which had been ever of old; the covenant he made with their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the wonders he did for them in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the

wilderness, by the hand of Moses; his intercession to him on their behalf, and the many great and good things he did for them; and therefore determined not now to cast them off altogether, but to do as he had done before; and, to stir up himself thereunto, puts the following questions:

where is he? &c.; so the Targum paraphrases it,

“he had mercy for the glory of his name, and because of the remembrance of his goodness of old, the mighty things he did by the hands of Moses to his people;”

and adds,

“lest they should say;”

that is, the Gentiles, as Aben Ezra also explains it, lest they should by way of taunt and reproach say, as follows: “where is he?” &c.; compare with this (^{<1626>}Deuteronomy 32:26,27). Gussetius^{f1234} thinks the last words should be rendered, “the extractor of his people”; or, he that drew out his people; that is, out of many waters, delivered them from various afflictions, as in (^{<1986>}Psalm 18:16) and to be understood not of Moses, only in allusion to him, who had his name from being drawn out of the waters; but of a divine Person, who is said to do all the following things; so Ben Melech says the word here has the signification of drawing, or bringing out, as in the above psalm: or else these are the words of the people themselves; at least of some of the truly good and gracious, wise and faithful, among them, in this time of their distress; calling to mind former times, and former appearances of God for them, using them as pleas and arguments with him, and as an encouragement to their faith and hope; and right it is to

remember the years of the right hand of the most High, (^{<3770>}Psalm 77:10) so Jarchi takes them to be the words of the prophet in his distress, bemoaning and saying, in a supplicating way, what is after expressed; and Kimchi interprets them of Israel in captivity; it seems to be the language of the believing Jews a little before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, or about the time of their conversion in the latter day: saying,

where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? or “shepherds”^{f1235}, according to another reading; that is, Moses and Aaron, by the hands of whom the Lord led his people Israel as a flock of sheep, and which were his, and not the property of those shepherds; they were only instruments by, and with whom, he brought them through the

sea, and out of it, which was a wonderful work of God, and often mentioned as a proof of his power, as it is here; for what is it he cannot do who did this? (see ^{<1972>}Psalm 77:20 ^{<2510>}Isaiah 51:10)

where is he that put his Holy Spirit within him? either within Moses, the shepherd of the flock, as Aben Ezra; or within Israel, the flock itself, as Jarchi; for the Spirit of God was not only upon Moses, but upon the seventy elders, and upon all the people at Sinai, as Kimchi observes; and indeed the Holy Spirit was given to the body of the people to instruct and teach them, according to (^{<1402>}Nehemiah 9:20) now these questions are put, not by way of jeer, but by way of complaint, for want of the divine presence as formerly; and by way of inquiry where the Lord was; and by way of expostulation with him, that he would show himself again, as in the days of old.

Ver. 12. *That led them by the right hand of Moses with his glorious arm,* &c.] That is, through the Red sea, as the next clause shows: this was done by the right hand of Moses, and the rod in it, to which Kimchi thinks respect is had; who, by divine order, lifted up his rod, and stretched out his hand over the sea, and divided it, and so led the people through it: but, lest this should be attributed to Moses and his rod, the glorious arm of the Lord is made mention of, which held and guided the right hand of Moses, and from whence came all that power that was exerted on this occasion. Aben Ezra interprets this of the Angel of the Lord, that went before them: it seems to design the arm of omnipotence, which was gloriously displayed, (^{<0206>}Exodus 15:6):

dividing the water before them; the waters of the sea, so that they rose up as a wall on each side them, through which they passed as on dry land: to make himself an everlasting name? or to get himself everlasting honour and glory, as he did on Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen, (^{<0247>}Exodus 14:17) and which wonderful action of his has been and ever will be spoken of to the glory of his name, which was the end he had in view.

Ver. 13. *That led them through the deep,* &c.] The depths, the bottom of the sea; not through the shallow, but where the waters had been deepest, the descent greatest; and at the bottom of which might have been expected much filth and dirt to hinder them in their passage, yet through this he led them:

as an horse in the wilderness; or rather, “in a plain”, as the word^{f1236} sometimes signifies; and so Kimchi renders it a plain land, and Jarchi smooth land. The sense is, that the Israelites passed through the sea with as much ease, and as little difficulty, as a good horse will run over a plain, where there is nothing to stop his course:

that they should not stumble? there being no clay to stick in, no stone to stumble at, but all like an even plain.

Ver. 14. *As a beast goeth down into the valley*, &c.] Softly and gently, especially when laden; which may have some respect to the descent of the Israelites into the sea, into which they entered without any fear and dread, and without any hurry and precipitation, though Pharaoh’s host was behind them; or rather, “as a beast goes along a valley”, or “plain”^{f1237}; with ease, and without any interruption, so passed the Israelites through the sea. Thus the Targum renders it,

“as a beast goes, or is led, in a plain;”

so the word is used in (²³⁸⁸Isaiah 38:8), and elsewhere:

the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest; or gently led him, that is, Israel; he walked on through the sea, with as much facility, and as little danger, as a beast walks on in a valley, or a horse in a plain. Some understand this of leading Israel through the wilderness, where often resting places were found for them, and at last they were brought to the land of rest, Canaan, and settled there:

so didst thou lead thy people; both through the sea, and through the wilderness, in a like easy, safe, and gentle manner:

to make thyself a glorious name; among the nations of the world, as he did by this amazing appearance of his for Israel; and it is hoped by those, whose words these are, he would do the like again, and get himself immortal glory.

Ver. 15. *Look down from heaven*, &c.] Here begins the prayer of the church and people of God, which continues to the end of the chapter, goes through the next, and the answer to which begins at (²³⁹¹Isaiah 65:1). Aben Ezra calls it the prayer of the wise in captivity: it seems to be the petition of some converts among the Jews, either in the first times of the Gospel, or in the latter day; who entreat that the Lord would “look down from

heaven”, the third heaven, the seat of his majesty, where is his throne of glory, and his presence is most visible to angels and glorified saints; this is on high, as the phrase imports; and the persons below, on earth, at his footstool, whom he is desired to look down upon, and which to do is a great condescension in him, (~~EB16~~ Psalm 113:6 138:6), and this is to be understood, not of that general view of persons and things, which he is always taking, (~~EB13~~ Psalm 33:13,14), but of a special look of love, grace, and mercy; such an one with which he looks upon his people in Christ, with complacency and delight: indeed his eyes are always on them, and never withdrawn from them; he ever looks upon them, to preserve and protect them, to communicate unto them, to support them under their afflictions, and to deliver out of them; but because of this they are not always sensible, but are ready to conclude that he looks off from them, and turns his back upon them, therefore they desire him to return, look down, and behold; (see ~~EB14~~ Psalm 80:14):

and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory; this is a description of heaven, as the dwelling place of God, who is most holy, holiness itself, in whom that perfection is most glorious, and which is displayed in all his works; and hence heaven is a holy as well as a high place, and where none but holy persons dwell; and which is a glorious place, where the glory of God is displayed, the glory of Christ is seen, and which is glory itself; and from hence the holy God is desired to behold; what creatures, dust, and ashes, sinful ones, polluted worms, at his footstool, a poor and an afflicted people:

where is thy zeal, and thy strength? his “jealousy” of his great name, and of his own glory; his jealousy of his dear people, that they are not wronged and injured; his “fervent love”, and warm affections for them, of which he has given pregnant proofs; which, shed abroad in the heart, warms that, and is what many waters cannot quench: this indeed is not always alike manifest, and therefore unbelief asks where it is, as if it was quite gone; or, however, faith prays for a fresh manifestation of it. The “strength” or power of God has appeared in creation, and in the sustentation of all things; in Christ, the man of his right hand; in strengthening his people, destroying their enemies, and delivering them; and yet this not appearing sometimes at once, immediately for their help and protection, they ask where it is: it follows:

the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me? the noise and rumbling of the bowels, to which the allusion is, are sometimes occasioned by the working of strong passions, as fear and love, and which produce what is called the yearning of the bowels; of which there are instances in Joseph, and in the harlot in Solomon's time, (^{<04530>}Genesis 43:30 ^{<10336>}1 Kings 3:26), the tender mercies of God, his pity and compassion, are expressed hereby, to which are owing the mission of his Son, the forgiveness of sins, and help and relief under afflictions; (see ^{<40177>}Luke 1:77,78 ^{<45101>}Psalm 51:1 ^{<24512>}Jeremiah 31:20 ^{<28108>}Hosea 11:8), now it is asked, where are those?

are they restrained? it was thought they were shut up in anger, and would not be let out again; (see ^{<49707>}Psalm 77:7-9 ^{<23542>}Isaiah 64:12). The phrase "towards me", in the former clause, seems, according to the accents, to belong to this; and should be read, "are they restrained towards me"^{f1238}? or "shut up from me?" the Lord seemed to harden his heart against his church and people, and to have no heart of compassion towards them, as they imagined.

Ver. 16. *Doubtless thou art our father,* &c.] Therefore why shouldst thou restrain thy mercies and bowels of compassion from us? or therefore look down upon us, and behold us; the church pleads her relation to God, and in a strong manner; faith of interest continued with her, though he hid his face from her. This relation of father and children, which subsists between God and his people, is not upon the foot of creation, so he is a father to all men; nor on account of national adoption, so he was to the whole body of the Jewish people; but through special adopting grace, which is a sovereign act of his will, founded in divine predestination; is a blessing of the covenant of grace; comes to men through Christ, through relation to him, and redemption by him, and is made manifest in regeneration; and a loving tender hearted father he is to his children, who sympathizes with them, provides all things for them, food and raiment, and bestows them on them, and lays up for them, for time to come, even an inheritance rescued in heaven; and though there are sometimes doubts in the minds of the children of God about this relation, through the temptations of Satan, by reason of their sins and corruptions, and because of their afflictions; yet those doubts are wholly removed through the testimony of the spirit of adoption, witnessing to their spirits that they are the children of God, when they can in the strength of faith claim their interest, and call him their Father:

though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; those, who were their ancestors, were both dead; and the dead know not any thing of their posterity, and of their case and circumstances in this world, temporal or spiritual; nor are capable of giving them any help or aid in time of distress; and perhaps the prophet, in the name of the church, purposely expresses himself in this language, knowing what confidence the Jews were apt to place in Abraham and Israel, to draw off their minds from them, and to lead them to look to God as their only Father; who only could help them in their time of affliction, and was infinitely more to them than any earthly father could possibly be. Some think the sense is, that they confess they were become so degenerate, that if Abraham and Jacob were to return from the dead, they would not know them to be their seed and offspring; and yet, notwithstanding this, God was their Father. This may be the language of some persons, who have comfortable views of their relation to God, when earthly parents, and even professors of religion, disown and slight them:

thou, O Lord; art our father; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to express their full assurance of faith in it the more strongly:

our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting; or, “our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name”^{f1239}; more agreeably to the accents: Christ was appointed from everlasting to be the Redeemer of his people; God was so early in him, drawing the scheme of redemption and salvation, and made so early a covenant with him concerning it; which may be properly enough called the covenant of redemption, though not as distinct from the covenant of grace; and Christ was the Redeemer of his people in all ages, and lived as such, as well as God the Father was, of old, in all ages, the protector of his people, and the avenger of their wrongs, to whom they might at all times apply for help.

Ver. 17. *O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?* &c.] These are the words, not of wicked men among the Jews, charging all their errors, hardness of heart, and wickedness they were guilty of, upon the Lord, as if he was the author and occasion of them, and led them into them; but of the truly godly, lamenting and confessing their wandering from the ways, commands, and ordinances of God, the hardness of their hearts; their want of devotion and affection for God; and their neglect of his worship; not blaming him for these things, or complaining of him as having done anything amiss or

wrong; but expostulating with him, and wondering at it, that he, who was their loving and tender Father, that he should suffer them to err from his ways, and to wander from his worship, by withholding his grace and withdrawing his presence from them; by leaving them to the corruptions and hardness of their hearts; by chastising them sorely, and suffering the enemy to afflict them in such a severe manner as laid them under temptation to desert the worship of God, and cast off the fear of him. The Jews^{f1240} interpret this of their being hardened from the fear of God, and made to err from his ways by seeing the prosperity of the wicked, and their own long captivity, troubles, and distresses:

return for thy servants' sake, the tribes of thine inheritance; or turn^{f1241}; turn from thine anger and displeasure to thy people; or, as the Targum,

“return thy Shechinah to thy people;”

thy gracious and glorious presence, which has been so long withdrawn; or “return” thy people from their captivity, the twelve tribes, thy portion and “inheritance”; and do this “for thy servants' sake”; for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: or because of the covenant made with them; or for the sake of all thy people, who are thy servants, and which also are the tribes of thine inheritance, return unto them.

Ver. 18. *The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while,* &c.] Either the land of Canaan, which the Jews, the Lord's holy people, whom he had separated from others, possessed about fourteen hundred years, which was but a little while in comparison of “for ever”, as was promised; or they enjoyed it but a little while in peace and quiet, being often disturbed by their neighbours; or else the sanctuary, the temple, as it is to be supplied from the next clause, which stood but little more than four hundred years:

our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary; the temple; the first temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar; and the second temple by the Romans; and Antiochus, and Pompey, and others, profaned it, by treading in it.

Ver. 19. *We are thine,* &c.] Thy children, thy people, thy subjects. Some read it, taking a word from the next clause, “we are thine of old”, or “from everlasting”^{f1242}; as the Lord's special people are, being chosen by him in Christ before the foundation of the world, and taken into an everlasting

covenant by him, when he became their God, and they his people; agreeably to which is the Targum,

“we are thy people that were of old;”

so Kimchi reads the words: “thou never barest rule over them”; the Heathens that oppressed them; they never acknowledged God as their King as they did, or were subject to him as they were; and therefore had no claim to protection from him as they had:

they were not called by thy name; they were not called the people of God, nor the children of God, nor the servants or subjects of God; or, “thy name is not called upon them”^{f1243}; or they called after it; nor did they call upon it, but served other gods. The Targum is,

“thou hast not given unto the people the doctrine of thy law, neither is thy name called upon by them.”