

CHAPTER 3

In the close of the foregoing chapter we had a gracious promise of deliverance in Mount Zion and Jerusalem; now this whole chapter is a comment upon that promise, showing what that deliverance shall be, how it shall be wrought by the destruction of the church's enemies, and how it shall be perfected in the everlasting rest and joy of the church. This was in part accomplished in the deliverance of Jerusalem from the attempt that Sennacherib made upon it in Hezekiah's time, and afterwards in the return of the Jews out of their captivity in Babylon, and other deliverances wrought for the Jewish church between that and Christ's coming. But it has a further reference, to the great redemption wrought out for us by Jesus Christ, and the destruction of our spiritual enemies and all their agents, and will have its full accomplishment in the judgment of the great day. Here is a prediction,

I. Of God's reckoning with the enemies of his people for all the injuries and indignities that they had done them, and returning them upon their own head (v. 1-8).

II. Of God's judging all nations when the measure of their iniquity is full, and appearing publicly, to the everlasting confusion of all impenitent sinners and the everlasting comfort of all his faithful servants (v. 9-17).

III. Of the provision God has made for the refreshment of his people, for their safety and purity, when their enemies shall be made desolate (v. 18-21). These promises were not of private interpretation only, but were written for our learning, "that we, through patience and comfort of this scripture, might have hope."

☞ JOEL 3:1-8

THREATENINGS AGAINST ISRAEL'S ENEMIES

We have often heard of the *year of the redeemed*, and the *year of recompences for the controversy of Zion*; now here we have a description

of the transactions of that year, and a prophecy of what shall be done when it comes, whenever it comes, for it comes often, and at the end of time it will come once for all.

I. It shall be the *year of the redeemed*, for God will *bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem*, v. 1. Though the bondage of God's people may be grievous and very long, yet it shall not be everlasting. That in Egypt ended at length in their deliverance into the glorious liberty of the children of God. *Let my son go, the he may serve me*. That in Babylon shall likewise end well. And the Lord Jesus will provide for the effectual redemption of poor enslaved souls from under the dominion of sin and Satan, and will proclaim that *acceptable year*, the year of jubilee, the release of debts and servants, and the *opening of the prison to those that were bound*. There is a day, there is a time, fixed for the *bringing again of the captivity* of God's children, for the redeeming of them *from the power of the grave*; and it shall be the *last day* and the end of all time.

II. It shall be the *year of recompences for the controversy of Zion*. Though God may suffer the enemies of his people to prevail against them very far and for a long time, yet he will call them to an account for it, and will lead captivity captive (^{<BHS>}Psalm 68:18), will lead those captive that led his people captive, ^{<G31>}Revelation 13:10. Observe,

1. Who those are that shall be reckoned with — *all nations*, v. 2. This intimates,

(1.) That all the nations had made themselves liable to the judgment of God for wrong done to his people. Persecution is the reigning crying sin of the world; that *lying in wickedness* itself is set against godliness. The enmity that is in the old serpent, *the god of this world*, against the seed of the woman, appears more or less in the *children of this world*. *Marvel not if the world hate you*.

(2.) That, whatsoever nation injured God's nation, they should not go unpunished; for he that touches the Israel of God shall be made to know that he touches the apple of his eye. Jerusalem will be a *burdensome stone to all people*, ^{<BHS>}Zechariah 12:3. But the neighboring nations shall be particularly reckoned with — *Tyre, and Sidon, and all the coasts of Palestine*, or the Philistines, who have been troublesome neighbours to the Israel of God, v. 4. When the more remote and potent nations that laid Israel wastes are reckoned with the impotent malice of those that lay near

them, and *helped forward the affliction*, (^{<3115>}Zechariah 1:15), and made a hand of it (^{<336P>}Ezekiel 26:2), shall not be passed by. Note, Little persecutors shall be called to an account as well as great ones; and, though they could not do much mischief, shall be reckoned with according to the *wickedness of their endeavors* and the mischief they would have done.

2. The sitting of this court for judgment. They shall all be *gathered* (v. 2), that those who have combined together against God's people, *with one consent* (^{<388P>}Psalm 83:5), may together receive their doom. They shall be *brought down into the valley of Jehoshaphat*, which lay near Jerusalem, and there *God will plead with them*,

(1.) Because it is fit that criminals should be tried in the same country where they did the fact.

(2.) For their greater confusion, when they shall see that Jerusalem which they have so long endeavored and hoped for the ruin of, in spite of all their rage, made a *praise in the earth*.

(3.) For the greater comfort and honor of God's Jerusalem, which shall see God pleading their cause.

(4.) Then shall be re-acted what God did for Jehoshaphat when he gave him victory over those that invaded him, and furnished him and his people with matter of joy and praise, in the *valley of Berachah*. See ^{<40P>}2 Chronicles 20:26.

(5.) It was in this valley of Jehoshaphat (as Dr. Lightfoot suggests) that Sennacherib's army, or part of it, lay, when it was destroyed by an angel. They came together to ruin Jerusalem, but God brought them together for their own ruin, *as sheaves into the floor*, (^{<391P>}Micah 4:12).

3. The plaintiff called, on whose behalf this prosecution is set on foot; it is for *my people*, and for *my heritage Israel*. It is their cause that God will now plead with jealousy. Note, God's people are *his heritage*, his *peculiar*, his *portion*, his *treasure*, above all people, (^{<29P>}Exodus 19:5; ^{<53P>}Deuteronomy 32:9). They are his demesne, and therefore he has a good action against those that trespass upon them.

4. The charge exhibited against them, which is very particular. Many affronts they had put upon God by their idolatries, but that for which God

has a quarrel with them is the affront they have put upon his people and upon the vessels of his sanctuary.

(1.) They had been very abusive to the people of Israel, had *scattered them among the nations* and forced them to seek for shelter where they could find a place, or carried them captive into their respective countries and there industriously dispersed them, for fear of their incorporating for their common safety. They *parted their land*, and took every one his share of it as their own; nay, they have *cast lots for my people*, and *sold them*. When they had taken them prisoners,

[1.] They made a jest of them, made a scorn of them as of no value. They would not release them and yet thought them not worth the keeping; they made nothing of playing them away at dice. Or they made a dividend of the prisoners *by lot*, as the soldiers did of Christ's garments.

[2.] They made a gain of them. When they had them they *sold* them, yet with so much contempt that they did *not increase their wealth by their price*, but sold them for their pleasure rather than their profit; they *gave a boy* taken in war for the *hire of a harlot*, and a *girl* for so many bottles of wine as would serve them for one sitting, a *goodly price* at which they valued them, and goodly preferment for a son and daughter of Israel to be a slave and a drudge in a tavern or a brothel. Observe, here, how that which is got by sin is commonly spent upon another. The spoil which these enemies of the Jews gathered by injustice and violence they scattered and threw away in drinking and whoring; such is frequently the character, and such the conversation, of the enemies and persecutors of the people of God. The Tyrians and Philistines, when they seized any of the children of Judah and Jerusalem, either took them prisoners in war or kidnapped them, they sold them to the Grecians (with whom the men of Tyre traded in the *persons of men*, ³²⁷³Ezekiel 27:13), that they *might remove them far from their own border*, v. 6. It was a great reproach to Israel, God's first-born, his free-born, to be thus bought and sold among the heathen.

(2.) They had unjustly seized *God's silver and gold* (v. 5), by which some understand the wealth of Israel. The silver and gold which God's people had he calls his, because they had received it from him and devoted it to him; and whosoever robbed them God took it as if they had robbed him and would make reprisals accordingly. Those who take away the estates of good men for well-doing will be found guilty of sacrilege; they take God's *silver and gold*. But it seems rather to be meant of the *vessels* and

treasures of the temple, which God here calls his *goodly pleasant things*, precious and desirable to him and all that are his. These they *carried into their temples* as trophies of their victory over God's Israel, thinking that therein they triumphed over Israel's God, nay, and that their idols triumphed over him. Thus the ark was put in Dagon's temple. Thus they did unjustly. “*What have you to do with me* (v. 4), with my people; what wrong have they done you? What provocation have they given you? You had nothing to do with them, and yet you do all this against them. Devices are devised against the *quiet in the land*, and those offended and harmed that are harmless and inoffensive: *Will you render me a recompence?*” Can they pretend that either God or his people have done them any injury, for which they may justify themselves by the law of retaliation in doing them these mischiefs? No; they have no colour for it. Note, It is no new thing for those who have been very civil and obliging to their neighbours to find them very unkind and unneighbourly and for those who do no injuries to suffer many.

5. The sentence passed upon them. In general (v. 4), “*If you recompense me*, if you pretend a quarrel with me, if you provoke me thus to jealousy, if you touch the apple of my eye, *I will swiftly and speedily return your recompence upon your own head.*” Those that contend with God will find themselves unable to make their part good with him. He will recompense them *suddenly*, when they little think of it, and have not time to prevent it; if he take them to task, he will soon effect their ruin. Particularly, it is threatened,

(1.) That they should not gain their end in the mischief they designed against God's people. They thought to *remove them so far from their border* that they should never return to it again, v. 6. But (says God) “*I will raise them out of the place whither you have sold them*, and they shall not, as you intended, be buried alive there.” Men's selling the people of God will not deprive him of his property in them.

(2.) That they shall be paid in their own coin, as Adonibezek was (v. 8): “*I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hands of the children of Judah*; you shall lie as much at their mercy as they have been at yours,”

²⁰¹⁴Isaiah 60:14. Thus the Jews *had rule over those that hated them*,

¹⁷⁰¹Esther 9:1. And then they shall justly be *sold to the Sabeans*, to a *people far off*. This (some think) had its accomplishment in the victories obtained by the Maccabees over the enemies of the Jews; others think it

looks as far forward as the last day, when the *upright shall have dominion* (³⁹⁴⁴Psalm 49:14) and *the saints shall judge the world*. It is certain that none ever hardened his heart against God, or his church, and prospered long; no, not Pharaoh himself, for *the Lord has spoken it*, for the comfort of all his suffering servants, that *vengeance is his and he will repay*.

²⁰⁸⁹JOEL 3:9-17

THREATENINGS AGAINST ISRAEL'S ENEMIES

What the psalmist had long before ordered to be *said among the heathen* (³⁹⁴⁴Psalm 96:10) the prophet here will have in like manner to be published to all nations, That *the Lord reigns*, and that *he comes, he comes to judge the earth*, as he had long been judging in the earth. The notice here given of God's judging the nations may have reference to the destruction of Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, and to the Antichrist especially, and all the proud enemies of the Christian church; but some of the best interpreters, ancient and modern (particularly the learned Dr. Pollock), think the scope of these verses is to set forth the day of the last judgment under the similitude of God's making war upon the enemies of his kingdom, and his gathering in the harvest of the earth, both which similitudes we find used in the Revelation, ⁶⁶⁴Revelation 19:11; 14:18. Here we have,

I. A challenge given to all the enemies of God's kingdom to do their worst. To signify to them that God is preparing war against them, they are called upon to prepare war against him, v. 9-11. When the hour of God's judgment shall come effectual methods shall be taken to gather all nations *to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*, ⁶⁶⁴Revelation 16:14; 20:8. It seems to be here spoken ironically: "*Proclaim you this among the Gentiles; let all the forces of the nations be summoned to join in confederacy against God and his people.*" It is like that, ²⁰⁸⁹Isaiah 7:9, "*Associate yourselves, O you people! and gird yourselves, but you shall be broken to pieces. Prepare war; muster up all your strength; wake up the mighty men; call them into your service; excite them to vigilance and resolution; let all the men of war draw near. Let them come and enter the lists with Omnipotence if they dare; let them not complain for want of weapons, but let them beat their ploughshares into swords and their*

pruning-hooks into spears. Let them resolve, if they will, never to return to their husbandry again, but either to conquer or die; let none plead unfitness to bear arms, but *let the weak say, I am strong* and will venture into the field of battle.” Thus does a God of almighty power bid defiance to all the opposition of the powers of darkness; let the *heathen rage*, and the *kings of the earth take counsel together, against the Lord and his Christ*; let them *assemble, and come, and gather themselves together*; but he that sits in heaven shall laugh at them, and, while he thus calls them, he has them in derision, ^{<H11>}Psalm 2:1, 4. The heathen must be wakened, must be raised from the dead, that they may *come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat*, to receive their doom (v. 12), may come up out of their graves, come up *into the air*, to meet the Lord there. Jehoshaphat signifies *the judgment of the Lord*. Let them come to the place of God's judgment, which perhaps is the chief reason for the using of this name here, but it is put together as a proper name for the sake of allusions to the place so called, which we observed before; let them come thither where God will *sit to judge the heathen*, to that *throne of glory* before which shall be *gathered all nations* (^{<H12>}Matthew 25:32), for before the judgment-seat of Christ *we must all appear*. The challenge (v. 9) is turned into a summons, v. 12. It is not only, *Come if you dare*, but *You shall come* whether you will or no, for there is no escaping the judgments of God.

II. A charge given to the ministers of God's justice to appear and act against these daring enemies of his kingdom among men: And therefore *cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord!* v. 11. When they bring their forces into the field, let God bring his, let the archangel's trumpet sound a charge, to call together his *mighty ones*, that is, his angels. Perhaps it is with reference to this that Christ's coming from heaven at the last day is said to be *with his mighty angels*, ^{<H13>}2 Thessalonians 1:7. These are the *hosts of the Lord*, that shall fight his battles when he shall put down all opposing rule, principality, and power when he shall *judge among the heathen*, ^{<H14>}Psalm 110:6. Some think these words (v. 9, 10), *Prepare war, wake up the mighty men*, are not a challenge to the enemies' hosts, but a charge to God's hosts; let them *draw near, and come up*. When God's cause is to be pleaded, either by the law or by the sword, he has those ready that shall please it effectually, witnesses ready to appear for him in the court of judgment, soldiers ready to appear for him in the field of battle. They shall *beat ploughshares into swords*, if need be. However, it is plain that to them the charge is given (v. 13), *Put you in the sickle, for*

the harvest is ripe; that is, their wickedness is great, the measure of it is full, and they are ripe for ruin. Our Saviour has expounded this, ⁴¹³⁹Matthew 13:39. *The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. And they are commanded to thrust in their sickle. their sharp sickle, and gather in both the harvest and the vintage,* ⁶⁴⁴⁵Revelation 14:15, 18. Note, The greatness of men's wickedness makes them ripe for God's judgment.

III. The vast appearance that shall be in that great and solemn day (v. 14): *Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision, the same which before was called the valley of Jehoshaphat, or of the judgment of the Lord, for the day of the Lord is near in that valley.* Note,

1. The judgment-day, that day of the Lord, has all along been looked upon, and spoken of, as *nigh at hand*. Enoch said, *Behold, the Lord comes*, as if the Judge were then standing before the door, because it is certain that that day will come and will come according to the appointment, and a *thousand years with God are but as one day*; things are ripening apace for it; we ought always to be ready for it, because our judgment is at hand.

2. The day of judgment will be the *day of decision*, when every man's eternal state will be determined, and the controversy that has been long depending between the kingdom of Christ and that of Satan shall be finally decided, and an end put to the struggle. *The valley of the distribution of judgment* (so the Chaldee), when *every man shall receive according to the things done in the body*. *The valley of threshing* (so the margin), carrying on the metaphor of the *harvest*, v. 13. The proud enemies of God's people will then be crushed and broken to pieces, and made as the *dust of the summer threshing-floors*.

3. Innumerable multitudes will be gathered together to receive their final doom in that day, as in the destruction of Gog we read of the valley of *Hamon-Gog*, and the city of *Hamonah* (³³⁴⁵Ezekiel 39:15, 16), both signifying the *multitude* of the vanquished enemies; it is the word here used, *Hamonim, Hamonim*, expressed by the way of admiration — O what vast multitudes of sinners will divine justice be glorified in the ruin of at that day! *A multitude of living* (says one of the rabbin) *and a multitude of dead*, for Christ shall come *to judge both the quick and the dead*.

IV. The amazing change that shall then be made in the kingdom of nature (v. 15): *The sun and moon shall be darkened*, as before, ²¹³¹Joel 2:31.

Their glory and lustre shall be eclipsed by the far greater brightness of that glory in which the Judge shall then appear. Nay, they shall themselves be set aside in the dissolution of all things; for the damned sinners in hell shall not be allowed their light, for God himself will be *their everlasting light*, ^{<219>}Isaiah 60:19. Those that fall under the wrath of God in that day of wrath shall be cut off from all comfort and joy, signified by the darkening not only of sun and moon, but of the stars also.

V. The different impressions which that day will make upon the children of this world and the children of God, according as it will be to them.

1. To the wicked it will be a terrible day. *The Lord* shall then speak *from Zion and Jerusalem*, from the throne of his glory, from heaven, where he manifests himself in a peculiar manner, as sometimes he has done in the *glorious high throne of his sanctuary*, which yet was but a faint resemblance of the glory of that day. He shall speak *from heaven*, from *the midst* of his saints and angels (so some understand it), the holy society of which may be called *Zion and Jerusalem*; for, when we come to the *heavenly Jerusalem*, we come to the *innumerable company of angels*; see ^{<220>}Hebrews 12:22, 25. Now his speaking in that day will be to the wicked as *roaring*, terrible as the roaring of a lion (for so the word signifies); he long kept silence, but now *our God shall come, and shall not keep silence*, ^{<221>}Psalms 50:3, 21. Note, The judgment of the great day will make the ears of those to tingle that continue the implacable enemies of God's kingdom. God's voice will then *shake terribly both heaven and earth* (^{<222>}Isaiah 2:21), yet *once more*, ^{<223>}Haggai 2:6; ^{<224>}Hebrews 12:26. This denotes that the voice of God will in the great day speak such terror to the wicked as were enough to put even heaven and earth into a consternation. When God comes to pull down and destroy his enemies, and make them all his footstool, though heaven and earth should stand up in defence of them and undertake their protection, it shall be all in vain. Even they shall shake before him and be an insufficient shelter to those whom he comforts forth to contend with. Note, As blessings out of Zion are the sweetest blessings, and enough to make heaven and earth sing, so terrors out of Zion are the sorest terrors, and enough to make heaven and earth shake.

2. To the righteous it will be a joyful day. When the heaven and earth shall tremble, and be dissolved and burnt up, then will the Lord be the *hope of his people* and the *strength of the children of Israel* (v. 16), and *then shall Jerusalem be holy*, v. 17. The saints are the Israel of God; they are *his*

people; the church is his Jerusalem. They are in covenant and communion with him; now in the great day,

(1.) Their longings shall be satisfied: *The Lord will be the hope of his people*. As he always was the founder and foundation of their hopes, so he then will be the crown of their hopes. He will be the *harbour* of his people (so the word is), their receptacle, refuge, and home. The saints in the great day shall arrive at the desired haven, shall put to shore after a stormy voyage; they shall go to be for ever at home with God, to their Father's house, the house *not made with hands*.

(2.) Their happiness shall be confirmed. God will be in that day the *strength of the children of Israel*, enabling them to bid that day welcome and to bear up under the weight of its glories and joys. In this world, when the judgments of God are abroad, and sinners are falling under them, God is and will be the hope and strength of his people, the strength of their heart, and their portion, when other men's hearts fail them for fear.

(3.) Their holiness shall be completed (v. 17): *Then shall Jerusalem be holy*, the *holy city* indeed; such shall the heavenly Jerusalem be, such the glorious church, *without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing*. *Jerusalem shall be holiness* (so the word is); it shall be perfectly holy; there shall be no remainder of sin in it. The gospel-church is a holy society, even in its militant state, but will never be holiness itself till it comes to be triumphant. Then *no stranger shall pass through her any more*; there shall not enter into the New Jerusalem any thing that defiles or works iniquity; none shall be there but those who have a right to be there, none but its own citizens; for it shall be an unmixed society.

(4.) God shall in all this be manifested and magnified: *So shall you know that I am the Lord your God*. By the sanctifying and glorifying of the church God will be known in his holiness and glory, as the God that dwells in his holy mountain and makes it holy by dwelling in it; and those that are sanctified and glorified are so *through the knowledge of him* that called them. The knowledge which true believers have of God is,

[1.] An appropriating knowledge. They know that he is *the Lord their God*, yet not theirs only, but theirs in common with the whole church, that he is their God, but *dwelling in Zion his holy mountain*; for, though faith appropriates, it does not engross or monopolize the privileges of the covenant.

[2.] It is an experimental knowledge. They shall find him their *hope and strength* in the worst of times, and so they shall *know that he is the Lord their God*. Those know best the goodness of God who have tasted and seen it, and have found him good to them.

~~2488~~ JOEL 3:18-21

JUDGMENTS AND MERCIES

These promises with which this prophecy concludes have their accomplishments in part in the kingdom of grace, and the comforts and graces of all the faithful subjects of that kingdom, but will have their full accomplishment in the kingdom of glory; for, as to the Jewish church, we know not of any event concerning that which answers to the extent of these promises, and what instances of peace and prosperity they were blessed with, which they may be supposed to be a hyperbolical description of, they were but figures of *better things reserved for us, that they* in their best estate *without us might not be made perfect*.

I. It is promised that the enemies of the church shall be vanquished and brought down, v. 19. Egypt, that old enemy of Israel, and Edom, which had an inveterate enmity to Israel, derived from Esau, these *shall be a desolation, a desolate wilderness*, no more to be inhabited; they have become the *people of God's curse*; so the Idumeans were, ~~2485~~ Isaiah 34:5. No strength nor wealth of a nation is a defence against the judgment of God. But what is the quarrel God has with these potent kingdoms? It is for their *violence against the children of Judah*, and the injuries they had done them; see ~~2485~~ Ezekiel 25:3, 8, 12, 15; 26:2. They had *shed the innocent blood* of the Jews that fled to them for shelter or were making their escape through their country. Note, The innocent blood of God's people is very precious to him, and not a drop of it shall be shed but it shall be reckoned for. In the last day this earth, which has been filled with violence against the people of God, shall be made a desolation, when it and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up. And, sooner or later, the oppressors and persecutors of God's Israel shall be brought down and laid in the dust, nay, they will at length be brought down and laid in the flames.

II. It is promised that the church shall be very happy; and truly happy it is in spiritual privileges, even during its militant state, but much more when it comes to be triumphant. Three things are here promised it: —

1. Purity. This is put last here, as a reason for the rest (v. 21); but we may consider it first, as the ground and foundation of the rest: *I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed*, that is, their bloody heinous sins, especially shedding innocent blood; that filth and guilt they had contracted by sin, which rendered them unfit for communion with God, and made them odious to his holiness and obnoxious to his justice; this they shall be washed from in the *fountain opened*, ^{<381>}Zechariah 13:1. That shall be cleansed by the blood of Christ which could not be cleansed by the sacrifices and purifications of the ceremonial law. Or, if we apply it to the happiness of a future state, it intimates the cleansing of the saints from all these corruptions from which they were not cleansed either by ordinances or providences in the world; there shall not be the least remains of sin in them there. Here, though they are washing daily, there is still something that is not cleansed; but in heaven, even that also shall be done away. And the reason is because *the Lord dwells in Zion*, dwells with his church, and much more gloriously with that in heaven, and *holiness becomes his house for ever*, for which reason, where he dwells there must be, there shall be, a perfection of holiness. Note, Though the refining and reforming of the church is work that goes on slowly, and still there is something we complain of that is *not cleansed*, yet there is a day coming when every thing that is amiss shall be amended, and the church shall be all fair, and no spot, no stain in her; and we must wait for that day.

2. Plenty, v. 18. This is put first, because it is the reverse of the judgment threatened in the foregoing chapters.

(1.) The streams of this plenty overflow the land and enrich it: *The mountains shall drop new wine and the hills shall flow with milk*, such great abundance shall they have of suitable provision, both for *babes* and for *strong men*. It intimates the abundance of vineyards, and all fruitful; and the abundance of cattle in the pastures that fill them with milk. And, to make the corn-land fruitful, the *rivers of Judah shall flow with water*, so that the country shall be like the garden of Eden, well-watered every where and greatly enriched, ^{<389>}Psalms 65:9. But this seems to be meant spiritually; the graces and comforts of the new covenant are compared to *wine and milk* (^{<251>}Isaiah 55:1), and the Spirit to *rivers of living water*,

~~4178~~ John 7:38. And these gifts abound much more under the New Testament than they did under the Old; when believers receive *grace for grace* from Christ's fulness, when they are enriched with *everlasting consolations*, and *filled with joy and peace in believing*, then *the mountains drop new wine*, and *the hills flow with milk*. *Drink you, drink abundantly, O beloved!* When there is plentiful effusion of the Spirit of grace, then the *rivers of Judah flow with water*, and make glad, not only *the city of our God* (~~4948~~ Psalm 46:4), but the whole land.

(2.) The fountain of this plenty is in the *house of God*, whence the streams take their rise, as those *waters of the sanctuary* (~~2671~~ Ezekiel 47:1) from *under the threshold of the house*, and the river of life *out of the throne of God and the Lamb*, ~~6211~~ Revelation 22:1. The psalmist, speaking of Zion, says, *All my springs are in thee*, ~~1877~~ Psalm 87:7. Those that take temporal blessings to be meant in the former part of the verse, yet by this *fountain out of the house of the Lord* understand the grace of God, which, if we abound in temporal blessings, we have so much more need of, that we may not abuse them. Christ himself is the fountain; his merit and grace cleanse us, refresh us, and make us fruitful. This is said to water *the valley of Shittim*, which lay a great way off from the temple at Jerusalem, on the other side of Jordan, and was a dry and barren valley, which intimates that gospel-grace, flowing from Christ, shall reach far, even to the Gentile world, to the most remote regions of it, and shall make those to abound in the fruits of righteousness who had long lain as the barren wilderness. This grace is a fountain overflowing, ever-flowing, from which we may be continually drawing, and yet need not fear its being drawn dry. This fountain comes *out of the house of the Lord* above, from his temple in heaven, flows all that good which here we are daily tasting the streams of, but hope to be shortly, hope to be eternally, drinking at the fountain-head of.

3. Perpetuity. This crowns all the rest (v. 20): *Judah shall dwell for ever* (when Egypt and Edom are made *a desolation*), and Jerusalem shall continue *from generation to generation*. This is a promise, and a precious promise it is,

(1.) That the church of Christ shall continue in the world to the end of time. As one generation of professing Christians passes away, another shall come, in whom the *throne of Christ shall endure for ever*, and *the gates of hell shall not prevail* against it.

(2.) That all the living members of that church (Judah and Jerusalem are put for the *inhabitants* of that city and country, ~~4185~~ Matthew 3:5) shall be established in their happiness to the utmost ages of eternity. This new Jerusalem shall be *from generation to generation*, for it is a city that has foundations, not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.