

CHAPTER 33

This chapter relates to the same events as the foregoing chapter, the distress of Judah and Jerusalem by Sennacherib's invasion and their deliverance out of that distress by the destruction of the Assyrian army. These are intermixed in the prophecy, in the way of a Pindaric. Observe,

- I. The great distress that Judah and Jerusalem should then be brought into (v. 7-9).
- II. The particular frights which the sinners in Zion should then be in (v. 13, 14).
- III. The prayers of good people to God in this distress (v. 2).
- IV. The holy security which they should enjoy in the midst of this trouble (v. 15, 16).
- V. The destruction of the army of the Assyrians (v. 1-3), in which God would be greatly glorified (v. 5, 10-12).
- VI. The enriching of the Jews with the spoil of the Assyrian camp (v. 4, 23, 24).
- VII. The happy settlement of Jerusalem, and the Jewish state, upon this. Religion shall be uppermost (v. 6), and their civil state shall flourish (v. 17-22). This was soon fulfilled, but is written for our learning.

ISA. 33: 1-12

Here we have,

I. The proud and false Assyrian justly reckoned with for all his fraud and violence, and laid under a woe, v. 1. Observe,

1. The sin which the enemy had been guilty of. He had spoiled the people of God, and made a prey of them, and herein had broken his treaty of peace with them, and dealt treacherously. Truth and mercy are two such sacred things, and have so much of God in them, that those cannot but be under the wrath of God that make conscience of neither, but are perfectly lost to both, that care not what mischief they do, what spoil they make, what dissimulations they are guilty of, nor what solemn engagements they violate, to compass their own wicked designs. Bloody and deceitful men are the worst of men.

2. The aggravation of this sin. He spoiled those that had never done him any injury and that he had no pretence to quarrel with, and dealt treacherously with those that had always dealt faithfully with him. Note, The less provocation we have from men to do a wrong thing the more provocation we give to God by doing it.

3. The punishment he should fall under for this sin. He that spoiled the cities of Judah shall have his own army destroyed by an angel and his camp plundered by

those whom he had made a prey of. The Chaldeans shall deal treacherously with the Assyrians and revolt from them. Two of Sennacherib's own sons shall deal treacherously with him and basely murder him at his devotions. Note, The righteous God often pays sinners in their own coin. *He that leads into captivity shall go into captivity*, Rev. 13:10; 18: 6.

4. The time when he shall be thus dealt with. When he shall *make an end to spoil, and to deal treacherously*, not by repentance and reformation, which might prevent his ruin (Dan. 4:27), but when he shall have done his worst, when he shall have gone as far as God would permit him to go, to the utmost of his tether, then the cup of trembling shall be put into his hand. When he shall have arrived at his full stature in impiety, shall have filled up the measure of his iniquity, then all shall be called over again. When he has done God will begin, for his day is coming.

II. The praying people of God earnest at the throne of grace for mercy for the land now in its distress (v. 2): "*O Lord! be merciful to us.* Men are cruel; be thou gracious. We have deserved thy wrath, but we entreat thy favour; and, if we may find the propitious to us, we are happy; the trouble we are in cannot hurt us, shall not ruin us. It is in vain to expect relief from creatures; we have no confidence in the Egyptians, but *we have waited for thee* only, resolving to submit to thee, whatever the issue of the trouble be, and hoping that it shall be a comfortable issue." Those that by faith humbly wait for God shall certainly find him gracious to them. They prayed,

1. For those that were employed in military services for them: "*Be thou their arm every morning.* Hezekiah, and his princes, and all the men of war, need continual supplies of strength and courage from thee; supply their need therefore, and be to them a God all-sufficient. Every morning, when they go forth upon the business of the day, and perhaps have new work to do and new difficulties to encounter, let them be afresh animated and invigorated, and, *as the day, so let the strength be.*" In our spiritual warfare our own hands are not sufficient for us, nor can we bring any thing to pass unless God not only strengthen our arms (Gen. 49:24), but be himself our arm; so entirely do we depend upon him as our arm every morning, so constantly do we depend upon his power, as well as his compassions, which are new every morning, Lam. 3:23. If God leaves us to ourselves any morning, we are undone; we must therefore every morning commit ourselves to him, and go forth in his strength to do the work of the day in its day.

2. For the body of the people: "*Be thou our salvation also in the time of trouble,* ours who sit still, and do not venture into the high places of the field." They depend upon God not only as their Saviour, to work deliverance for them,

but as their salvation itself; for, whatever becomes of their secular interests, they will reckon themselves safe and saved if they have him for their God. If he undertake to be their Saviour, he will be their salvation; for *as for God his work is perfect*. Some read it thus: “*Thou who wast their arm every morning, who wast the continual strength and help of our fathers before us, be thou our salvation also in time of trouble. Help us as thou helpedst them; they looked unto thee and were lightened* (Psa. 34: 5); let us then not walk in darkness.”

III. The Assyrian army ruined and their camp made a rich but cheap and easy prey to Judah and Jerusalem. No sooner is the prayer made (v. 2) than it is answered (v. 3), nay, it is outdone. They prayed that God would save them from their enemies; but he did more than that; he gave them victory over their enemies and abundant cause to triumph; for,

1. The strength of the Assyrian camp was broken (v. 3) when the destroying angel slew so many thousands of them: *At the noise of the tumult*, of the shrieks of the dying men (who, we may suppose, did not die silently), the rest of *the people fled*, and shifted every one for his own safety. When God did thus lift up himself the several nations, or clans, of which the army was composed, were scattered. It was time to stir when such an unprecedented plague broke out among them. When God arises his enemies are scattered, Psa. 68: 1.

2. The spoil of the Assyrian camp is seized, by way of reprisal, for all the desolations of the defenced cities of Judah (v. 4): *Your spoil shall be gathered by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, like the gathering of the caterpillar, and as the running to and fro of locusts*, that is, the spoilers shall as easily and as quickly make themselves masters of the riches of the Assyrians as a host of caterpillars, or locusts, make a field, or a tree, bare. Thus *the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just* and Israel is enriched with the spoil of the Egyptians. Some make the Assyrians to be the caterpillars and locusts, which, when they are killed, are gathered together in heaps, as the frogs of Egypt, and are run upon, and trodden to dirt.

IV. God and his Israel glorified and exalted hereby. When the spoil of the enemy is thus gathered,

1. God will have the praise of it (v. 5): *The Lord is exalted*. It is his honour thus to abase proud men, and hide them in the dust, together; thus he magnifies his own name, and his people give him the glory of it, as Israel when the Egyptians were drowned, Exo. 15: 1, 2, etc. He is exalted as one that dwells on high, out of the reach of their blasphemies, and that has an over-ruling power over them, and wherein they deal proudly delights to show himself above them — that does what he will, and they cannot resist him.

2. His people will have the blessing of it. When God lifts up himself to scatter the nations that are in confederacy against Jerusalem (v. 3) then, as a preparative for that, or as the fruit and product of it, *he has filled Zion with judgment and righteousness*, not only with a sense of justice, but with a zeal for it and a universal care that it be duly administered. It shall again be called, *The city of righteousness*, Isa. 1:26. In this the grace of God is exalted, as much as his providence was in the destruction of the Assyrian army. We may conclude God has mercy in store for a people when he fills them with judgment and righteousness, when all sorts of people, and all their actions and affairs, are governed by them, and they are so full of them that no other considerations can crowd in to sway them against these. Hezekiah and his people are encouraged (v. 6) with an assurance that God would stand by them in their distress. Here is,

(1.) A gracious promise of God for them to stay themselves upon: *Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation*. Here is a desirable end proposed, and that is *the stability of our times*, that things be not disturbed and unhinged at home, and the *strength of salvation*, deliverance from, and success against, enemies abroad. The salvation that God ordains for his people has strength in it; it is a horn of salvation. And here are the way and means for obtaining this end — *wisdom and knowledge*, not only piety, but prudence. That is it which, by the blessing of God, will be the *stability of our times and the strength of salvation*, that wisdom which is first pure, then peaceable, and which sacrifices private interests to a public good; such prudence as this will establish truth and peace, and fortify the bulwarks in defence of them.

(2.) A pious maxim of state for Hezekiah and his people to govern themselves by: *The fear of the Lord is his treasure*. It is God's treasure in the world, from which he receives his tribute; or, rather, it is the prince's treasure. A good prince accounts it so (that wisdom is better than gold) and he shall find it so. Note, True religion is the true treasure of any prince or people; it denominates them rich. Those places that have plenty of Bibles, and ministers, and serious good people, are really rich; and it contributes to that which makes a nation rich in this world. It is therefore the interest of a people to support religion among them and to take heed of every thing that threatens to hinder it.

V. The great distress that Jerusalem was brought into described, that those who believed the prophet might know beforehand what troubles were coming and might provide accordingly, and that when the foregoing promise of their deliverance should have its accomplishment the remembrance of the extremity of their case might help to magnify God in it and make them the more thankful, v. 7-9. It is here foretold,

1. That the enemy would be very insolent and abusive and there would be no dealing with him, either by treaties of peace (*for he has broken the covenant* without any hesitation, as if it were below him to be a servant to his word), or by the preparations of war, *for he has despised the cities*; he scorns to take notice either of their appeals to justice or of their petitions for mercy. He makes himself master of them so easily (though they are called *fenced cities*), and meets with so little resistance, that he despises them, and has no relentings when he puts all to the sword; for he regards no man, has no pity or concern, no, not for those that he is under particular obligations to. He neither fears God nor regards man, but is haughty and imperious to every one. There are those that take a pride in trampling upon all mankind, and have neither veneration for the honourable nor compassion for the miserable.

2. That therefore he would not be brought to any terms of reconciliation: *The valiant ones of Jerusalem*, being unable to make their parts good with him, must be contentedly run down with noise and insolence, which will make them cry without, because they cannot serve their country as they might have done against a fair adversary. *The ambassadors* sent by Hezekiah to treat of peace, finding him so haughty and unmanageable, *shall weep bitterly* for vexation at the disappointment they had met with in their negotiations; they shall weep like children, as despairing to find out any expedient to pacify him.

3. That the country should be made quite desolate for a time by his army.

(1.) No man durst travel the roads; so that a stop was put to trade and commerce, and (which was worse) no man could safely go up to Jerusalem, to keep the solemn feasts: *The highways lie waste*. While the fields lie waste, trodden like the highways, the highways lie waste, untrodden like the fields, *for the traveller ceases*.

(2.) No man had any profit from the grounds, v. 9. The earth used to rejoice in its own productions for the service of God's Israel, but now the enemies of Israel eat them up, or tread them down: it *mourns and languishes*; the country looks melancholy and the country people have misery in their countenances, wanting necessary food for themselves and their families; the wonted joy of harvest is turned into lamentation, so withering and uncertain are all worldly joys. The desolation is universal. That part of the country which belonged to the ten tribes was already laid waste: "*Lebanon* famed for cedars, *Sharon* for roses, *Bashan* for cattle, *Carmel* for corn, all very fruitful, have now become like wildernesses, *are ashamed* to be called by their old names, they are so unlike what they were. They *shake off their fruits* before their time into the hand of the spoiler, which used to be gathered seasonably by the hand of the owner."

VI. God appearing, at length, in his glory against his proud invader, v. 10-12. When things are brought thus to the last extremity,

1. God will magnify himself. He had seemed to sit by as an unconcerned spectator: “But *now will I arise, saith the Lord*; now will I appear and act, and therein I will be not only evidenced, but exalted.” He will not only demonstrate that there is a God that judges in the earth, but that he is God over all, and higher than the highest. “Now *will I lift up myself*, will prepare for action, will act vigorously, and will be glorified in it.” God’s time to appear for his people is when their affairs are reduced to the lowest ebb, *when their strength is gone and there is none shut up nor left*, Deu. 32:36. When all other helpers fail, then is God’s time to help.

2. He will bring down the Assyrian: “You, O Assyrians! are big with hopes that you shall have all the wealth of Jerusalem for your own, and are in pain till it be so; but all your hopes shall come to nothing: *You shall conceive chaff, and bring forth stubble*, which is not only worthless and good for nothing, but combustible and proper fuel for the fire, which it cannot escape, when *your own breath as fire shall devour you*, that is, the breath of God’s wrath, provoked against you by the breath of your sins — your malignant breath, the threatenings and slaughter you breathe out against the people of God, this shall devour you, and your blasphemous breath against God and his name.” God would make their own tongues to fall upon them, and their own breath to blow the fire that should consume them; and then no wonder that the people are *as the burnings of lime* in a lime-kiln, all on fire together, and *as thorns cut up*, which are dried and withered, and therefore easily take fire and are soon burnt up. Such was the destruction of the Assyrian army; it was like the burning up of thorns, which can well be spared, or the burning of lime, which makes it good for something. The burning of that army enlightened the world with the knowledge of God’s power and made his name shine brightly.

ISA. 33:13-24

Here is a preface that commands attention; and it is fit that all should attend, both near and afar off, to what God says and does (v. 13): *Hear, you that are afar off*, whether in place or time. Let distant regions and future ages hear what God has done. They do so; they will do so from the scripture, with as much assurance as those that were near, the neighbouring nations and those that lived at that time. But whoever hears what God has done, whether near or afar off, let them acknowledge his might, that it is irresistible, and that he can do every thing. Those are very stupid who hear what God has done and yet will not

acknowledge his might. Now what is it that God has done which we must take notice of, and in which we must acknowledge his might?

I. He has struck a terror upon the sinners in Zion (v. 14): *Fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites.* There are sinners in Zion, hypocrites, that enjoy Zion's privileges and concur in Zion's services, but their hearts are not right in the sight of God; they keep up secret haunts of sin under the cloak of a visible profession, which convicts them of hypocrisy. Sinners in Zion will have a great deal to answer for above other sinners; and their place in Zion will be so far from being their security that it will aggravate both their sin and their punishment. Now those sinners in Zion, though always subject to secret frights and terrors, were struck with a more than ordinary consternation from the convictions of their own consciences.

1. When they saw the Assyrian army besieging Jerusalem, and ready to set fire to it and lay it in ashes, and burn the wasps in the nest. Finding they could not make their escape to Egypt, as some had done, and distrusting the promises God had made by his prophets that he would deliver them, they were at their wits' end, and ran about like men distracted, crying, "*Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire?* Let us therefore abandon the city, and shift for ourselves elsewhere; one had as good live in everlasting burnings as live here." *Who will stand up for us against this devouring fire?* so some read it. See here how the sinners in Zion are affected when the judgments of God are abroad; while they were only threatened they slighted them and made nothing of them; but, when they come to be executed, they run into the other extreme, then they magnify them, and make the worst of them; they call them *devouring fire* and *everlasting burnings*, and despair of relief and succour. Those that rebel against the commands of the word cannot take the comforts of it in a time of need. Or, rather,

2. When they saw the Assyrian army destroyed; for the destruction of that is the fire spoken of immediately before, v. 11, 2. When the sinners in Zion saw what dreadful execution the wrath of God made they were in a great fright, being conscious to themselves that they had provoked this God by their secretly worshipping other gods; and therefore they cry out, *Who among us shall dwell with this devouring fire*, before which so vast an army is as thorns? *Who among us shall dwell with these everlasting burnings*, which have made the Assyrians *as the burnings of lime?* v. 12. Thus they said, or should have said. Note, God's judgments upon the enemies of Zion should strike a terror upon the sinners in Zion, nay, David himself trembles at them, Psa. 119:120. God himself is this devouring fire, Heb. 12:29. Who is able to stand before him? 1Sa. 6:20. His wrath will burn those everlastingly that have made themselves fuel for it. It is a fire that shall never be quenched, nor will ever go out of itself; for it is the

wrath of an everlasting God preying upon the conscience of an immortal soul. Nor can the most daring sinners bear up against it, so as to bear either the execution of it or the fearful expectation of it. Let this awaken us all to flee from the wrath to come, by fleeing to Christ as our refuge.

II. He has graciously provided for the security of his people that trust in him: *Hear this, and acknowledge his power in making those that walk righteously, and speak uprightly, to dwell on high, v. 15, 16.* We have here,

1. The good man's character, which he preserves even in times of common iniquity, in divers instances.

(1.) He walks righteously. In the whole course of his conversation he acts by rules of equity, and makes conscience of rendering to all their due, to God his due, as well as to men theirs. His walk is righteousness itself; he would not for a world wilfully do an unjust thing.

(2.) He speaks uprightly, *uprightnesses* (so the word is); he speaks what is true and right, and with an honest intention. He cannot think one thing and speak another, nor look one way and row another. His word is to him as sacred as his oath, and is not yea and nay.

(3.) He is so far from coveting ill-gotten gain that he despises it. He thinks it a mean and sordid thing, and unbecoming a man of honour, to enrich himself by any hardship put upon his neighbour. He scorns to do a wrong thing, nay, to do a severe thing, though he might get by it. He does not over-value gain itself, and therefore easily abhors the gain that is not honestly come by.

(4.) If he have a bribe at any time thrust into his hand, to pervert justice, *he shakes his hands from holding it*, with the utmost detestation, taking it as an affront to have it offered him.

(5.) *He stops his ears from hearing* any thing that tends to cruelty or bloodshed, or any suggestions stirring him up to revenge, Job. 31:31. He turns a deaf ear to those that delight in war and entice him to *cast in his lot among them*, Pro. 1:14, 16.

(6.) He *shuts his eyes from seeing evil*. He has such an abhorrence of sin that he cannot bear to see others commit it, and does himself watch against all the occasions of it. Those that would preserve the purity of their souls must keep a strict guard upon the senses of their bodies, must stop their ears to temptations, and turn away their eyes from beholding vanity.

2. The good man's comfort, which he may preserve even in times of common calamity, v. 16.

(1.) He shall be safe; he shall escape the devouring fire and the everlasting burnings; he shall have access to, and communion with, that God who is a devouring fire, but shall be to him a rejoicing light. And, as to present troubles, *he shall dwell on high*, out of the reach of them, nay, out of the hearing of the noise of them; he shall not be really harmed by them, nay, he shall not be greatly frightened at them: *The floods of great waters shall not come nigh him*; or, if they should attack him, *his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks*, strong and impregnable, fortified by nature as well as art. The divine power will keep him safe, and his faith in that power will keep him easy. God, the rock of ages, will be his high tower.

(2.) He shall be supplied; he shall want nothing that is necessary for him: *Bread shall be given him*, even when the siege is straitest and provisions are cut off; and *his waters shall be sure*, that is, he shall be sure of the continuance of them, so that he shall not drink his water by measure and with astonishment. Those that fear the Lord shall not want any thing that is good for them.

III. He will protect Jerusalem, and deliver it out of the hands of the invaders. This storm that threatened them should blow over, and they should enjoy a prosperous state again. Many instances are here given of this prosperity.

1. Hezekiah shall put off his sackcloth and all the sadness of his countenance, and shall appear publicly in his beauty, in his royal robes and with a pleasing aspect (v. 17), to the great joy of all his loving subjects. Those that walk uprightly shall not only have bread given them, and their water sure, but they shall with an eye of faith see the King of kings in his beauty, the beauty of holiness, and that beauty shall be upon them.

2. The siege being raised, by which they were kept close within the walls of Jerusalem, they shall now be at liberty to go abroad upon business or pleasure without danger of falling into the enemies' hand: *They shall behold the land that is very far off*; they shall visit the utmost corners of the nation, and take a prospect of the adjacent countries, which will be the more pleasant after so long a confinement. Thus believers behold the heavenly Canaan, that land that is very far off, and comfort themselves with the prospect of it in evil times.

3. The remembrance of the fright they were in shall add to the pleasure of their deliverance (v. 18): *Thy heart shall meditate terror*, meditate it with pleasure when it is over. Thou shalt think thou still hearest the alarm in thy ears, when all the cry was, "Arm, arm, arm! every man to his post. *Where is the scribe or secretary of war? Let him appear to draw up the muster-roll. Where is the receiver and pay-master of the army? Let him see what he had in bank, to defray the charge of a defence. Where is he that counted the towers? Let him bring in the account of them, that care may be taken to put a competent number*

of men in each.” Or these words may be taken as Jerusalem’s triumph over the vanquished army of the Assyrians, and the rather because the apostle alludes to them in his triumphs over the learning of this world, when it was baffled by the gospel of Christ, 1Co. 1:20. The virgin, the daughter of Zion, despises all their military preparations. Where is the scribe or muster-master of the Assyrian army? Where is their weigher (or treasurer), and where are their engineers that counted the towers? They are all either dead or fled. There is an end of them.

4. They shall no more be terrified with the sight of the Assyrians, who were a fierce people naturally, and were particularly fierce against the people of the Jews, and were of a strange language, that could understand neither their petitions nor their complaints, and therefore had a pretence for being deaf to them, nor could themselves be understood: “They are *of a deeper speech than thou canst perceive*, which will make them the more formidable, v. 19. Thy eyes shall no more see them thus fierce, but their countenances changed when they shall all become dead corpses.”

5. They shall no more be under apprehensions of the danger of Jerusalem — Zion, and the temple there (v. 20): “*Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities*, the city where our solemn sacred feasts are kept, where we used to meet to worship God in religious assemblies.” The good people among them, in the time of their distress, were most in pain for Zion upon this account, that it was the city of their solemnities, that the conquerors would burn their temple and they should not have that to keep their solemn feasts in any more. In times of public danger our concern should be most about our religion, and the cities of our solemnities should be dearer to us than either our strong cities or our store-cities. It is with an eye to this that God will work deliverance for Jerusalem, because it is the city of religious solemnities: let those be conscientiously kept up, as the glory of a people, and we may depend upon God to create a defence upon that glory. Two things are here promised to Jerusalem:

(1.) A well-grounded security. It shall be *a quiet habitation* for the people of God; they shall not be molested and disturbed, as they have been, by the alarms of the sword either of war or persecution, Isa. 29:20. It shall be a quiet habitation, as it is the city of our solemnities. It is desirable to be quiet in our own houses, but much more so to be quiet in God’s house and have none to make us afraid there. Thus it shall be with Jerusalem; and *the eyes shall see it*, which will be a great satisfaction to a good man, Psa. 128: 5, 6. “*Thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem, and peace upon Israel; thou shalt live to see it and share in it.*”

(2.) An unmoved stability. Jerusalem, the city of our solemnities, is indeed but a *tabernacle*, in comparison with the New Jerusalem. The present manifestations of the divine glory and grace are nothing in comparison with those that are reserved for the future state. But it is such a tabernacle as *shall not be taken down*. After this trouble is over Jerusalem shall long enjoy a confirmed peace; and her sacred privileges, which are the stakes and cords of her tabernacle, shall not be removed from her, nor any disturbance given to the course and circle of her religious services. God's church on earth is a tabernacle, which, though it may be shifted from one place to another, shall not be taken down while the world stands; for in every age Christ will have a seed to serve him. The promises of the covenant are its stakes, which shall never be removed, and the ordinances and institutions of the gospel are its cords, which shall never be broken. They are things which cannot be shaken, though heaven and earth be, but shall remain.

6. God himself will be their protector and Saviour, v. 21, 22. This the principal ground of their confidence: "He that is himself *the glorious Lord* will display his glory for us and be a glory to us, such as shall eclipse the rival-glory of the enemy." God, in being a gracious Lord, is a glorious Lord; for his goodness is his glory. God will be the Saviour of Jerusalem and her glorious Lord,

(1.) As a guard against their adversaries abroad. He will be a *place of broad rivers and streams*. Jerusalem had no considerable river running by it, as most great cities have, nothing but the brook Kidron, and so wanted one of the best natural fortifications, as well as one of the greatest advantages for trade and commerce, and upon this account their enemies despised them and doubted not but to make an easy prey of them; but the presence and power of God are sufficient at any time to make up to us the deficiencies of the creature and of its strength and beauty. We have all in God, all we need or can desire. Many external advantages Jerusalem has not which other places have, but in God there is more than an equivalent. But, if there be broad rivers and streams about Jerusalem, may not these yield an easy access to the fleet of an invader? No; these are rivers and streams *in which shall go no galley with oars*, no man of war or gallant ship. If God himself be the river, it must needs be inaccessible to the enemy; they can neither find nor force their way by it.

(2.) As a guide to their affairs at home: "*For the Lord is our Judge*, to whom we are accountable, to whose judgment we refer ourselves, by whose judgment we abide, and who therefore (we hope) will judge for us. *He is our lawgiver*; his word is a law to us, and to him every thought within us is brought into obedience. *He is our King*, to whom we pay homage and tribute, and an inviolable allegiance, and therefore *he will save us*." For, as protection draws allegiance, so allegiance may expect protection, and shall have it with God. By

faith we take Christ for our prince and Saviour, and as such depend upon him and devote ourselves to him. Observe with what an air of triumph, and with what an emphasis laid upon the glorious name of God, they comfort themselves with this: *Jehovah is our Judge, Jehovah is our Lawgiver, Jehovah is our King, who, being self-existent, is self-sufficient, and all-sufficient to us.*

7. The enemies shall be quite infatuated, and all their powers and projects broken, like a ship at sea in stress of weather, that cannot ride out the storm, but having her tackle torn, her masts split, and nothing wherewith to repair them, is given up for a wreck, v. 23. *The tacklings of the Assyrian are loosed;* they are like a ship whose tacklings are loose, or forsaken by the ship's crew, when they give it over for lost, finding that they cannot strengthen the mast, but it will come down. They thought themselves sure of Jerusalem; but when they were just entering the port as it were, and though all was their own, they were quite becalmed, and *could not spread their sail*, but lay wind-bound till God poured the fury of his wrath upon them. The enemies of God's church are often disarmed and unrigged when they think they have almost gained their point.

8. The wealth of their camp shall be a rich booty for the Jews: *Then is the prey of a great spoil divided.* When the greater part were slain the rest fled in confusion, and with such precipitation that (like the Syrians) they *left their tents as they were*, so that all the treasure in them fell into the hands of the besieged; and even *the lame take the prey*. Those that tarried at home did divide the spoil. It was so easy to come at that not only the strong man might make himself master of it, but even the lame man, whose hands were lame, that he could not fight, and his feet, that he could not pursue. As the victory shall cost them no peril, so the prey shall cost them no toil. And there was such abundance of it that when those who were forward, and came first, had carried off as much as they would, even the lame, who came late, found sufficient. Thus God brought good out of evil, and not only delivered Jerusalem, but enriched it, and abundantly recompensed the losses they had sustained. Thus comfortably and well do the frights and distresses of the people of God often end.

9. Both sickness and sin shall be taken away; and then sickness is taken away in mercy when this is all the fruit of it, and the recovery from it, even the taking away of sin.

(1.) *The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick. As the lame shall take the prey*, so shall the sick, notwithstanding their weakness, make a shift to get to the abandoned camp and seize something for themselves; or there shall be such a universal transport of joy upon this occasion that even the sick shall, for the present, forget their sickness and the sorrows of it, and join with the public in its rejoicings; the deliverance of their city shall be their cure. Or it intimates

that, whereas infectious diseases are commonly the effect of long sieges, it shall not be so with Jerusalem, but the inhabitants of it with their victory and peace shall have health also, and there shall be no complaining upon the account of sickness within their gates. Or those that are sick shall bear their sickness without complaining as long as they see it goes well with Jerusalem. Our sense of private grievances should be drowned in our thanksgivings for public mercies.

(2.) *The people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity*, not only the body of the nation forgiven their national guilt in the removing of the national judgment, but particular persons, that dwell therein, shall repent, and reform, and have their sins pardoned. And this is promised as that which is at the bottom of all other favours; he will do so and so for them, *for he will be merciful to their unrighteousness*, Heb. 8:12. Sin is the sickness of the soul. When God pardons the sin he heals the disease; and, when the diseases of sin are healed by pardoning mercy, the sting of bodily sickness is taken out and the cause of it removed; so that either the inhabitant shall not be sick or at least shall not say, *I am sick*. If iniquity be taken away, we have little reason to complain of outward affliction. *Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee.*