

CHAPTER 35

It was promised, in the foregoing chapter, that when the time to favour Zion, yea, the set time, should come, especially the time for sending the Messiah and setting up his kingdom in the world, God would cause the enemies of his church to cease and the blessings and comforts of the church to abound. This chapter enlarges upon the former promise, concerning the destruction of the enemies of the church; the next chapter upon the latter promise, the replenishing of the church with blessings. Mount Seir (that is, Edom) is the enemy prophesied against in this chapter, but fitly put here, as in the prophecy of Obadiah, for all the enemies of the church; for, as those all walked in the way of Cain that hated Abel, so those all walked in the way of Esau who hated Jacob, but over whom Jacob, by virtue of a particular blessing, was to have dominion. Now here we have,

I. The sin charged upon the Edomites, and that was their spite and malice to Israel (v. 5, 10-13).

II. The ruin threatened, that should come upon them for this sin. God will be against them (v. 3) and then their country shall be laid waste (v. 4), depopulated, and made quite desolate (v. 6-9), and left so when other nations that had been wasted should recover themselves (v. 14, 15).

ⲄⲚⲓⲔ EZEKIEL 35:1-9

THE FALL OF EDOM

Mount Seir was mentioned as partner with Moab in one of the threatenings we had before (^{ⲄⲚⲓⲔ}Ezekiel 25:8); but here it is convicted and condemned by itself, and has woes of its own. The prophet must boldly *set his face against Edom*, and *prophesy particularly against it*; for the God of Israel has said, *O Mount Seir! I am against thee*. Note, Those that have God against them have the word of God against them, and the face of his ministers, nor dare they prophesy any good to them, but evil. The prophet must tell the Edomites that God has a controversy with them, and let them know,

I. What is the cause and ground of that controversy, v. 5. God espouses his people's cause, and will plead it, takes what is done against them as done against himself, and will reckon for it; and it is upon their account that God now contends with the Edomites.

1. Because of the enmity they had against the people of God, that was rooted in the heart. "Thou hast had a *perpetual hatred* to them, to the very name of an Israelite." The Edomites kept up an *hereditary* malice against Israel, the same that Esau bore to Jacob, because he got the birth-right and the blessing. Esau had been reconciled to Jacob, had embraced and kissed him (Genesis 33), and we do not find that ever he quarrelled with him again. But the posterity of Esau would never be reconciled to the seed of Jacob, but hated them with a perpetual hatred. Note, Children will be more apt to imitate the vices than the virtues of their parents, and to tread in the steps of their sin than in the steps of their repentance. Parents should therefore be careful not to set their children any bad example, for though, through the grace of God, they may return, and prevent the mischief of what they have done amiss to themselves, they may not be able to obviate the bad influence of it upon their children. It is strange how deeply rooted national antipathies sometimes are, and how long they last; but it is not to be wondered at that profane Edomites hate pious Israelites, since the old *enmity* that was put between the *seed of the woman* and the seed of the serpent (^{<0085}Genesis 3:15) will continue to the end. *Marvel not if the world hate you.*

2. Because of the injuries they had done to the people of God. They *shed their blood by the force of the sword, in the time of their calamity*; they did not attack them as fair and open enemies, but laid wait for them, to *cut off* those of them that had escaped (^{<3014}Obadiah 1:14), or they drove them back upon the sword of the pursuers, by which they fell. It was cowardly, as well as barbarous, to take advantage of their distress; and for neighbours, with whom they had lived peaceably, to *smite them secretly* when strangers openly invaded them. It was in the time *that their iniquity had an end*, when the measure of it was full and destruction came. Note, Even those that suffer justly, and for their sins, are yet to be pitied and not trampled upon. If the father corrects one child, he expects the rest should tremble at it, not triumph in it.

II. What should be the effect and issue of that controversy. If God stretch out his hand against the country of Edom, he will *make it most desolate*, v. 3. *Desolation and desolation.*

1. The inhabitants shall be slain with the sword (v. 6): *I will prepare thee unto blood.* Edom shall be gradually weakened, and so be the more easily conquered, and the enemy shall gather strength the more effectually to subdue it. Thus preparation is in the making a great while before for this destruction. *Thou hast not hated blood;* it implies, “Thou hast delighted in it and thirsted after it.” Those that do not keep up a rooted hatred of sin, when a temptation to it is very strong, will be in danger of yielding to it. Some read it, “*Unless thou hatest blood*” (that is, “unless thou dost repent, and put off this bloody disposition) *blood shall pursue thee.*” And then it is an intimation that the judgment may yet be prevented by a thorough reformation. *If he turn not, he will whet his sword,* ^{<397>}Psalm 7:12. But, if he turn, he will lay it by. *Blood shall pursue thee,* the guilt of the blood which thou hast shed or the *judgment* of blood; thy blood-thirsty enemies shall pursue thee, which way soever thou seekest to make thy escape. A great and general slaughter shall be made of the Idumeans, such as had been foretold (^{<396>}Isaiah 34:6): *The mountains and hills, the valleys and rivers, shall be filled with the slain*, v. 8. The pursuers shall overtake those that flee and shall give no quarter, but put them all to the sword. Note, When God comes to make inquisition for blood those that have shed the blood of his Israel shall have blood given them to drink, for they are worthy. *Satia te sanguine quem sitisti — Glut thyself with blood, after which thou hast thirsted.*

2. The country shall be laid waste. The cities shall be destroyed (v. 4), the *country made most desolate* (v. 7); for God will *cut off* from both him that *passes out* and *him that returns*; and when the inhabitants are cut off that should keep the cities in repair they will decay and go into ruins, and when those are cut off that should till the land that will soon be over-run with briars and thorns and become a wilderness. Note, Those that help forward the desolations of Israel may expect to be themselves made desolate. And that which completes the judgment is that Edom shall be made *perpetual desolations* (v. 9) and the cities shall never return to their former state, nor the inhabitants of them come back from their captivity and dispersion. Note, Those that have a perpetual enmity to God and his people, as the carnal mind has, can expect no other than to be made a perpetual desolation. Implacable malice will justly be punished with irreparable ruin.

~~350~~ EZEKIEL 35:10-15

THE FALL OF EDOM

Here is,

I. A further account of the sin of the Edomites, and their bad conduct towards the people of God. We find the church complaining of them for setting on the Babylonians, and irritating them against Jerusalem, saying, *Rase it, rase it, down with it, down with it* (~~137~~ Psalm 137:7), inflaming a rage that needed no spur; here it is further charged upon them that they triumphed in Jerusalem's ruin and in the desolations of the country. Many *blasphemies* they spoke against the *mountains of Israel*, saying, with pride and pleasure, *They are laid desolate*, v. 12. Note, The troubles of God's church, as they give proofs of the constancy and fidelity of its friends, so they discover and draw out the corruptions of its enemies, in whom there then appears more brutish malice than one would have thought of. Now their triumphing in Jerusalem's ruin is here said to proceed,

1. From a sinful passion against the people of Israel; from *anger* and *envy*, and *hatred against them* (v. 11), that *perpetual hatred* spoken of v. 5. Though they were not a match for them, and therefore could not do them a mischief themselves, yet they were glad when the Chaldeans did them a mischief.

2. From a sinful appetite to the land of Israel. They pleased themselves with hopes that when the people of Israel were destroyed they should be let into the possession of their country, which they had so often grudged and envied them. They thought they could make out something of a title to it, *ob defectum sanguinis* — *for want of other heirs*. If Jacob's issue fail, they think that they are next in the entail, and that the remainder will be to his brother's issue: "*These two nations of Judah and Israel shall be mine*. Now is the time for me to put in for them." At least they hope to come in as first occupants, being near neighbours: *We will possess it* when it is deserted. *Ceditur occupanti* — *Let us get possession and that will be title enough*. Note, Those have the spirit of Edomites who desire the death of others because they hope to get by it, or are pleased with their failing because they expect to come into their business. When we see the vanity of the world in the disappointments, losses, and crosses, that others meet

with in it, instead of showing ourselves, upon such an occasion, greedy of it, we should rather be made thereby to sit more loose to it, and both take our affections off it and lower our expectations from it. But in this case of the Edomites' coveting the land of Israel, and gaping for it, there was a particular affront to God, when they said, "*These lands are given us to devour, and we shall have our bellies full of their riches.*" God says, *You have boasted against me and have multiplied your words against me;* for they expected possession upon a vacancy, because Israel was driven out, *whereas the Lord was still there*, v. 10. His temple indeed was burnt, and the other tokens of his presence were gone; but his promise to give that land to the seed of Jacob for an inheritance was not made void, but remained in full force and virtue; and by that promise he did in effect still keep possession for Israel, till they should in due time be restored to it. That was Immanuel's land (^{<2888>}Isaiah 8:8); in that land he was to be born, and therefore that people shall continue in it of whom he is to be born, till he has passed his time in it, and then let who will take it. *The Lord is there*, the Lord Jesus is to be there; and therefore Israel's discontinuance of possession is no defeasance of their right, but it shall be kept for them, and they shall have, hold, and enjoy it by virtue of the divine grant, till the promise of this Canaan shall by the Messiah be changed into the promise of a far better. Note, It is a piece of presumption highly offensive to God for Edomites to lay claim to those privileges and comforts that are peculiar to God's chosen Israel and are reserved for them. It is *blasphemy against the mountains of Israel*, the holy mountains, to say, because they are for the present made a prey of and *trodden under foot of the Gentiles* (^{<6112>}Revelation 11:2), even the *holy city* itself, that therefore the *Lord has forsaken them, their God has forgotten them*. The apostle will by no means admit such a thought as this, that *God hath cast away his people*, ^{<6111>}Romans 11:1. No; though they are cast down for a time, they are not cast off for ever. Those *reproach the Lord* who say they are.

II. The notice God took of the barbarous insolence of the Edomites, and the doom passed upon them for it: *I have heard all thy blasphemies*, v. 12. And again (v. 13), *You have multiplied your words against me, and I have heard them*, I have observed them, I have kept an account of them. Note, In the multitude of words, not one escapes God's cognizance; let men speak ever so much, ever so fast, though they multiply words, which they themselves regard not, but forget immediately, yet none of them are lost in the crowd, not the most idle words; but God hears them, and will be able

to charge the sinner with them. All the haughty and hard speeches, particularly, which are spoken against the Israel of God, the words which are *magnified* (as it is in the margin, v. 13) as well as the words which are multiplied, God takes notice of. For, as the most trifling words are not below his cognizance, so the most daring are not above his rebuke. *I have heard all thy blasphemies*. This is a good reason why we should bear reproach as if we heard it not, because *God will hear*, ~~OR~~ Psalm 38:13, 15. God has heard the Edomites' blasphemy; let them therefore hear their doom, v. 14, 15. It was a national sin (the blasphemies charged upon them were the sense and language of all the Edomites), and therefore shall be punished with a national desolation. And,

1. It shall be a distinguishing punishment. As God has peculiar favours for Israelites, so he has peculiar plagues for Edomites: so that “*When the whole earth rejoices I will make thee desolate*; when other nations have their desolations repaired, to their joy, thine shall be *perpetual*,” v. 9. 2. The punishment shall answer to the sin: “*As thou didst rejoice in the desolation of the house of Israel, God will give thee enough of desolation*; since thou art so fond of it, *thou shalt be desolate; I will make thee so*.” Note, Those who, instead of weeping with the mourners, make a jest of their grievances, may justly be made to weep like the mourners, and themselves to feel the weight, to feel the smart, of those grievances which they set so light by. Some read v. 14 so as to complete the resemblance between the sin and the punishment: *The whole earth shall rejoice when I make thee desolate, as thou didst rejoice when Israel was made desolate*. Those that are glad at the death and fall of others may expect that others will be glad of their death, of their fall.

3. In the destruction of the enemies of the church God designs his own glory, and we may be sure that he will not come short of his design.

(1.) That which he intends is to manifest himself, as a just and jealous God, firm to his covenant and faithful to his people and their injured cause (v. 11): *I will make myself known among them when I have judged thee*. The Lord is and will be known by the judgments which he executes.

(2.) His intention shall be fully answered; not only his own people shall be made to know it to their comfort, but even the Edomites themselves, and all the other enemies of his name and people, *shall know that he is the Lord*, v. 4, 9, 15. As the works of creation and common providence

demonstrate that there is a God, so the care taken of Israel shows that Jehovah, the God of Israel, is that God alone, the true and living God.