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Preface

Preface:

This is the shortest of all the books of the Old Testament, the least of those tribes, and yet is not to be passed by, or thought meanly of, for this penny has Caesar's image and superscription upon it; it is stamped with a divine authority. There may appear much of God in a short sermon, in a little book; and much good may be done by it, *multum in parvo—much in a little*. Mr. Norris says, "If angels were to write books, we should have few folios." That may be very precious which is not voluminous. This book is entitled, *The Vision of Obadiah*. Who this Obadiah was does not appear from any other scripture. Some of the ancients imagined him to be the same with that Obadiah that was steward to Ahab's household (1 Ki. 18:3); and, if so, he that hid and fed the prophets had indeed a prophet's reward, when he was himself made a prophet. But that is a conjecture which has no ground. This Obadiah, it is probable, was of a later date, some think contemporary with Hosea, Joel, and Amos; others think he lived about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, when the children of Edom so barbarously triumphed in that destruction. However, what he wrote was what he saw; it is his *vision*. Probably there was much more which he was divinely inspired to speak, but this is all he was inspired to write; and all he writes is concerning Edom. It is a foolish fancy of some of the Jews that because he prophesies only concerning Edom he was himself an Edomite by birth, but a proselyte to the Jewish religion. Other prophets prophesied against Edom, and some of them seem to have borrowed from him in their predictions against Edom, as Jer. 49:7, etc.; Eze. 25:12, etc. Out of the mouth of these two or three witnesses every word will be established.

Chapter 1

This book is wholly concerning Edom, a nation nearly allied and near adjoining to Israel, and yet an enemy to the seed of Jacob, inheriting the enmity of their father Esau to Jacob. Now here we have, after the preface (v. 1). I. Threatenings against Edom, 1. That their pride should be humbled (v. 2-4). 2. That their wealth should be plundered (v. 5-7). 3. That their wisdom should be infatuated (v. 8, 9). 4. That their spiteful behaviour towards God's Israel should be avenged (v. 10-16). II. Gracious promises to Israel; that they shall be restored and reformed, and shall be victorious over the Edomites, and become masters of their land and the lands of others of their neighbours (v. 17-20), and that the kingdom of the Messiah shall be set up by the bringing in of the great salvation (v. 21).

Verses 1-9

Edom is the nation against which this prophecy is levelled, and which, some think, is put for all the enemies of Israel, that shall be brought down first or last. The rabbin by Edom understand Rome. Rome Christians they understand it of, and have an implacable enmity to it a such; but, if we understand it of Rome antichristian, we shall find the passages of it applicable enough. And though Edom was mortified in the times of the Maccabees, as it had been before by Jehoshaphat, yet its destruction seems to have been typical, as their father Esau's rejection, and to have had further reference to the destruction of the enemies of the gospel-church; for so shall all God's enemies perish; and we find (Isa. 34:5) the *sword of the Lord* coming down *upon Idumea*, to signify the general day of God's recompences for the controversy of Zion, v. 8. Some have well observed that it could not but be a great temptation to the people of Israel, when they saw themselves, who were the children of beloved Jacob, in trouble, and the Edomites, not only prospering, but triumphing over them in their troubles; and therefore God gives them a prospect of the destruction of Edom, which should be total and final, and of a happy issue of their own correction. Now we may observe here,

I. A declaration of war against Edom, (v. 1): "*We have heard a rumour, or rather an order, from the Lord, the God of hosts; he has given the word of command; it is his counsel and decree, which can neither be reversed nor resisted, that all who do mischief to his people shall certainly bring mischief upon themselves. We have heard a report that God is raised up out of his holy habitation, and is preparing his throne for judgment; and an ambassador is sent among the heathen,*" a *herald* rather, some minister or messenger of Providence, to alarm the nations, or the Lord's prophets, who gave each nation its burden. Those whom God employs cry to each other, *Arise ye*, stir up yourselves and one another, and let *us rise up against Edom in battle*. The confederate forces under Nebuchadnezzar thus animate themselves and one another to make a descent upon that country: *Gather yourselves together, and come against her*; so it is in the parallel place, Jer. 49:14. Note, When God has bloody work to do among the enemies of his church he will find out and fit up both hands and hearts to do it.

II. A prediction of the success of that war. Edom shall certainly be subdued, and spoiled, and brought down; for all her confidences shall fail her and stand her in no stead, and in like manner shall all the enemies of God's church be disappointed in those things which they stayed themselves upon.

1. Do they depend upon their grandeur, the figure they make among the nations, their influence upon them, and interest in them? That shall dwindle (v. 2): "*Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen*, so that none of thy neighbours will court thy friendship, or court an alliance with thee; *thou art greatly despised* among them, and looked upon with contempt, as an infatuated and unfaithful nation." And thus (v. 3) *the pride of thy heart has deceived thee*. Note, (1.) Those that think well of themselves are apt to fancy that others think well of them too; but, when they come to make trial of them, they will find themselves mistaken, and thus their pride deceives them and by it slays them. (2.) God can easily lay those low that have magnified and exalted themselves, and will find out a way to do it, for he *resists the proud*; and we often see those small and greatly despised who once looked very big and were greatly caressed and admired.

2. Do they depend upon the fortifications of their country, both by nature and art, and glory in the advantages they have thereby? Those also shall deceive them. They *dwelt in the clefts of the rock*, as an eagle in her nest, and their *habitation was high*, not only exalted above their neighbours, which was the matter of their pride, but fortified against their enemies, which was the matter of their security, so high as to be out of the reach of danger. Now observe, (1.) What Edom says in the pride of his heart: *Who shall bring me down to the ground?* He speaks with a confidence of his own strength, and a contempt of God's judgments, as if almighty power itself could not overpower him. As for *all his enemies*, even God himself, he *puffs at them* (Ps. 10:5), sets them all at defiance. Their father Esau had *sold his birthright*, and yet they lifted up themselves, as if to them had still pertained the *excellency of dignity and power*. Many forfeit their privileges, and yet boast of them. Because Edom is high and lifted up, he imagines none can bring him down. Note, Carnal security is a sin that most easily besets men in the day of their pomp, power, and prosperity, and does, as much as any thing, both ripen men for ruin and aggravate it when it comes. (2.) What God says to this, v. 4. If men will dare to challenge Omnipotence, their challenge shall be taken up: *Who shall bring me down?* says Edom. "*I will,*" says God. "*Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle* that soars high and builds high, nay, *though thou set thy nest among stars*, higher than ever any eagle flew, it is but in thy own imagination, and *thence will I bring thee down.*" This we had Jer. 49:15, 16. Note, Sinners will certainly be made ashamed of their pride and security of their pride when it has a fall and of their security when their confidences fail their expectation.

3. Do they depend upon their wealth and treasure, the abundance of which is looked upon as the sinews of war? Is their money their defence? Is that their strong city? It is so only in their own conceit, for it shall rather expose them than protect them; it shall be made a prey to the enemy, and they for the sake of it, v. 5. 6. Much to this purport we had Jer. 49:9, 10. Only here comes in, in a parenthesis, *How art thou cut off!* thou and all thy stores. The prophet foretels it, but laments it, that the thread of their prosperity was cut off. How art thou fallen, and how great is thy fall! *How art thou stupefied!* so the Chaldee words it. How senseless art thou under these desolating judgments, as if they were but common strokes! But he shows that it should be an utter ruin, not a usual calamity; for, (1.) It is indeed a usual calamity for those that have wealth to have it stolen, and to lose a little out of their great deal. *Thieves come to them* (for where the carcase is, there will the birds of prey be gathered together), *robbers come by night*, and they *steal till they have enough*, what they have occasion for, what they have a mind for; they steal no more than they think they can carry away, and out of a great stock it is scarcely missed. Those that rob orchards, or

vineyards, carry off what they think fit; but they *leave some grapes*, some fruit for the owner, who easily bears his loss perhaps and soon recruits it. But, (2.) It shall not be so with Edom; his wealth shall all be taken away, and nothing shall escape the hands of the destroying army, not that which is most precious and valuable, v. 6. *How are the things of Esau*, the things he sets his heart upon and places his happiness in, his good things, his best things, how are these things, which were so carefully treasured up and concealed, now *sought out* by the enemy and seized! *How are the hidden things*, his hidden treasures, plundered, rifled, and *sought up*! His hoards, that had not see the light for many years, are now a spoil to the enemy. Note, Treasures on earth, though ever so fast locked up and ever so artfully hidden, cannot be so safely laid up but that thieves may break through and steal; it is therefore our wisdom to *lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven*.

4. Do they depend upon their alliances with neighbouring states and potentates? Those also shall fail them (v. 7): "The *men of thy confederacy*, all of them, the Ammonites and Moabites, and other thy high allies that were at *peace with thee*, that entered into a league offensive and defensive with thee, that solemnly engaged not only to do thee no hurt, but to do thee all the service the could, *did eat thy bread*, were magnificently treated and entertained by thee, lived upon thee; their soldiers had free quarter in thy country, and took pay as thy auxiliaries; they *brought thee even to the border* of thy land, were very respectful to thy ambassadors, and brought them on their way home, even to the utmost limits of their country; they seemed forward to serve thee with their forces when thou hadst occasion for them, and came along with thee *to the border*, till thou wast just ready to engage the invading enemy; but then," (1.) "They had *deceived thee*; they flew back and retreated when thou wast in extremity, and proved as a broken reed to the traveller that is weary, and as the brooks in summer to the traveller that is thirsty; they bear no weight, yield no relief." Nay, (2.) "They have *prevailed against thee*; they were too hard for thee in the treaty imposed upon thee, and by cheating thee ruined thee, brought thee into danger, and there left thee an easy prey to thy enemy." Note, Those that make flesh their arm arm it against them. Yet this was not the worst. (3.) "They have *laid a wound under thee*; that is, they have laid that under thee for a stay and support, for a foundation to rely on, for a pillow to repose on, which will prove a wound to thee; not as thorns only, but as swords." If God lay under us the arms of his power and love, these will be firm and easy under us; the God of our covenant will never deceive us. But if we trust to *the men of our confederacy*, and what they will lay under us, it may prove to us a *wound* and *dishonour*. And observe the just censure here passed upon Edom for trusting to those who thus played tricks with him: "*There is no understanding in him*, or else he would never have put it into their power to betray him by putting such a confidence in them." Note, Those show they have no understanding in them who, when they are encouraged to trust in the Creator, put a cheat upon themselves by reposing a confidence in the creature.

5. Do they depend upon the politics of their counsellors? These shall fail them, v. 8. Edom had been famous for great statesmen, men of learning and experience, that sat at the help of government, and were masters of all the arts of management, that in all treaties used to outwit their neighbours; but now the *counsellors* have become *fools*, and the wise God makes them so: *Shall I not in that day destroy the wise men out of Edom?* As men they shall fall by the sword in common with others (Ps. 49:10), and their wisdom shall not secure them; as wise men they shall be infatuated in all their counsels; their best-laid designs shall be baffled, their measures broken, and those very projects by which they thought to establish themselves and the

public interests shall be the ruin of both. Thus *wisdom perishes from Teman*, as it is in the parallel place, Jer. 49:7. This was, (1.) The just punishment of their folly in trusting to an arm of flesh: *There is no understanding in them*, v. 7. They have not sense to trust in a living God, and a God of truth, but put confidence in men that are frail, fickle, and false; and therefore God will *destroy their understanding*. Note, God will justly deny those understanding to keep out of the way of danger that will not use their understanding to keep out of the way of sin. He that will be foolish, let him be foolish still. (2.) It was the forerunner of their destruction. A nation is certainly marked for ruin when God hides the things that belong to its peace from the eyes of those that are entrusted with its counsels. *Quos Deus vult perdere, eos dementat—God infatuates those whom he designs to destroy*. Job 12:17.

6. Do they depend upon the strength and courage of their soldiers? They are not only able-bodied, but men of spirit and courage, that can face an enemy and stand their ground; but now (v. 9), *Thy mighty men, O Teman! shall be dismayed*; their courage shall fail them, *to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter*, and none escape. The weak, and feeble, and unarmed must fall of course into the hand of the destroyer when the *mighty men are dismayed*, and not only lose the day, but lose their lives, because they have lost their spirit. *Howl, fir-trees, if the cedars be shaken*. Note, The death or disuniting of the mighty often proves the death and destruction of the many; and it is in vain to depend upon mighty men for our protection if we have not an almighty God for us, much less if we have an almighty God against us.

Verses 10-16

When we have read Edom's doom, no less than utter ruin, it is natural to ask, *Why, what evil has he done?* What is the ground of God's controversy with him? Many things, no doubt, were amiss in Edom; they were a sinful people, and *a people laden with iniquity*. But that one single crime which is laid to their charge, as filling their measure and bringing this ruin upon them, that for which they here stand indicted, of which they are convicted, and for which they are condemned, is the injury they had done to the people of God (v. 10): "It is *for thy violence against thy brother Jacob*, that ancient and hereditary grudge which thou hast borne to the people of Israel, that all this *shame shall cover thee and thou shalt be cut off for ever*." Note, Injuries to men are affronts to God, the righteous God, that loveth righteousness and hateth wickedness; and, as the Judge of all the earth, he will give redress to those that suffer wrong and take vengeance on those that do wrong. All violence, all *unrighteousness, is sin*; but it is a great aggravation of the violence if it be done either, 1. Against any of our own people; it is violence *against thy brother*, thy near relation, to whom thou shouldst be a *goël—a redeemer*, whom it is thy duty to right if others wronged him; how wicked is it then for thee thyself to wrong him! Thou *slandereest* and abusest *thy own mother's son*; this makes the sin *exceedingly sinful*, Ps. 50:20. Or, 2. Much more if it be done against any of God's people; "it is thy brother Jacob that is in covenant with God, and dear to him. Thou hatest him whom God has loved, and because God espouses and will plead with jealousy, and in whose interests God is pleased so far to interest himself that he takes the violence done to him as done to himself. *Whoso touches Jacob touches the apple of the eye of Jacob's God*." So that it is *crimen laesae majestatis—high treason*, for which, as for high treason, let Edom expect an ignominious punishment: *Shame shall cover thee, and a ruining one; thou shalt be cut off for ever*.

In the following verses we are told more particularly,

I. What the violence was which Edom did against his brother Jacob, and what are the proofs of this charge. It does not appear that the Edomites did themselves invade Israel, but that was more for want of power than will; they had malice enough to do it, but were not a match for them. But that which is laid to their charge is their barbarous conduct towards Judah and Jerusalem when they were in distress, and ready to be destroyed, probably by the Chaldeans, or upon occasion of some other of the calamities of the Jews; for this seems to have been always their temper towards them. See this charged upon the Edomites (Ps. 137:7), that *in the day of Jerusalem they said, Rase it, rase it*, and Eze. 25:12. They are here told particularly what they did, by being told what they should not have done (v. 12–14): "Thou *shouldst not have looked, thou shouldst not have entered*; but thou didst so." Note, In reflecting upon ourselves it is good to compare what we have done with what we should have done, our practice with the rule, that we may discover wherein we have done amiss, have *done those things which we ought not to have done*. We should not have been where we were at such a time, should not have been in such and such company, should not have said what we said, nor have taken the liberty that we took. Sin thus looked upon, in the glass of the commandment, will appear exceedingly sinful. Let us see,

1. What was the case of Judah and Jerusalem when the Edomites behaved themselves thus basely and insulted over them. (1.) It was a day of distress with them (v. 12): It was the *day of their calamity*, so it is called three times, v. 13. With the Edomites it was a day of prosperity and peace when with the Israelites it was a day of distress and calamity, for judgment commonly *begins at the house of God*. Children are corrected when strangers are let alone. (2.) It was the day of *their destruction* (v. 12), when both city and country were laid waste, were laid *in ruins*. (3.) It was a day when *foreigners entered into the gates of Jerusalem*, when the city, after a long siege, was broken up, and the great officers of the king of Babylon's army came, and sat in the gates, as judges of the land; when they cast lots upon the spoils of Jerusalem, as the soldiers on Christ's garments, what shares each of the conquerors shall have, what shares of the lands, what shares of the goods; or they cast lots to determine when and where they should attack it. (4.) It was a day when the *strangers carried away captive his forces* (v. 11), took the men of war prisoners of war, and carried them off, in poverty and shame, to their own country, or such a multitude of captives that they were as an army. (5.) "It was a day when thy brother himself, that had long been at home, at rest in his own land, *became a stranger*, an exile in a strange land." Now, when this was the woeful case of the Jews, the Edomites, their neighbours and brethren, should have pitied them and helped them, condoled with them and comforted them, and should have trembled to think that their own turn would come next; for, *if this was done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* But,

2. See what was the conduct of the Edomites towards them when they were in this distress, for which they are here condemned. (1.) They looked with pleasure upon the affliction of God's people; they *stood on the other side* (v. 11), afar off, when they should have come in to the relief of their distressed neighbours, and *looked upon them*, and *their day, looked on their affliction* (v. 12, 13), with a careless unconcerned eye, as the priest and Levite looked upon the wounded man, and *passed by on the other side*. Those have a great deal to answer for that are idle spectators of the troubles and afflictions of their neighbours, when they are capable of being their active helpers. But this was not all; they looked upon it with a scornful eye,

with an eye of complacency and satisfaction; they looked and laughed to see Israel in distress, saying, *Aha! so we would have it*. They fed their eyes with the rueful spectacle of Jerusalem's ruin, and looked at it as those that had long looked for it and often wished to see it. Note, We must take heed with what eye we look upon the afflictions of our brethren; and, if we cannot look upon them with a gracious eye of sympathy and tenderness, it is better not to look upon them at all: *Thou shouldst not have looked as thou didst upon the day of thy brother*. (2.) They triumphed and insulted over them, upbraided their brethren with their sorrows, and made themselves and their companions merry with them. They *rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction*. They had not the good manners to conceal the pleasure they took in Judah's destruction and to dissemble it, but openly declared it, and rudely and insolently declared it *to them; they rejoiced over them*, crowed, and hectorred, and trampled upon them. Those have the spirit of Edomites that can rejoice over any, especially over Israelites, in the day of their calamity. (3.) They *spoke proudly-magnified the mouth* (so the word is), against Israel, talked with a great disdain of the suffering Israelites, and with an air of haughtiness of the present safety and prosperity of Edom, as it if might be inferred from their present different state that the tables were turned, and now Esau was beloved, and the favourite of heaven, and Jacob hated and rejected. Note, Those must expect to be in some way or other effectually humbled and mortified themselves that are puffed up and made proud by the humiliations and mortifications of others. (4.) They went further yet, for they *entered into the gate* of God's people in the day of their calamity, and *laid hands on their substance*. Though they did not help to conquer them, they helped to plunder them, and put in for a share in the prey, v. 13. Jerusalem was thrown open, and then they entered in; its wealth was thrown about, and they seized it for themselves, excusing it with this, that they might as well take it as let it be lost; whereas it was taking what was not their own. Babylon lays Jerusalem waste, but Edom, by meddling with the spoil, becomes *particeps criminis—partaker of the crime*, and shall be reckoned with as an accessory *ex post facto—after the fact*. Note, Those do but impoverish themselves that think to enrich themselves by the ruins of the people of God; and those deceive themselves who think they may call all that substance their own which they can lay their hands on in a day of calamity. (5.) They did yet worse things; they not only robbed their brethren, but murdered them, in the day of their calamity; laid hands not only on their substance, but on their persons, v. 14. When the victorious sword of the Chaldeans was making bloody work among the Jews many made their escape, and were in a fair way to save themselves by flight; but the Edomites basely intercepted them, *stood in the cross-way* where several roads met, by each of which the trembling Israelites were making the best of their way from the fury of the pursuers, and there they stopped them: some they barbarously and cowardlike cut off themselves; others they took prisoners, and delivered up to the pursuers, only to ingratiate themselves with them, because they were now the conquerors. They *should not have been thus cruel* to those that lay at their mercy, and never had done, nor were every likely to do, them any hurt; they should not have betrayed those whom they had such a fair opportunity to protect; but such are the *tender mercies of the wicked*. One cannot read this without a high degree of compassion towards those who were thus basely abused, who when they fled from the sword of an open enemy, and thought they had got out of the reach of it, fell upon and fell by the sword of a treacherous neighbour, whom they were not apprehensive of any danger from. Nor can one read this without a high degree of indignation towards those who were so perfectly lost to all humanity as to exercise such

cruelty upon such proper objects of compassion. (6.) In all this they joined with the open enemies and persecutors of Israel: *Even thou wast as one of them*, an accessory equally guilty with the principals. He that joins in with the evil doers, and is aiding and abetting in their evil deeds, shall be reckoned, and shall be reckoned with, as one of them.

II. What the shame is that shall cover them for this violence of theirs. 1. They shall soon find that the cup is going round, even the cup of trembling; and, when they come to be in the same calamitous condition that the Israel of God is now in, they will be ashamed to remember how they triumphed over them (v. 15): *The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen*, when God will recompense tribulation to the troublers of his church. Though judgment begin at the house of God, it shall not end there. This should effectually restrain us from triumphing over others in their misery, that we know not how soon it may be our own case. 2. Their enmity to the people of God, and the injuries they had done them, shall be recompensed into their own bosoms: *As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee*. The righteous God will render both to nations and to particular persons *according to their works*; and the punishment is often made exactly to answer to the sin, and those that have abused others come to be themselves abused in like manner. The just and jealous God will find out a time and way to avenge the wrongs done to his people on those that have been injurious to them. *As you have drunk upon my holy mountain* (v. 16), that is, as God's professing people, who inhabit his holy mountain, have drunk deeply of the cup of affliction (and their being of the holy mountain would not excuse them), *so shall all the heathen drink*, in their turn, of the same bitter cup; for, if God *bring evil on the city that is called by his name, shall those be unpunished* that never knew his name? See Jer. 25:29. And it is part of the burden of Edom (Jer. 49:12), *Those whose judgment was not to drink of the cup* (who had reason to promise themselves an exemption from it) have assuredly drunken, and *shall Edom* that is the generation of God's wrath *go unpunished*? No, *thou shalt surely drink of it; the cup of trembling shall be taken out of the hand of God's people, and put into the hand of those that afflict them*, Isa. 51:22, 23. Nay, they may expect their case to be worse in the day of their distress than that of Israel was in their day; for, (1.) The afflictions of God's people were but for a moment, and soon had an end, but their enemies shall *drink continually the wine of God's wrath*, Rev. 14:10. (2.) The dregs of the cup are reserved for the *wicked of the earth* (Ps. 75:8); they shall *drink and swallow down*, or *sup up* (as the margin reads it), shall drink it to the bottom. (3.) The people of God, though they may be made to drink of the wine of astonishment for a while (Ps. 60:3), shall yet recover, and come to themselves again; but the heathen shall drink and be *as though they had not been*; there shall be neither any remains nor any remembrance of them, but they shall be wholly extirpated and rooted out. *So let all thy enemies perish, O Lord!* so they shall perish, if the turn not.

Verses 17-21

After the destruction of the church's enemies is threatened, which will be completely accomplished in the great day of recompence, and that judgment for which Christ came once, and will come again, into this world, here follow precious promises of the salvation of the church, with which this prophecy concludes, and those of Joel and Amos did, which, however they might be in part fulfilled in the return of the Jews out of Babylon notwithstanding the triumphs of Edom in their captivity, as if it were perpetual, are yet, doubtless, to have their full accomplishment in that great salvation wrought out by Jesus Christ,

to which all the prophets bore witness. It is promised here,

I. That there shall be salvation upon Mount Zion, that holy hill where God sets his anointed King (Ps. 2:6): *Upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance*, v. 17. There shall be *those that escape*; so the margin. A remnant of Israel, *upon the holy mountain* shall be saved, v. 16. Christ said, *Salvation is of the Jews*, Jn. 4:22. God wrought deliverances for the Jews, typical of our redemption by Christ. But Mount Zion is the gospel-church, from which the New-Testament law *went forth*, Isa. 2:3. There salvation shall be preached and prayed for; to the gospel-church those are added who *shall be saved*; and for those who come in faith and hope to this Mount Zion deliverance shall be wrought from wrath and the curse, from sin, and death, and hell, while those who continue afar off shall be left to perish.

II. That, where there is salvation, there shall be sanctification in order to it: *And there shall be holiness*, to prepare and qualify the children of Zion for this deliverance; for wherever God designs glory he gives grace. Temporal deliverances are indeed wrought for us in mercy when with them there is holiness, when there is wrought in us a disposition to receive them with love and gratitude to God; when we are sanctified, they are sanctified to us. Holiness is itself a great deliverance, and an earnest of that eternal salvation which we look for. *There*, upon Mount Zion, in the gospel-church, *shall be holiness*; for that is it which *becomes God's house for ever*, and the great design of the gospel, and its grace, is to plant and promote holiness. There shall be the Holy Spirit, the holy ordinances, the holy Jesus, and a select remnant of holy souls, in whom, and among whom, the holy God will delight to dwell. Note, Where there is holiness there shall be deliverance.

III. That this salvation and sanctification shall spread, and prevail, and get ground in the world: *The house of Jacob*, even this *Mount Zion*, with the deliverance and their holiness there wrought, shall *possess their possessions*; that is, the gospel-church shall be set up among the heathen, and shall replenish the earth; the apostles of Christ by their preaching shall gain possession of the hearts of men for him whose messengers and ministers they are, and when they possess their hearts they shall *possess their possessions*, for those who have given up themselves to the Lord give up all they have to him. When Lydia's heart was opened to Christ her house was opened to his ministers. When the Gentile nations became *nations of those that were saved*, were disciplined, *walked in the light* of the Lord, and *brought their glory and honour into the new Jerusalem* (Rev. 21:24), then the *house of Jacob possessed their possessions*. This is the part fulfilled by the planting of the Christian religion in the world, and shall be fulfilled yet more and more by the setting up of Christ's throne where Satan's seat is, and the erecting of trophies of his victory upon the ruins of the devil's kingdom. Now here is foretold,

1. How this possession shall be *gained*, and the opposition given to it got over (v. 18): *The house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame*, for their God is, and will be, a *consuming fire*; and the house of Esau shall be for *stubble*, easily devoured and consumed by this fire. This is fulfilled, (1.) In the conversion of multitudes by the grace of Christ; the gospel, preached in the house of Jacob and Joseph, and there owned and professed, shall be as a fire and a flame to melt and to soften hard hearts, to burn up the dross of sin and corruption, that they may be purified and refined with the *spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning*. Christ, when he comes, shall be *as a refiner's fire*, Mal. 3:1, 2. (2.) In the confusion of all the impenitent implacable enemies of the gospel of Christ, that oppose it and do all they can to hinder the setting up of the kingdom of the

Messiah by it. The gospel day is a day that *burns like an oven*, in which *all the proud, and all that do wickedly, shall be a stubble*, Mal. 4:1. Jacob and Joseph shall be as a fire and a flame; for those that meddle with them, to do them hurt, will find that they do so at their peril; they shall be to them as *a torch of fire in a sheaf*, Zec. 12:6. The word of God in the mouth of his ministers is said to be like fire, and the people as wood to be devoured by it, Jer. 5:14. And the *man of sin* is to be *consumed by the breath of Christ's mouth*, 2 Th. 2:8. Those that are not refined as gold by fire of the gospel shall be consumed as dross by it; for it will be a savour either of life or of death. When idols and idolatry were abolished, and the wealth and power of nations were brought into the service of Christ and his gospel, and the spoils of the *strong man armed* were divided by him that was *stronger than he*, then the house of Jacob and Joseph devoured *the house of Esau*, so that there was none of them left remaining. This the Lord *spoke* by his prophets, and this he did by his apostles.

2. How far this possession shall extend, v. 19, 20. This is described in Jewish language, which speaks the accession made to the land of Israel, after the return out of captivity into Babylon. The *captivity of this host of Israel*, that is, this host of Israel that have been so long in captivity and now they have come back are still called the *children of the captivity*, these shall not only recover their own land, but shall gain ground upon their neighbours adjoining to them, some of whom shall become proselytes and shall incorporate with the Jews, who, by possessing them in a holy communion, possess their land. We must reckon ourselves truly enriched by the conversion of our neighbours to the fear of God and the faith of Christ, and their coming to join with us in the worship of God. Such an accession to our Christian communion we must reckon to be more our wealth and strength than an accession to our estates. Or, The ancient inhabitants of those lands that were carried away into captivity being lost, and never returning to their estates, the children of Israel shall take possession of that which lies next them; for their numbers shall so increase that their own land shall be too strait for them, and their neighbours' estates shall escheat to them *ob defectum sanguinis—through default of heirs*. They shall enter upon that which is adjoining to them. The country of Esau shall be possessed by those *of the south* parts of Canaan, for to them it lies contiguous. Those *of the plain*, on the west of Canaan, which was a champaign country, shall enter upon *the land of the Philistines*, their neighbours. Those of Judah, which was the chief of the two returning tribes, shall possess *the field of Ephraim and Samaria*, which before belonged to the ten tribes; and Benjamin, the other tribe, shall possess Gilead on the other side of Jordan, which had belonged to the two tribes and a half. The kingdom of Israel shall join with that of Judah both in civil and sacred interests, and, as friends and brethren, shall mutually possess and enjoy one another; and both together shall *possess the Canaanites*, even to Zarephath, which *belongeth to Zidon*; and Jerusalem shall possess the *cities of the south*, even to Sepharad. Thus did the Jews enlarge their borders on all sides. The modern rabbin teach their scholars by Zarephath and Sepharad to understand France and Spain, grounding upon this a foolish groundless expectation that some time or other the Jews shall be masters of those countries; and they call and count the Christians *Edomites*, over whom they are to have dominion. But the promise here, no doubt, has a spiritual signification, and had its accomplishment in the setting up of the Christian church, the gospel-Israel, in the world, and shall have its accomplishment more and more in the enlargement of it and the additions made to it, till the mystical body is completed. When ministers and Christians prevail with their neighbours to come to Christ, to yield themselves to the Lord, they possess them.

The converts that Abraham had are said to be the *souls that he had gotten*, Gen. 12:5. The possession is gained, not *vi et armis*—*by force and arms*; for the *weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual*; it is by the preaching of the gospel, and the power of divine grace going along with it, that this possession is got and kept.

IV. That the kingdom of the Redeemer shall be erected and maintained, to the comfort of his loyal subjects and the terror and shame of all his enemies (v. 21): *The kingdom shall be the Lord's*, the Lord Christ's. God shall give it to him, by putting all things into his hand, all power both in heaven and in earth; men shall give it to him, by resigning themselves to him as his willing people, and appointing him their head. Now the work of kings is to protect their subjects and suppress their enemies; and this Christ will do; he will both reward and punish. 1. The mountain of Zion shall be saved; on it *saviours shall come*, the preachers of the gospel, who are called saviours, because their business is to save themselves and those that hear them; and in this they are *workers together with Christ*, but to little purpose if he by his grace did not *work together with them*. 2. The mountain of Esau shall be judged; and the same that come as saviours on Mount Zion shall *judge the mountain of Esau*; for the word of the gospel in their mouth, that saves believers, judges unbelievers, convinces and condemns them. Christ's ministers are *saviours on Mount Zion* when they preach that *he that believes shall be saved*; but they judge the mount of Esau when they preach *that he that believeth not shall be damned*, which they are not only commissioned, but commanded to do, Mk. 16:16. And in the course of God's providence his scripture is fulfilled; when God raises up friends to the church in her distress (as he *raised up judges* to deliver Israel of old, Jdg. 2:16), then *saviours come on Mount Zion*, to save it from being sunk and ruined; and when the enemies of the church are brought down, and their power broken, then is the *mount of Esau judged*; and this shall be done in every age in such a way as God thinks best; we may depend upon it that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church, but the church shall prevail against them; *for the kingdom shall be the Lord's*; the kingdoms of the world shall become his, and he has taken, and will take, to himself his great power and reign.