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COMMENTARIES

EXPOSITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

OBADIAH

by John Gill

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth*
— Psalm 60:4

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INTRODUCTION TO OBADIAH

The title of this Book, in the Hebrew copies, is usually “Sepher Obadiah”, the Book of Obadiah: the Vulgate Latin version calls it the Prophecy of Obadiah; and so the Arabic version: and in the Syriac version it is, the Prophecy of the Prophet Obadiah. His name signifies a “servant” or “worshipper of the Lord”. Who he was, what his parentage, and in what age he lived, are things uncertain. The Seder Olam Zuta ^{f1} places him in the reign of Jehoshaphat: and he is thought by some to be that Obadiah that was one of the princes he sent to teach the people, (^{<4170>}2 Chronicles 17:7). The ancient Jewish Rabbins take him to be the same with him that lived in the times of Ahab, and in his court, who hid the prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them, (^{<1183>}1 Kings 18:3,4); to which Aben Ezra objects, because he is not called a prophet, only one that feared the Lord; whereas to be a prophet is something greater. They also say he was an Edomite by birth, but was proselyted to the Jewish religion, and so a fit person to be employed in prophesying against Edom; and it is a tradition with them that his widow is the woman whose cruse of oil Elisha multiplied, (^{<1201>}2 Kings 4:1). Some have been of opinion that he was the captain of the third fifty, whose life Elijah spared in the times of Ahaziah; and who upon that left the king’s service, and followed the prophet, and became a disciple of his; so Pseudo-Epiphanius ^{f2}, and Isidorus Hispalensis ^{f3}, who say that he was of Sychem, a city of Samaria, and of the field of Bethachamar, or Bethaccaron. Others would have him to be one of the overseers of the workmen in the house of the Lord, in the times of Josiah, (^{<14312>}2 Chronicles 34:12); to which Mr. Lively ^{f4} inclines; though others, going according to the order of the books in the canon of Scripture, which is not to be depended on, place him earlier, and make him contemporary with Hosea, Joel, and Amos, as Grotius ^{f5}, Huetius ^{f6}, and Lightfoot ^{f7}: but he seems rather to be contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel, with whose prophecies this agrees, as may be observed by comparing it with (^{<2440>}Jeremiah 49:1-39 ^{<3201>}Ezekiel 25:1-17); and to have lived and prophesied after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; in which the Edomites, against whom he prophesies, had a concern; (see ^{<31011>}Obadiah 1:11-14 ^{<4170>}Psalms 137:7); though Dr. Lightfoot thinks these prophecies refer either to the sacking of Jerusalem by Shishak king of Egypt, (^{<11425>}1 Kings 14:25); or by the Philistines and Arabians, (^{<14216>}2 Chronicles

21:16,17); or by Joash king of Israel, (~~4252~~ 2 Chronicles 25:21); so that, upon the whole, it is not certain; and, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi own, it is not known in what age this prophet lived: Bishop Usher^{f8} places his prophecy in the twelfth year of Jeconiah's captivity. However, there is no doubt to be made of the authenticity of the prophecy; as may be concluded, not only from the title of it, and the solemn manner in which it begins; but from the matter of it, and the accomplishment of what is contained in it; as well as from the testimony borne to it in the New Testament, in which not only the book of the minor prophets, in which this stands, is quoted, (~~4172~~ Acts 7:42); but a passage in it, (~~31008~~ Obadiah 1:8); is referred to in (~~4019~~ 1 Corinthians 1:19); as is thought by some learned men. I have only to observe, that, according to Pseudo-Epiphanius^{f9}, he died in Bethachamar, where he is said to be born, and was buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors; but, according to Jerom^{f10} and Isidore^{f11}, his sepulchre is in Sebaste or Samaria; which remained to the times of Jerom, near those of the Prophet Elisha and John the Baptist. Monsieur Thevenot^{f12} says that John Baptist here lies buried between the Prophets Elisha and Abdias.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO OBADIAH 1

This prophecy of Obadiah is the least of the minor prophets, consisting but of one chapter; the subject of it is Edom, whose destruction is foretold, and is to be considered as a type of the enemies of Christ and his kingdom, and especially of the Roman antichrist. After the preface, the rumour of war, and preparation for it, which would issue in the ruin of Edom, are observed, (³¹⁰⁰¹Obadiah 1:1,2); because of their pride, confidence, and security, (³¹⁰⁰³Obadiah 1:3,4); which should be complete and entire, (³¹⁰⁰⁵Obadiah 1:5,6); notwithstanding their allies, who would deceive them; and the wisdom of their wise men, which should be destroyed; and the strength of their mighty men, who would be dismayed, (³¹⁰⁰⁷Obadiah 1:7-9); and this should come upon them, chiefly because of their ill usage of the Jews at the time of Jerusalem's destruction, which is enlarged upon, (³¹⁰¹⁰Obadiah 1:10-14); and this would be when all the nations round about them would be destroyed, (³¹⁰¹⁵Obadiah 1:15,16); and then deliverance is promised to the Jews, who should not only enjoy their own possessions, but the land of the Edomites, wasted by them, (³¹⁰¹⁷Obadiah 1:17-20); and the book is concluded with a glorious prophecy of the kingdom of the Messiah, (³¹⁰²¹Obadiah 1:21).

Ver. 1. *The vision of Obadiah*, etc.] Or the prophecy, as the Targum; which was delivered unto him by the Lord in a vision; it was not what he fancied or dreamed of, but what he saw, what he had a clear discovery and revelation of made unto his mind; hence prophets are sometimes called "seers". This was a single prophecy; though sometimes a book, consisting of various prophecies, is called a vision; as the prophecies of Isaiah are called the vision of Isaiah, (²¹⁰⁰³Isaiah 1:1);

thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom; by the mouth of this prophet, who was divinely inspired by him; for Obadiah said not what follows of himself but in the name of the Lord; and is a proof of the divine authority of this book; the subject matter of which is Edom or Idumea, as in the Septuagint version; a neighbouring country to the Jews, and very troublesome to them, being their implacable enemies, though their

brethren; and were a type of the enemies of the Christian church, those false brethren, the antichristian states; and particularly the head of them, the Romish antichrist, whose picture is here drawn and whose destruction is prophesied of, under the name of Edom; for what has been literally fulfilled in Idumea will; be mystically accomplished in antichrist. The Jews generally understand, by Edom, Rome, and the Christians in general; which, if applied only to the antichristians, is not amiss;

we have heard a rumour from the Lord; or “a report” ^{f13}; a message from him, brought by the Spirit of God, as a spirit of prophecy; that is, I Obadiah, and Jeremiah, and other prophets, as Isaiah and Amos, who have had orders to prophesy against Edom; (see ^{<49:14>}Jeremiah 49:14); so the angels, or Gospel ministers, will have a rumour or message concerning the fall of antichrist (^{<14:6-9>}Revelation 14:6-9);

and an ambassador is sent among the Heathen: either by the Lord, as Jeremiah the prophet, according to some; or an angel, as others; or an impulse upon the minds of the Chaldeans stirring them up to war against the Edomites: or else by Nebuchadnezzar to the nations in alliance with him, to join him in his expedition against them; or a herald sent by him to his own people, to summon them together to this war, and to encourage them in it:

arise ye, and let us rise up in battle against her; come up from all parts, join together, and invade the land of Idumea, and give battle to the inhabitants of it, and destroy them; so the kings of the earth will stir up one another to hate the whore of Rome, and make her desolate, (^{<17:16>}Revelation 17:16).

Ver. 2. *Behold, I have made thee small among the Heathen*, etc.] Or “a little one”, or “thing” ^{f14}; their number few, and their country not large, as Aben Ezra, especially in comparison of other nations; and therefore had no reason to be so proud, insolent, and secure, as they are afterwards said to be; or rather, “I will make thee”; the past for the future, after the prophetic manner, as Kimchi; that is weak and feeble, as the Targum; reduce their numbers, destroy their towns and cities, and bring them into a low and miserable condition: or the sense is, that he would make them look little, mean, and abject, in the sight of their enemies who would conclude, upon a view of them, that they should have no trouble in subduing them, and therefore should attack them without fear, and as sure of success:

thou art greatly despised; in the eyes of the nations round about; by their enemies, who looked upon them with contempt, because of the smallness of their number, their defenceless state and want of strength to support and defend themselves; (see ²⁴⁹¹⁵Jeremiah 49:15); had so the pope of Rome is little and despicable in the eyes of the monarchs of the earth; and the antichristian Edom will be more so at the time of its general ruin.

Ver. 3. *The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee*, etc.] The Edomites were proud of their wealth and riches, which they had by robberies amassed together; and of their military skill and courage, and of their friends and allies; and especially of their fortresses and fastnesses, both natural and artificial; and therefore thought themselves secure, and that no enemy could come at them to hurt them, and this deceived them:

thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock; their country was called Arabia Petraea, the rocky; and their metropolis Petra, the rock: Jerom says that they that inhabited the southern part of the country dwelt in caves cut out of the rock, to screen them from the heat of the sun: or, “thou that dwellest in the circumferences of the rock”^{f15}; round about it, on the top of it, in a tower built there, as Kimchi and Ben Melech. Aben Ezra thinks that “caph”, the note of similitude, is wanting; and that the sense is, thou thoughtest that Mount Seir could secure thee, as they that dwell in the clefts of a rock:

whose habitation [is] high; upon high rocks and mountains, such as Mount Seir was, where Esau dwelt, and his posterity after, him. The Targum is,

“thou art like to an eagle that dwells in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is in a high place;”

this they were proud of, thinking themselves safe, which deceived them; hence it follows:

that saith in his heart, who shall bring me down to the ground? what enemy, ever so warlike and powerful, will venture to invade my land, or besiege me in my strong hold? or, if he should, he can never take it, or take me from hence, conquer and subdue me. Of the pride, confidence, and security of mystical Edom or antichrist, (see ⁶⁶⁸⁰⁷Revelation 18:7).

Ver. 4. *Though thou exaltest [thyself] as the eagle*, etc.] That soars aloft, flies on high, even out of sight, higher than any other bird does: or,

“exaltest thy habitation”; and makest it as high as the eagle’s nest; (see ^{<3476>}Jeremiah 49:16);

and though thou set thy nest among the stars; even higher than the eagle’s; an hyperbolical expression, supposing that which never was or can be done; yet, if it was possible, would not secure from danger: or should their castles and fortresses be built upon the top of the highest mountains, which seem to reach the heavens, and be among the stars:

thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord; this is said in answer to the question put, or bold challenge made, in (^{<3103>}Obadiah 1:3); if men cannot do it, God will; and, if he employs instruments to effect it, it shall be done by them; all seeming difficulties are easily surmounted by an omnipotent Being; what are the heights of mountains, or the strength of fortresses, to him? thus the whore of Rome sits upon seven mountains, and mystical Babylon reigns over the kings of the earth; yet shall be thrown down and found no more, for the Lord is strong that judgeth her, (^{<6670>}Revelation 17:9,18 18:8,21).

Ver. 5. *If thieves came to thee, if robbers by night*, etc.] Whether the one came by day, and the other by night, or both by night, the same being meant by different words, whose intent is to plunder and steal, and carry off what they can; thy condition would not be worse, nor so bad as now it is: for

how art thou cut off! from being a nation, wholly destroyed; thy people killed, or carried captive; thy fortresses demolished, towns and cities levelled with the ground, and all thy wealth and substance carried off, and nothing left: these are either the words of God, or of the prophet, setting forth their utter ruin, as if it was already; or of the nations round about, wondering at their sudden destruction. Some render it, “how silent art thou!”^{f16} that is, under all these calamities: or, “how art thou asleep!” or “stupefied!” as the Targum and Jarchi; not to be upon thy guard against the incursions of the enemy, but careless, secure, and stupid, and now stripped of everything: had common thieves and robbers broke in upon thee,

would they not have stolen till they had enough? as much as they came for, or could carry off; they seldom strip a house into which they enter of everything in it; they come for some particular things, and, meeting with them, they go off, and leave the rest:

if the grape gatherers come to thee, would they not leave [some] grapes? that is, if men should come into thy vineyards, and gather the grapes, and carry them off by force or stealth, would they take them all a way? doubtless they would leave some behind; some would be hid under the boughs, and be left unobserved by them: or the allusion is to gatherers of grapes, who gather them for the owners, and at their direction, who were wont to leave some clusters for the poor to glean after them; but in the case of Edom it is suggested that nothing should be left, all should be clean carried off; the destruction would be complete and entire. The Targum is,

“if spoilers as grape gatherers should come unto thee, etc.”

(see ²⁴⁰⁰Jeremiah 49:9).

Ver. 6. *How are [the things] of Esau searched out!* etc.] Or how are the Esauites, the posterity of Esau, sought out! though they dwelt in the clefts of the rocks, and hid themselves in caves and dens, yet their enemies searched them, and found there, and plucked them out from thence, so that none escaped:

[how] are his hid things sought up! his riches, wealth and treasure, hid in fortresses, in rocks and caves, where they were thought to be safe, and judged inaccessible; or that an enemy would not have ventured in search of them there; and yet these should be sought after and found by the greedy, and diligent, and venturous soldier, and carried off; which was the case of the Edomites by the Chaldeans, and will be of the antichristian states by the kings of the earth, (⁶⁶⁷¹⁶Revelation 17:16); (see ²⁴⁰⁰Jeremiah 49:10).

Ver. 7. *All the men of thy confederacy have brought thee [even] to the border,* etc.] Or of “thy covenant”^{f17}; that are in league with thee; thine allies, even all of them, prove treacherous to thee, in whom thou trustedst; when they sent their ambassadors to them, they received them kindly, promised great things to them, dismissed them honourably, accompanied them to the borders of their country, but never stood to their engagements: or those allies came and joined their forces with the Edomites, and went out with them to meet the enemy, as if they would fight with them, and them; but when they came to the border of the land they left them, and departed into their own country; or went over to the enemy; or these confederates were the instruments of expelling them out of their own land, and sending them to the border of it, and carrying them captive; or they followed them to the border of the land, when they were carried captive, as

if they lamented their case, when they were assisting to the enemy, as Kimchi; so deceitful were they. The Targum is to the same purpose,

“from the border all thy confederates carried thee captive ^{f18}:”

the men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee, [and] prevailed against thee; outwitted them in their treaties of peace, and got the advantage of them; or they proved treacherous to them, and joined the enemy against them; or they persuaded them to declare themselves enemies to the Chaldeans, which proved their ruin; and so they prevailed against them:

[they that eat] thy bread: so the Targum and Kimchi supply it; or it may be supplied from the preceding clause, “the men of thy bread”; who received subsidies from them, were maintained by them, and quartered among them:

have laid a wound under thee; instead of supporting them, secretly did that which was wounding to them. The word signifies both a wound and a plaster; they pretended to lay a plaster to heal, but made a wound; or made the wound worse. The Targum is,

“they laid a stumbling block under thee;”

at which they stumbled and fell: or snares, as the Vulgate Latin version, whereby they brought them to ruin:

[there is] none understanding in him; in Esau, or the Edomites; they were so stupid, that they could not see into the designs of their pretended friends, and prevent the execution of them, and their ill effects.

Ver. 8. *Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, even destroy the wise [men] out of Edom*, etc.] When they shall be invaded by the enemy, and treacherously dealt with by their allies; so that there shall be no wise counsellors at court to give advice what proper methods should be taken at such a season; they should either be taken off by death, or their wisdom should be turned into folly, and they be rendered incapable of giving right counsel:

and understanding out of the mount of Esau? that is, men of understanding, as the Targum, should be destroyed out of Edom or Idumea, which was a mountainous country; such as were well versed in politics, or understood military affairs, and how to conduct at such a critical time; to form schemes, and concert measures, and wisely put them

in execution; and to be deprived of all such must be a great loss at such a time, and add to their distress and calamity; (see ²⁴⁰⁷Jeremiah 49:7).

Ver. 9. *And thy mighty [men], O Teman, shall be dismayed*, etc.] Teman was one part of the country of Edom, so called from Teman, a son of Eliphaz, and grandson of Esau, (⁰³⁵¹Genesis 36:11); and which it seems had been famous for men of might and courage: it abounded with brave officers, and courageous soldiers, who should now be quite dispirited, and have no heart to go out against the enemy; and, instead of defending their country, should throw away their arms, and run away in a fright. The Targum and Vulgate Latin version render it,

“thy mighty men that inhabit the south;”

or are on the south, the southern part of Edom, and so lay farthest off from the Chaldeans, who came from the north; yet these should be at once intimidated upon the rumour of their approach and invasion:

to the end that even one of the mount of Esau may be cut by slaughter; that so there might be none to resist and stop the enemy, or defend their country; but that all might fall by the sword of the enemy, and none be left, even every mighty man, as Jarchi interprets it, through the greatness of the slaughter that should be made.

Ver. 10. *For [thy] violence against thy brother Jacob*, etc.] Which is aggravated: by being against Jacob, an honest plain hearted man, and whom the Lord loved; his brother, his own brother, a twin brother, yea, his only brother; yet this is to be understood, not so much of the violence of Esau against Jacob personally, though there is an allusion to that; as of the violence of the posterity of the one against the posterity of the other; and not singly of the violence shown at the destruction of Jerusalem, but in general of the anger they bore, the wrath they showed, and the injuries they did to their brethren the Jews, on all occasions, whenever they had an opportunity, of which the following is a notorious instance; and for which more especially, as well as for the above things, they are threatened with ruin:

shame shall cover thee; as a garment; they shall be filled with blushing, and covered with confusion, when convicted of their sin, and punished for it:

and thou shalt be cut off for ever; from being a nation; either by Nebuchadnezzar; or in the times of the Maccabees by Hyrcanus, when they

were subdued by the Jews, and were incorporated among them, and never since was a separate people or kingdom.

Ver. 11. *In the day thou stoodest on the other side*, etc.] Aloof off, as a spectator of the ruin of Jerusalem, and that with delight and pleasure; when they should, as brethren and neighbours, have assisted against the common enemy; but instead of this they stood at a distance; or they went over to the other side, and joined the enemy, and stood in opposition to their brethren the Jews:

in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces; that is, at the time that the Chaldeans took Jerusalem, and carried captive as many of the forces of the Jews as fell into their hands; or when

“the people spoiled his substance,”

as the Targum; plundered the city of all its wealth and riches:

and foreigners entered into his gates; the gates of their cities, particularly Jerusalem; even such who came from a far country, the Babylonians, who were aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel; whereas the Edomites were their near neighbours, and allied to them by blood, though not of the same religion; and by whom they helped against a foreign enemy, instead of being used by them as they were:

and cast lots upon Jerusalem; either to know when they should make their attack upon it; or else, having taken it, the generals of the Chaldean army cast lots upon the captives, to divide them among them, so Kimchi; (see ²⁰⁰⁸ Joel 3:3 Na 3:10); or rather, the soldiers cast lots for the division of the plunder of the city, as was usual at such times:

even thou [wast] as one of them; the Edomites joined the Chaldeans, entered into the city with them, showed as much wrath, spite, and malice, as they did, and were as busy in dividing the spoil. So Aben Ezra interprets these and the following verses of the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; but Kimchi expounds them of the destruction of them by the Romans, at which he supposes many Edomites to be present, and rejoiced at it: could this be supported, the connection would be more clear and close between these words and those that follow, which respect the Gospel dispensation, beginning at (³⁰⁰⁷ Obadiah 1:17); but the Edomites were not in being then; and that there were many of them in the Roman army, and that Titus himself was one, is all fabulous.

Ver. 12. *But thou shouldest not have looked on the day of thy brother,* etc.] The day of his calamity, distress, and destruction, as afterwards explained; that is, with delight and satisfaction, as pleased with it, and rejoicing at it; but rather should have grieved and mourned, and as fearing their turn would be next: or, “do not look”^{f19}; so some read it in the imperative, and in like manner all the following clauses:

in the day that he became a stranger; were carried into a strange country, and became strangers to their own: or, “in the day of his alienation”^{f20}; from their country, city, houses, and the house and worship of God; and when strange, surprising, and unheard of things were done unto them, and, among them:

neither shouldest thou have rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction; the destruction of the Jews, of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, by the Chaldeans: this explains what is meant by the Edomites looking upon the day of the calamity of the Jews, that it was with pleasure and complacency, having had a good will to have destroyed them themselves, but it was not in the power of their hands; and now being done by a foreign enemy, they could not forbear expressing their joy on that occasion, which was very cruel and brutal; and this also shows that Obadiah prophesied after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar:

neither shouldest thou have spoken proudly in the day of distress; or “magnified thy mouth”^{f21}; opened it wide in virulent scoffing, and insulting language; saying with the greatest fervour and vehemence, and as loud as it could be said, “rase it, rase it to the foundation thereof”, (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 137:7).

Ver. 13. *Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of my people in the day of their calamity,* etc.] Or gates, as the Targum; the gates of any of their cities, and particularly those of Jerusalem; into which the Edomites entered along with the Chaldeans, exulting over the Jews, and insulting them, and joining with the enemy in distressing and plundering them:

yea, thou shouldest not have looked on their affliction in the day of their calamity: which is repeated, as being exceeding cruel and inhuman, and what was highly resented by the Lord; that, instead of looking upon the affliction of his people and their brethren with an eye of pity and compassion, they looked upon it with the utmost pleasure and delight:

nor laid [hands] on their substance in the day of their calamity; or “on their forces”^{f22}; they laid violent hands on their armed men, and either

killed or took them captive: and they laid hands on their goods, their wealth and riches, and made a spoil of them. The phrase, “in the day of their calamity”, is three times used in this verse, to show the greatness of it; and as an aggravation of the sin of the Edomites, in behaving and doing as they did at such a time.

Ver. 14. *Neither shouldest thou have stood in the crossing*, etc.] In a place where two or more roads met, to stop the Jews that fled, let them take which road they would: or, “in the breach”^{f23}; that is, of the walls of the city;

to cut off those of his that did escape; such of the Jews that escaped the sword of the Chaldeans in the city, and attempted, to get away through the breaches of the walls of it, or that took different roads to make their escape; these were intercepted and stopped by the Edomites, who posted themselves at these breaches, or at places where two or more ways met, and cut them off; so that those that escaped the sword of the enemy fell by theirs; which was exceeding barbarous and cruel:

neither shouldest thou have delivered up those of his that did remain in the day of their distress; or “shut up”^{f24}; they shut them up in their houses, or stopped up all the avenues and ways by which they might escape, even such as remained of those that were killed or carried captive; these falling into the hands of the Edomites, some they cut off, and others they delivered up into the hands of the Chaldeans. Of the joy and rejoicing of the mystical Edomites, the Papists, those false brethren and antichristians, at the destruction of the faithful witnesses and true Christians, and of their cruelty and inhumanity to them, (see ^{<6110>}Revelation 11:7-10).

Ver. 15. *For the day of the Lord [is] near upon all the Heathen*, etc.] That is, the time was at hand, fixed and determined by the Lord, and he had spoken of by his prophets, when he would punish all the Heathens round about for their sins; as the Egyptians, Philistines, Tyrians, Ammonites, Moabites, and others; and so the Edomites among the rest; for this is mentioned for their sakes, and to show that their punishment was inevitable, and that they could not expect to escape in the general ruin; (see ^{<2517>}Jeremiah 25:17-26). This destruction of Edom here prophesied of, and of all the Heathen, was accomplished about five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, so that it might be truly said to be near; and some time within this space Obadiah seems to have prophesied; and the day of the Lord is not far off upon the Pagans, Mahometans, and all the “antichristian” states,

When mystical Edom or Rome will be destroyed; (see ^{<6169>}Revelation 16:19 17:14 19:19-21);

as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head; this is particularly directed to Edom, upon whom the day of the Lord's vengeance shall come; when he punished the Heathens, then the Edomites should be retaliated in their own way; and as they had rejoiced at the destruction of the Jews, and had insulted them in their calamities, and barbarously used them, they should be treated in like manner; (see ^{<6155>}Ezekiel 35:15); and thus will mystical Babylon, or the mystical Edomites, be dealt with, even after the same manner as they have dealt with the truly godly, the faithful professors of Christ, (^{<6186>}Revelation 18:6).

Ver. 16. *For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, [so] shall all the Heathen drink continually*, etc.] Which is either spoken to the Edomites; and the sense be, according to the Targum,

“as ye have rejoiced at the blow (given unto or at the subversion and destruction) of the mountain of my holiness, all people shall drink the cup of their vengeance;”

or punishment; and to the same sense Jarchi and Japhet interpret it; and so Kimchi,

“as ye have made a feast, rejoicing at the destruction of my holy mountain, so thou and all nations shall drink of the cup of trembling;”

but Aben Ezra thinks the words are spoken to the Israelites,

“as ye have drank the cup, so shall all nations;”

the cup of vengeance began with them, and so went round the nations, according to the prophecy in (^{<2517>}Jeremiah 25:17,18), etc. for, if judgment begins at the house and people of God, it may be expected it will reach to others; wherefore Edom had no reason to rejoice at the destruction of the Jews, since they might be assured by that the same would be their case before long; and with this difference, that whereas the Jews only drank this cup for a while, during the seventy years' captivity, these nations, and the Edomites among the rest, should be “continually” drinking it:

yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down; not only drink of the cup, but drink it up; not only take it into their mouths, but swallow it down their throats; not only sip at it, but “sup [it] up”^{f25}, as it may be rendered. The phrase denotes the fulness of their punishment, and their utter and entire ruin and destruction, which the next clause confirms:

and they shall be as though they had not been; as now are the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and so the Edomites; their names are not heard of in the world, only as they are read in the Bible; and thus it shall be with mystical Babylon or Edom, it shall be thrown down, and found no more, (~~4682b~~ Revelation 18:21).

Ver. 17. *But upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance*, etc.] Not only by Cyrus, at the end of the seventy years’ captivity; and by the Maccabees from the Idumeans, and other enemies; but by the Messiah; for not merely temporal deliverance is here intended, unless as a shadow, type, and figure; but spiritual deliverance from the law, sin, Satan, the world, death, hell, and wrath to come, by Christ; who is the Deliverer that should both come to Zion and out of Zion, and who has wrought the above deliverance for Zion, his church and people; and where it is preached and proclaimed, and where those who are delivered come and dwell: or, “upon Mount Zion shall be an escape”; or, “they that escape”^{f26}; the pollutions of the world, the vengeance of divine justice, the curses of the law, and the damnation of hell, by fleeing to Christ for refuge:

and there shall be holiness: that is, on Mount Zion, on the church, which is the holy hill of God, and where only holy persons should dwell; and for whomsoever deliverance is wrought out, sooner or later there will be in them holiness, both of heart and life; and indeed, without this, complete deliverance and salvation, which will be in heaven, will not be enjoyed; hence those that are chosen to this salvation are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit; and such as are redeemed and delivered by Christ are purified to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and are, in consequence of such deliverance and redemption, called with a holy calling, and have principles of holiness implanted in them, and live holy lives and conversations; and such kind of holiness, as it appeared in Zion, in the churches of Christ in the first times of the Gospel, so it will be more conspicuous among them in the latter day; (see ~~2304b~~ Isaiah 4:3 52:1) (~~384d~~ Zechariah 14:20,21); or, “there shall be an Holy One”, or “thing”^{f27}; the holy Jesus, who is holy in both his natures, in all his offices, works, and

words; the Lamb that should, and has been, seen on Mount Zion; and the Holy Spirit of God, who dwells and abides in his church, and among his people, to anoint and assist the ministers of the word; to accompany the word with power, and make it successful; and to sanctify and comfort the Lord's people in Zion; and there are the holy word of God, the doctrines of grace according to godliness preached, and the sacred ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper administered. The Targum is,

“and they shall be holy;”

the Lord's people: and so Kimchi interprets it of Israel being holy to the Lord;

and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions: that is, either the Israelites shall possess the possessions of the Heathens, particularly of the Edomites; so the Targum,

“and they of the house of Jacob shall possess the substance of the people that possessed them;”

(see ^{<3011>}Amos 9:11,12); which was fulfilled spiritually in the first times of the Gospel, when the apostles, who were of the house of Jacob, and were Israelites indeed, preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, and were the means of converting many of them, and of bringing them into the Gospel church; which may be called the house of Jacob, when they and theirs become their possession, and Christ, the master of this house, had the Heathen given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, (^{<3018>}Psalm 2:8); or else the sense is, that the people of God, true Christians, shall in Gospel times possess their own possessions; God himself, who is their portion and inheritance, and shall enjoy communion with him; Christ, and all that are his, all spiritual blessings in him; the Spirit and his graces, as the earnest of a future and eternal inheritance; exceeding great and precious promises they are heirs of, and a kingdom and glory hereafter; of which the possessions in the land of Canaan, restored to the right owners of them in the year of jubilee, were a type. R. Moses says this prophecy has respect to the times of Hezekiah; in which he is followed by Grotius, very wrongly; R. Jeshuah, better, to the times of the second temple; but Japhet, best of all, to time to come, to the times of the Messiah, to which it no doubt belongs: here begin the prophecies concerning Christ, his church, and kingdom.

Ver. 18. *And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame*, etc.] The former may denote the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, the latter the ten tribes, which after the separation in Rehoboam's time were called Ephraim, and sometimes Joseph; though they may here signify one and the same, since all the tribes will be united, and become one people, at the time the prophecy refers to: the meaning is, that the people of Judah and Israel shall have strength and power to conquer and destroy their enemies, with as much ease, as flames of fire consume chaff or stubble, or any such combustible matter they light upon, as it follows:

and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; that is, the Israelites shall fall upon the Edomites, who will be no more able to withstand them than stubble can stand before devouring flames of fire, and shall utterly waste and destroy them:

and there shall not be [any] remaining of the house or Esau; they shall all be cut off by, or swallowed up among, the Jews; not so much as a torch bearer left, one that carries the lights before an army, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions; which versions, and the custom alluded to, serve very much to illustrate the passage. It was a custom with the Greeks, as we are told ^{f28}, when armies were about to engage, that before the first ensigns stood a prophet or priest, bearing branches of laurels and garlands, who was called "pyrophorus", or the "torch bearer", because he held a lamp or torch; and it was accounted a most criminal thing to do him any hurt, seeing he performed the office of an ambassador; for those sort of men were priests of Mars, and sacred to him, so that those that were conquerors always spared them: hence, when a total destruction of an army, place, or people, was hyperbolically expressed, it used to be said, not so much as a torch bearer or fire carrier escaped ^{f29}; hence this phrase was proverbially used of the most entire defeat of an army, or ruin of a people. So Philo ^{f30} the Jew, speaking of the destruction of Pharaoh and his host at the Red sea, says, there was not so much as a torch bearer left, to declare the calamity to the Egyptians; and thus here, so general should be the destruction of the Edomites, that not one should be left, no, nor a person in such a post and office as described. The Targum of the whole is,

“and they of the house of Jacob shall be strong as fire, and they of the house of Joseph strong like a; flame, but they of the house of Esau shall be weak as stubble; and they shall have power over

them, and kill them, and there shall be none left of the: house of Esau.”

This was fulfilled literally, either by Judas Maccabeus, when he went against the children of Esau in Idumea, and smote them, and took their spoil, in the Apocrypha:

“34 Then the host of Timotheus, knowing that it was Maccabeus, fled from him: wherefore he smote them with a great slaughter; so that there were killed of them that day about eight thousand men. 35 This done, Judas turned aside to Maspha; and after he had assaulted it he took and slew all the males therein, and received the spoils thereof and burnt it with fire.” (1 Maccabees 5)

or rather by Hyrcanus, who took the cities of Idumea, subdued all the Edomites, but permitted them to live in their own country, provided they would be circumcised, and conform to the Jewish laws; which they did, as Josephus says ³¹, and coalesced and became the people with them, and were reckoned as Jews, and no more as Edomites. But this prophecy had its accomplishment spiritually, either in the first times of the Gospel, when the apostles, who were Jews and Israelites, went forth into the Gentile world, and among the enemies of Christ, preaching the word, which is like fire; and, when attended with the spirit of judgment and of burning, enlightens the consciences of men, melts their hearts, consumes their lusts, and is as a refiner’s fire to them, for, their purification; or, if not, it irritates, provokes, torments, and distresses, as fire does; and is either the savour of life unto life, or the savour of death unto death; (see ²⁰⁰⁴ Isaiah 4:4) (²²³³ Jeremiah 23:29 ⁶¹⁰⁵ Revelation 11:5); or rather it will have its full and final accomplishment in the destruction of antichrist, here signified by Esau and Edom, which will be by burning mystical Babylon, the whore of Rome; the beast and false prophet will be burnt with fire; the day of the, Lord will burn like an oven, and all the wicked will be as stubble, which will be burnt by it, root and branch, so that none will remain; (see ⁶⁷¹⁶ Revelation 17:16 18:8 19:20 ³⁹⁰² Malachi 4:2); compare with (³⁸¹⁶ Zechariah 12:6). Kimchi, on (³¹⁹² Amos 9:12), says this shall be in the days of the Messiah, the Edomites shall be all consumed, and the Israelites shall inherit their land:

for the Lord hath spoken [it]; and therefore it shall most certainly be accomplished; what God has said shall be done, he will not alter the thing that is gone out of his lips; heaven and earth shall sooner pass away than one word of his.

Ver. 19. *And [they of] the south shall possess the land of Esau,* etc.] That is, those Jews that shall dwell in the southern part of the land of Judea shall seize upon the country of Idumea, lying contiguous to them; they shall enlarge their border, and take that into their possession:

and [they of] the plain the Philistines; or of Sephela, they that shall inhabit the plain, or champaign country of Judea, as the parts of Lydda, Emmaus, and Sharon, were; these shall possess the country of the Philistines, lying near unto them, as Azotus, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron:

and they shall possess the fields of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria; all the countries that the ten tribes inhabited, in the times of their idolatry, before their captivity, which the Jews shall now be restored unto:

and Benjamin [shall possess] Gilead; that tribe shall be so enlarged as to take in the country of Gilead, which lay beyond Jordan, formerly possessed by the, half tribe of Manasseh. Some think this was fulfilled in the times of the Maccabees, when several of these places were taken by Judas, in the Apocrypha:

“17. Then said Judas unto Simon his brother, Choose thee out men, and go and deliver thy brethren that are in Galilee, for I and Jonathan my brother will go into the country of Galaad. 36. From thence went he, and took Casphon, Maged, Bosor, and the other cities of the country of Galaad. 38. So Judas sent men to espy the host, who brought him word, saying, All the heathen that be round about us are assembled unto them, even a very great host.” (1 Maccabees 5)

but since the land of Judea, and the countries adjacent to it, were never as yet inhabited by the Jews in the form and manner here mentioned, it rather respects their settlement in their own land, in the latter day, when their borders will be greatly enlarged; (see ^{<3800>}Ezekiel 48:1-35 ^{<3800>}Zechariah 10:10); or it may regard the enlargement of the church of Christ, either in the first times of the Gospel, when that was spread in those parts, and met with success; (see ^{<4086>}Acts 8:6,8 9:31,35); or rather in the latter day, when Christ’s kingdom will be from sea to sea, and his dominion from the river to the ends of the earth, (^{<4978>}Psalm 72:8); and to which also the following words belong.

Ver. 20. *And the captivity of this host of the children of Israel [shall possess] that of the Canaanites, [even] unto Zarephath,* etc.] That is, the

host or army, the great number of the children of Israel, that have been carried captive, upon their return shall possess that part of the land of Israel which was inhabited formerly by the Canaanites, even as far as to Zarephath, said to belong to Zidon, (^{<1170>}1 Kings 17:10); and called Sarepta of Sidon; (see ^{<1106>}Luke 4:26). It is mentioned by Pliny ^{f32} along with Sidon, where glass was made; and perhaps this place might have its name from the melting of glass in it, from **Prx**, which signifies to melt metals, glass, etc. it is called by Josephus ^{f33} Sarephtha; who says it was not far from Sidon and Tyre, and lay between them: according to an Arabic geographer ^{f34}, it was twenty miles from Tyre, and ten from Sidon. Here the Prophet Elijah dwelt for a time; and in the times of Jerom ^{f35} was shown a little tower, said to be his habitation, which travellers visited. Mr. Maundrell ^{f36} speaks of this place as three hours' journey from Sidon, and is now called

“Sarphan, supposed (he says) to be the ancient Sarepath, or Sarepta, so famous for the residence and miracles of the Prophet Elijah; the place shown us for this city consisted of only a few houses on the tops of the mountains, within about half a mile of the sea; but it is more probable the principal part of, the city stood below, in the space between the hills and the sea, there being ruins still to be seen in that place, of a considerable extent?”

It was once a place very famous for wine; the wine of Sarepta is often made mention of by writers ^{f37}; perhaps vines might grow upon the hills and mountains about it; and this being a city of Phoenicia, on the northern border of the land of Israel, is very fitly observed as the limit of the possession of the Israelites this way;

and the captivity of Jerusalem, which [is] in Sepharad, shall possess the cities of the south; the Jews, who were carried captive into Babylon, to Sepharad; some place, though unknown, perhaps in the land of Babylon. Calmet ^{f38} conjectures it may be Sippara or Sipparat, in Mesopotamia, a little above the division of the Euphrates: and the Septuagint version renders it Ephratha; which perhaps is a corruption, of the Euphrates in the present copies: the Vulgate Latin version translates it Bosphorus; and so Jerom, who says that the Hebrew that taught him assured him that Bosphorus was called Sepharad; whither Adrian is said to carry the Jews captive. Kimchi and Aben Ezra interpret it of the present captivity of theirs by Titus, who upon their return to their land shall possess the, southern part of it, which originally belonged to the tribe of Judah, (^{<1651>}Joshua

15:20,21). If Sepharad, in the Assyrian language, signifies a border, as Jerom says it does, it denotes, as some think, that part of Arabia which borders on the south of Judea, that shall be inhabited by the Jews. Some render the words, “the captivity of Jerusalem shall possess that which is in Sepharad, and the cities of the south”: but this is contrary to the accents, unless the words “shall possess” be repeated, and so two clauses made, “the captivity of Jerusalem [shall possess] that which is in Sepharad; they shall possess the cities of the south”. The Targum and Syriac version, instead of Sepharad, have Spain; and so the Jewish writers generally interpret it. By the Canaanites they think are meant the Germans, and the country of Germany; by Zarephath, France; and by Sepharad, Spain; so Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, fancying that they who are now captives in these countries shall one day possess them: but the prophecy only respects their settlement in their own land, and some parts adjacent to it; or rather the enlargement of the church of Christ in the world. A late learned writer^{f39}, is of opinion that some respect may be had to this passage in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in which the former makes mention of “five brethren” that he had, (^{<2163>}Luke 16:28); and are by the said writer thus reckoned:

1. the house of Jacob;
2. the house of Joseph, which are said to possess the south, with the mountains of Esau, and the plain;
3. Benjamin, which shall possess Gilead;
4. the captives from the Assyrian captivity;
5. the captives from the Jerusalem captivity, namely, by Titus Vespasian, who shall possess the cities of the south.

Ver. 21. *And saviours shall come upon Mount Zion*, etc.] Which according to some, is to be understood literally, either of Zerubbabel and Joshua, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, who were the restorers of, their civil and church state; or rather of Judas Maccabeus and his brethren, who saved the people of the Jews from Antiochus and his generals, called “saviours”, as the judges of old were, (^{<1632>}Nehemiah 9:27); but it is best to interpret these saviours of the apostles of Christ, and ministers of the word; and especially of the preachers of the Gospel in the latter days; called “saviours”, because they publish salvation, preach the

Gospel of it, show unto men the way of salvation; and so they, and the word preached by them, are the means and instruments of the salvation of men; otherwise Christ is the only Saviour of God's appointing and sending; and who came to effect salvation, and is become the author of it, nor is it in any others; (see ⁵⁰⁴⁶1 Timothy 4:16 ³⁵³⁰Ezekiel 33:9 ⁶⁰⁰⁶Romans 1:6 ³⁰¹⁹James 1:19); these in great numbers, in the latter day, wilt appear on Mount Zion, or in the church of Christ, and, shall openly and publicly, as on a mountain, declare the everlasting Gospel; these will be with Christ the Lamb, among the 144,000 upon Mount Zion, (⁶⁶⁴¹Revelation 14:1,6). Kimchi and Ben Melech say, these are the King Messiah and his companions, the seven shepherds and eight principal men, (³³⁶⁵Micah 5:5). Aben Ezra says the words refer to time to come; according to Baalhaturim on (⁰¹³³⁴Genesis 32:4); they will be fulfilled about the end of the sixth Millennium, when they expect the Messiah; and they are applied to times of the Messiah both by ancient and more modern Jews. In their ancient book of Zohar ^{f40} it is said,

“when the Messiah shall arise, Jacob shall take his portion above and below; and Esau shall be utterly destroyed, and shall have no portion and inheritance in the world, according to (Obadiah 1:18); but Jacob shall inherit two worlds, this world and the world to come; and of that time is it written, “and saviours shall come upon Mount Zion”, etc.”

So, in the Jerusalem Talmud ^{f41},

“says R. Hona, we do not find that Jacob our father went to Seir ((see ⁰¹³³⁴Genesis 33:14);) R. Joden, the son of Rabbi, says, in future times (the world to come, the days of the Messiah), is it not said, “and saviours shall come upon Mount Zion, to judge the mount of Esau?””

And to much the same purpose it is said in one of their ancient Midrasses ^{f42} or expositions,

“we have turned over all the Scripture, and we do not find that Jacob stood with Esau on Seir; he (God) said, until now it is with me to make judges and saviours stand, to take vengeance on that man, as it is said, “and saviours shall come up”, etc.”

And the Cabalistic writers ^{f43} thus paraphrase the words,

““and saviours shall come up”; who are the Lord of hosts, and the God of hosts: “on Mount Zion”; which is, the mystery of the living God: “to judge the mount of Esau”; which is Mount Seir.”

So Maimonides ^{f44}, quoting the passage in (^{<0248>}Numbers 24:18), “Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies”, adds, by way of explanation, this is the King Messiah, of whom it is said, “and saviours shall come upon Mount Zion”. The work and business of these saviours will be,

to judge the mount of Esau; to take vengeance on the Edomites, for their ill usage of the children of Judah, as the Jewish commentators generally interpret it: or rather, as Gospel ministers are these saviours, it expresses their business; which as it is to declare that whoever believes in Christ shall be saved, so that whoever does not shall be damned; and to convince impenitent and believing sinners of their sin and danger, and their need of Christ, judging and condemning, those that remain so: and moreover, as Esau and Edom signify antichrist, the sense is, that they shall publish proclaim the judgment of God upon antichrist, declare it to be near, yea, to be done; and shall express their approbation of the justice: of God in it, and shall call upon the saints to rejoice at it, (^{<616>}Revelation 14:6-9 16:5,6 18:1,20); yea, these saviours may include the Christian princes, that shall pour out the vials of God’s wrath upon the antichristian states;

and the kingdom shall be the Lord’s: the Lord Christ’s, who is the one Jehovah with the Father and Spirit; meaning not the government of the world, to which he has a natural right as Creator, and which is generally ascribed to Jehovah the Father; nor the government of the church in this present state, which is Christ’s already, and ever was: but the government of it in the latter day, when he will take to himself his great power, and reign; when his kingdom will be more visible, spiritual, glorious; and extensive; when the kingdoms of this world will become his, the Pagan, Papal, and Mahometan kingdoms, even all the kingdoms and nations of the earth; he will be King over all the earth; there will be but one Lord and King, and whose kingdom is an everlasting one; it shall never come into other hands; this will continue till the personal reign takes place, and that will issue in the ultimate glory; (see ^{<615>}Revelation 11:15,17 15:3,4 ^{<349>}Zechariah 14:9 ^{<978>}Psalms 72:8-10).

FOOTNOTES

ft1 -- P. 103.

ft2 -- Deuteronomy Prophet. Vid. c. 15.

ft3 -- Deuteronomy Vita & Mort. Sanct. c, 44.

ft4 -- In loc.

ft5 -- In loc.

ft6 -- Demonstrat. Evangel. Prop. 4. p. 290.

ft7 -- Works, vol. 1. p. 96.

ft8 -- Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3417 or 587 B.C.

ft9 -- Ut supra. (Deuteronomy Prophet. Vid. c. 15.)

ft10 -- Comment. in loc. & in Epitaph. Paulae, fol. 59. M.

ft11 -- Ut supra. (Deuteronomy Vita & Mort. Sanct. c, 44.)

ft12 -- Travels, par. 1. B. 1. ch. 56. p. 216.

ft13 -- h[wmç “auditum”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

ft14 -- ^j q “parvium”, V. L.

ft15 -- [l s ywgj b “in gyris, sive circuitionibus petrae”, so some in Vatablus.

ft16 -- htymdn Æya “quomodo redactus es in silentium?” Calvin;
“quomodo siles?” some in Tarnovius; so Syr.

ft17 -- Ætyrb yçna “viri foederis tui”, V. L. Montanus, Vatablus,
Burkius.

ft18 -- So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 51. 2. and 52. 1.

ft19 -- art l a “ne aspicias”, Junius & Tremellius; “ne aspicio”, Piscator;
“ne spectes”, Cocceius.

- ft20 -- **wrkn** **μwyb** “diem alienationis ejus”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Mercerus; “in die alienationis ejus”, Calvin, Cocceius, Burkus.
- ft21 -- **Æyp** **l dgt** **l aw** “et non debes magnificare os tuum”, Pagninus; “ne magnifices”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; “ne magnificato”, Piscator; “ne magno ore utaris”, Cocceius.
- ft22 -- **wl** **yj** **b** “is exercitum ejus”, Drusius; “in copius eorum”, Castalio; “in copiam ejus”, Cocceius.
- ft23 -- **qrph** **l [** “in diruptione”, Junius & Tremellius, Tarnovius.
- ft24 -- **rgst** **l aw** “neque concludas”, Montanus, Mercerus, Tigurine version, Tarnovius.
- ft25 -- **w[** **l w** “absorbebunt”, V. L. Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; “deglutient”, Montanus, Mercerus. Gussetius renders it “absorbebantur”.
- ft26 -- **hj** **yl** **p** **hyht** “erit evasio”, Vatablus, Piscator, Mercerus, Liveleus.
- ft27 -- **çdq** **hyhw** “erit sanctus”, V. L. Liveleus, Drusius.
- ft28 -- Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 5.
- ft29 -- Herodot. Urania, sive l. 8. c. 6.
- ft30 -- Deuteronomy Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 630.
- ft31 -- Antiqu. l. 13. c. 9. sect. 1.
- ft32 -- Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.
- ft33 -- Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 2.
- ft34 -- Scherif Ibn Idris apud Reland. Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. l. 3. p. 935.
- ft35 -- Epitaph. Paulae, fol. 51. M.
- ft36 -- Journey from Aleppo, etc. p. 48. Ed. 7.
- ft37 -- Vid. Roland. ut supra.
- ft38 -- Dictionary, in the word “Sepharad”.

ft39 -- Teelmanni Specimen, & Explic. Parabol. p. 517.

ft40 -- In Gen. fol. 85. 1.

ft41 -- T. Hieros. Avoda Zara, fol. 40. 3.

ft42 -- Debarim Rabba, fol. 234. 4.

ft43 -- Kabala Denudata, par. 1. p. 283.

ft44 -- Hilchot Melachim, c. 11. sect. 1.