

# CHAPTER 25

The prophecy of this chapter bears date some time before those prophecies in the chapters next foregoing, for they are not placed in the exact order of time in which they were delivered. This is dated in the first year of Nebuchadrezzar, that remarkable year when the sword of the Lord began to be drawn and furbished. Here is,

**I.** A review of the prophecies that had been delivered to Judah and Jerusalem for many years past, by Jeremiah himself and other prophets, with the little regard given to them and the little success of them (v. 1-7).

**II.** A very express threatening of the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem, by the king of Babylon, for their contempt of God, and their continuance in sin (v. 8-11), to which is annexed a promise of their deliverance out of their captivity in Babylon, after 70 years (v. 12-14).

**III.** A prediction of the devastation of divers other nations about, by Nebuchadrezzar, represented by a “cup of fury” put into their hands (v. 15-28), by a sword sent among them (v. 29-33), and a desolation made among the shepherds and their flocks and pastures (v. 34-38); so that we have here judgment beginning at the house of God, but not ending there.

## ~~201~~ JEREMIAH 25:1-7

### GOD'S REMONSTRANCE WITH THE PEOPLE

We have here a message from God concerning all the people of Judah (v. 1), which Jeremiah delivered, in his name, unto all the people of Judah, v. 2. Note, That which is of universal concern ought to be of universal cognizance. It is fit that the word which concerns all the people, as the word of God does, the word of the gospel particularly, should be divulged to all in general, and, as far as may be, addressed to each in particular. Jeremiah had been sent to the *house of the king* (~~201~~ Jeremiah 22:1), and he took courage to deliver his message to them, probably when they had all come up to Jerusalem to worship at one of the solemn feasts; then he had

them together, and it was to be hoped then, if ever, they would be well disposed to hear counsel and receive instruction.

This prophecy is dated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim and the first of Nebuchadrezzar. It was in the latter end of Jehoiakim's third year that Nebuchadrezzar began to reign by himself alone (having reigned some time before in conjunction with his father), as appears, <sup>200</sup>Daniel 1:1. But Jehoiakim's fourth year was begun before Nebuchadrezzar's first was completed. Now that that active, daring, martial prince began to set up for the world's master, God, by his prophet, gives notice that he is his servant, and intimates what work he intends to employ him in, that his growing greatness, which was so formidable to the nations, might not be construed as any reflection upon the power and providence of God in the government of the world. Nebuchadrezzar should not bid so fair for universal monarchy (I should have said universal tyranny) but that God had purposes of his own to serve by him, in the execution of which the world shall see the meaning of God's permitting and ordering a thing that seemed such a reflection on his sovereignty and goodness.

Now in this message we may observe the great pains that had been taken with the people to bring them to repentance, which they are here put in mind of, as an aggravation of their sin and a justification of God in his proceedings against them.

**I.** Jeremiah, for his part, had been a constant preacher among them twenty-three years; he began in the thirteenth year of Josiah, who reigned thirty-one years, so that he prophesied about eighteen or nineteen years in his reign, then in the reign of Jehoahaz, and now four years of Jehoiakim's reign. Note, God keeps an account, whether we do or no, how long we have enjoyed the means of grace; and the longer we have enjoyed them the heavier will our account be if we have not improved them. *These three years* (these three and twenty years) *have I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree.* All this while,

**1.** God had been constant in sending messages to them, as there was occasion for them: "From that time *to this very day the word of the Lord has come into me*, for your use." Though they had the substance of the warning sent them already in the books of Moses, yet, because those were not duly regarded and applied, God sent to enforce them and make them

more particular, that they might be without excuse. Thus God's Spirit was striving with them, as with the old world, <sup><018></sup>Genesis 6:3.

**2.** Jeremiah had been faithful and industrious in delivering those messages. He could appeal to themselves, as well as to God and his own conscience, concerning this: *I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking.* He had declared to them *the whole counsel of God*; he had taken a great deal of care and pains to discharge his thrust in such a manner as might be most likely to win and work upon them. What men are solicitous about and intent upon they rise up early to prosecute. It intimates that his head was so full of thoughts about it, and his heart so intent upon doing good, that it broke his sleep, and made him get up betimes to project which way he might take that would be most likely to do them good. He rose early, both because he would lose no time and because he would lay hold on and improve the best time to work upon them, when, if ever, they were sober and sedate. Christ came *early in the morning* to preach in the temple, and the people as early to hear him, <sup><018></sup>Luke 21:38. Morning lectures have their advantages. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning.*

**II.** Besides him, God had sent them other prophets, on the same errand, v. 4. Of the writing prophets Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, were a little before him, and Zephaniah contemporary with him. But, besides those, there were many other of God's *servants the prophets* who preached awakening sermons, which were never published. And here God himself is said to *rise early and send them*, intimating how much his heart also was upon it, that this people should *turn and live*, and not *go on and die*, <sup><018></sup>Ezekiel 33:11.

**III.** All the messages sent them were to the purpose, and much to the same purport, v. 5, 6.

**1.** They all told them of their faults, *their evil way*, and the *evil of their doings*. Those were not of God's sending who flattered them as if there were nothing amiss among them.

**2.** They all reproved them particularly for their idolatry, as a sin that was in a special manner provoking to God, their *going after other gods*, to *serve them and to worship them*, gods that were *the work of their own hands*.

**3.** They all called on them to repent of their sins and to reform their lives. This was the burden of every song, *Turn you now every one from his evil way*. Note, Personal and particular reformation must be insisted on as necessary to a national deliverance: *every one must turn from his own evil way*. The street will not be clean unless every one sweep before his own door.

**4.** They all assured them that, if they did so, it would certainly be the *lengthening out of their tranquillity*. The mercies they enjoyed should be continued to them: *“You shall dwell in the land, dwell at ease, dwell in peace, in this good land, which the Lord has given you and your fathers. Nothing but sin will turn you out of it, and that shall not if you turn from it.”* The judgments they feared should be prevented: *Provoke me not, and I will do you no hurt*. Note, We should never receive from God the evil punishment if we did not provoke him by the evil of sin. God deals fairly with us, never corrects his children without cause, nor causes grief to us unless we give offence to him.

**IV.** Yet all was to no purpose. They were not wrought upon to take the right and only method to turn away the wrath of God. Jeremiah was a very lively affectionate preacher, yet *they hearkened not* to him, v. 3. The other prophets dealt faithfully with them, but neither did they *hearken to them*, nor *incline their ear*, v. 4. That very particular sin which they were told, of all others, was most offensive to God, and made them obnoxious to his justice, they wilfully persisted in: *You provoke me with the works of your hands to your own hurt*. Note, What is a provocation to God will prove, in the end, hurt to ourselves, and we must bear the blame of it. *O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself*.

## ~~2418~~ JEREMIAH 25:8-14

### DESOLATION PREDICTED

Here is the sentence grounded upon the foregoing charge: *“Because you have not heard my words, I must take another course with you,”* v. 8. Note, When men will not regard the judgments of God's mouth they may expect to feel the judgments of his hands, to hear the rod, since they would not hear the word; for the sinner must either be parted from his sin or perish in it. Wrath comes without remedy against those only that sin

without repentance. It is not so much men's turning aside that ruins them as their not returning.

**I.** The ruin of the land of Judah by the king of Babylon's armies is here decreed, v. 9. God sent to them *his servants the prophets*, and they were not heeded, and therefore God will send for *his servant the king of Babylon*, whom they cannot mock, and despise, and persecute, as they did his servants the prophets. Note, The messengers of God's wrath will be sent against those that would not receive the messengers of his mercy. One way or other God will be heeded, and will make men know that *he is the Lord*. Nebuchadrezzar, though a stranger to the true God, the God of Israel, nay, an enemy to him and afterwards a rival with him, was yet, in the descent he made upon his country. *God's servant*, accomplished his purpose, was employed by him, and was an instrument in his hand for the correction of his people. He was really serving God's designs when he thought he was serving his own ends. Justly therefore does God here call himself *The Lord of hosts* (v. 8), for here is an instance of his sovereign dominion, not only over the inhabitants, but over the armies of this earth, of which he makes what use he pleases. He has them all at his command. The most potent and absolute monarchs are his servants. Nebuchadrezzar, who is an instrument of his wrath, is as truly his servant as Cyrus, who is an instrument of his mercy. The land of Judah being to be made desolate, God here musters his army that is to make it so, gathers it together, takes *all the families of the north*, if there be occasion for them, leads them on as their commander-in-chief, *brings them against this land*, gives them success, not only against Judah and Jerusalem, but against *all the nations round about*, that there might be no dependence upon them as allies or assistants against that threatening force. The utter destruction of this and all the neighbouring lands is here described, v. 9-11. It shall be total: *The whole land shall be a desolation*, not only desolate, but a desolation itself; both city and country shall be laid waste, and all the wealth of both be made a prey of. It shall be lasting, even *perpetual desolations*; they shall continue so long in ruins, and after long waiting there shall appear so little prospect of relief, that every one shall call it perpetual. This desolation shall be the ruin of their credit among their neighbours; it shall bury their honour in the dust, shall *make them an astonishment and a hissing*; every one will be amazed at them, and hiss them off the stage of action with just disgrace for deserting a God who would have been their protection for impostors who would certainly be their destruction. It will likewise be the

ruin of all their comfort among themselves; it shall be a final period of all their joy: *I will take from them the voice of mirth*, hang their harps on the willow-trees, and put them out of tune for songs. *I will take from them the voice of mirth*; they shall neither have cause for it nor hearts for it. They would not hear the voice of God's word and therefore the voice of mirth shall no more be heard among them. They shall be deprived of food: *The sound of the mill-stones shall not be heard*; for, when the enemy has seized their stores, the sound of the grinding must needs be low, <sup>2113</sup>Ecclesiastes 12:4. An end shall be put to all business; there shall not be seen *the light of a candle*, for there shall be no work to be done worth candle-light. And, *lastly*, they shall be deprived of their liberty: *Those nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years*. The fixing of time during which the captivity should last would be of great use, not only for the confirmation of the prophecy, when the event (which in this particular could by no human sagacity be foreseen) should exactly answer the prediction, but for the comfort of the people of God in their calamity and the encouragement of faith and prayer. Daniel, who was himself a prophet, had an eye to it, <sup>2114</sup>Daniel 9:2. Nay, God himself had an eye to it (<sup>482</sup>2 Chronicles 36:22); for *therefore he stirred up the spirit of Cyrus*, that the word spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, which appears by this, that, when he has thought fit, some of them have been made known to his servants the prophets and by them to his church.

**II.** The ruin of Babylon, at last, is here likewise foretold, as it had been, long before, by Isaiah, v. 12-14. The destroyers must themselves be destroyed, and the rod thrown into the fire, when the correcting work is done with it. This shall be done when *seventy years are accomplished*; for the destruction of Babylon must make way for the deliverance of the captives. It is a great doubt when these *seventy years* commence; some date them from the captivity in the fourth year of Jehoiakim and first of Nebuchadrezzar, others from the captivity of Jehoiachin eight years after. I rather incline to the former, because then these nations began *to serve the king of Babylon*, and because usually God has taken the earliest time from which to reckon the accomplishment of a promise of mercy, as will appear in computing the 400 years' servitude in Egypt. And, if so, eighteen or nineteen years of the seventy had run out before Jerusalem and the temple were quite destroyed in the eleventh year of Zedekiah. However that be, when the time, the set time, to favour Zion, has come, the king of Babylon

must be visited, and all the instances of his tyranny reckoned for; then that nation shall be punished *for their iniquity*, as the other nations have been punished for theirs. That land must then be a *perpetual desolation*, such as they had made other lands; for the *Judge of all the earth* will both *do right* and *avenge wrong*, as King of nations and King of saints. Let proud conquerors and oppressors be moderate in the use of their power and success, for it will come at last to their own turn to suffer; their day will come to fall. In this destruction of Babylon, which was to be brought about by the Medes and Persians, reference shall be had,

**1.** To what God had said: *I will bring upon that land all my words*; for all the wealth and honour of Babylon shall be sacrificed to the truth of the divine predictions, and all its power broken, rather than one iota or tittle of God's word shall fall to the ground. The same Jeremiah that prophesied the destruction of other nations by the Chaldeans foretold also the destruction of the Chaldeans themselves; and this must be brought upon them, v. 13. It is with reference to this very event that God says, *I will confirm the word of my servant, and perform the counsel of my messengers,* <sup><2340></sup>Isaiah 44:26.

**2.** Two what they had done (v. 14): *I will recompense them according to their deeds*, by which they transgressed the law of God, even then when they were made to serve his purposes. They had made many nations to serve them, and trampled upon them with the greatest insolence imaginable; but not that the measure of their iniquity is full *many nations and great kings*, that are in alliance with and come in to the assistance of Cyrus king of Persia, shall *serve themselves of them* also, shall make themselves masters of their country, enrich themselves with their spoils, and make them the footstool by which to mount the throne of universal monarchy. They shall make use of them for servants and soldiers. *He that leads into captivity shall go into captivity.*

## <sup><2455></sup>JEREMIAH 25:15-29

### THE CUP OF WRATH

Under the similitude of a cup going round, which all the company must drink of, is here represented the universal desolation that was now coming upon that part of the world which Nebuchadrezzar, who just now began to reign and act, was to be the instrument of, and which should at length

recoil upon his own country. The cup in the vision is to be a sword in the accomplishment of it: so it is explained, v. 16. It is *the sword that I will send among them*, the sword of war, that should be irresistibly strong and implacably cruel.

**I.** As to the circumstances of this judgment, observe,

**1.** Whence this destroying sword should come — *from the hand of God*. It is the *sword of the Lord* (<sup>2476</sup>Jeremiah 47:6), *bathed in heaven*, <sup>2305</sup>Isaiah 34:5. Wicked men are made use of as his sword, <sup>3773</sup>Psalms 17:13. It is the *wine-cup of his fury*. It is the just anger of God that sends this judgment. The nations have provoked him by their sins, and they must fall under the tokens of his wrath. These are compared to some intoxicating liquor, which they shall be forced to drink of, as, formerly, condemned malefactors were sometimes executed by being compelled to drink poison. The wicked are said to *drink the wrath of the Almighty*, <sup>3820</sup>Job 21:20; <sup>640</sup>Revelation 14:10. Their share of troubles in his world is represented by the dregs of a cup of red wine full of mixture, <sup>3758</sup>Psalms 75:8. See <sup>3916</sup>Psalms 11:6. The wrath of God in this world is but as a cup, in comparison of the full streams of it in the other world.

**2.** By whose hand it should be sent to them — by the hand of Jeremiah as the judge *set over the nations* (<sup>2410</sup>Jeremiah 1:10), to pass his sentence upon them, and by the hand of Nebuchadrezzar as the executioner. What a much greater figure then does the poor prophet make than what the potent prince makes, if we look upon their relation to God, though in the eye of the world it was the reverse of it! Jeremiah must *take the cup at God's hand*, and compel the nations *to drink it*. He foretells no hurt to them but what God appoints him to foretell; and what is foretold by a divine authority will certainly be fulfilled by a divine power.

**3.** On whom it should be sent — on all the nations within the verge of Israel's acquaintance and the lines of their communication. Jeremiah took the cup, and *made all the nations to drink of it*, that is, he prophesied concerning each of the nations here mentioned that they should share in this great desolation that was coming. *Jerusalem and the cities of Judah* are put first (v. 18); for *judgment begins at the house of God* (<sup>4007</sup>1 Peter 4:17), at the sanctuary, <sup>2006</sup>Ezekiel 9:6. Whether Nebuchadrezzar had his eye principally upon Jerusalem and Judah in this expedition or no does not appear; probably he had; for it was as considerable as any of the nations

here mentioned. However God had his eye principally to them. And this part of the prophecy was already begun to be accomplished; this is denoted by that melancholy parenthesis (*as it is this day*), for in the fourth year of Jehoiakim things had come into a very bad posture, and all the foundations were out of course. *Pharaoh king of Egypt* comes next, because the Jews trusted to that broken reed (v. 19); the remains of them fled to Egypt, and there Jeremiah particularly foretold the destruction of that country, <sup><2480></sup>Jeremiah 43:10, 11. All the other nations that bordered upon Canaan must pledge Jerusalem in this bitter cup, this cup of trembling. The *mingled people*, the Arabians (so some), some rovers of divers nations that lived by rapine (so others); *the kings of the land of Uz*, joined to the country of the Edomites. The Philistines had been vexatious to Israel, but now their cities and their lords become a prey to this mighty conqueror. Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Zidon, are places well known to border upon Israel; the *Isles beyond, or beside, the sea*, are supposed to be those parts of Phoenicia and Syria that lay upon the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Dedan and the other countries mentioned (v. 23, 24) seem to have lain upon the confines of Idumea and Arabia the desert. Those of Elam are the Persians, with whom the Medes are joined, now looked upon as inconsiderable and yet afterwards able to make reprisals upon Babylon for themselves and all their neighbours. The *kings of the north*, that lay nearer to Babylon, and others that lay at some distance, will be sure to be seized on and made a prey of by the victorious sword of Nebuchadrezzar. Nay, he shall push on his victories with such incredible fury and success that all the kingdoms of the world that were then and there known should become sacrifices to his ambition. Thus Alexander is said to have conquered *the world*, and the Roman empire is called *the world*, <sup><2481></sup>Luke 2:1. Or it may be taken as reading the doom of *all the kingdoms* of the earth; one time or other, they shall feel the dreadful effects of war. The world has been, and will be, a great cockpit, while men's lusts war as they do *in their members*, <sup><2482></sup>James 4:1. But, that the conquerors may see their fate with the conquered, it concludes, *The king of Sheshach shall drink after them*, that is, the king of Babylon himself, who has given his neighbours all this trouble and vexation, shall at length have it return upon his own head. That by Sheshach is meant Babylon is plain from <sup><2483></sup>Jeremiah 51:41; but whether it was another name of the same city or the name of another city of the same kingdom is uncertain. Babylon's ruin was foretold, v. 12, 13. Upon this prophecy of its being the author of the ruin of so many nations it is very fitly repeated here again.

**4.** What should be the effect of it. The desolations which the sword should make in all these kingdoms are represented by the consequences of excessive drinking (v. 16): *They shall drink, and be moved, and be mad. They shall be drunken, and spue, and fall and rise no more*, v. 27. Now this may serve,

**(1.)** To make us loathe the sin of drunkenness, that the consequences of it are made use of to set forth a most woeful and miserable condition. Drunkenness deprives men, for the present, of the use of their reason, makes them mad. It takes from them likewise that which, next to reason, is the most valuable blessing, and that is health; it makes them sick, and endangers the bones and the life. Men in drink often *fall and rise no more*; it is a sin that is its own punishment. How wretchedly are those intoxicated and besotted that suffer themselves at any time to be intoxicated, especially to be by the frequent commission of the sin besotted with wine or strong drink!

**(2.)** To make us dread the judgments of war. When God sends the sword upon a nation, with warrant to make it desolate, it soon becomes like a drunken man, filled with confusion at the alarms of war, put into a hurry; its counsellors *mad*, and at their wits' end, staggering in all the measures they take, all the motions they make, sick at heart with continual vexation, *vomiting up the riches* they have greedily *swallowed down* (<sup><B15></sup>Job 20:15), *falling* down before the enemy, and as unable to get up again, or do any thing to help themselves, as a man *dead drunk is*, <sup><B16></sup>Habakkuk 2:16.

**5.** The undoubted certainty of it, with the reason given for it, v. 28, 29. They will *refuse to take the cup at thy hand*; not only they will be loth that the judgment should come, but they will be loth to believe that ever it will come; they will not give credit to the prediction of so despicable a man as Jeremiah. But he must tell them that it is *the word of the Lord of hosts*, he hath said it; and it is in vain for them to struggle with Omnipotence: *You shall certainly drink*. And he must give them this reason, It is a time of visitation, it is a reckoning day, and Jerusalem has been called to an account already: *I begin to bring evil on the city that is called by my name*; its relation to me will not exempt it from punishment, and *should you be utterly unpunished?* No; *If this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* If those who have some good in them smart so severely for the evil that is found in them, can those expect to escape who have worse evils, and no good, found among them? If Jerusalem be punished

for learning idolatry of the nations, shall not the nations be punished, of whom they learned it? No doubt they shall: *I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth*, for they have helped to debauch the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

**II.** Upon this whole matter we may observe,

- 1.** That there is a God that judges in the earth, to whom all the nations of the earth are accountable, and by whose judgment they must abide.
- 2.** That God can easily bring to ruin the greatest nations, the most numerous and powerful, and such as have been most secure.
- 3.** That those who have been vexatious and mischievous to the people of God will be reckoned with for it at last. Many of these nations had in their turns given disturbance to Israel, but now comes destruction on them. The year of the redeemer will come, even the *year of recompenses* for the controversy of Zion.
- 4.** That the *burden of the word of the Lord* will at last become the burden of his judgments. Isaiah had prophesied long since against most of these nations (Isaiah 13, etc.) and now at length all his prophecies will have their complete fulfilling.
- 5.** That those who are ambitious of power and dominion commonly become the troublers of the earth and the plagues of their generation. Nebuchadrezzar was so proud of his might that he had no sense of right. These are the men that turn the world upside down, and yet expect to be admired and adored. Alexander thought himself a great prince when others thought him no better than a great pirate.
- 6.** That the greatest pomp and power in this world are of very uncertain continuance. Before Nebuchadrezzar's greater force kings themselves must yield and become captives.

## ~~250~~ JEREMIAH 25:30-38

### GENERAL DESOLATION

We have, in these verses, a further description of those terrible desolations which the king of Babylon with his armies should make in all the

countries and nations round about Jerusalem. In Jerusalem God had erected his temple; there were his oracles and ordinances, which the neighbouring nations should have attended to and might have received benefit by; thither they should have applied for the knowledge of God and their duty, and then they might have had reason to bless God for their neighbourhood to Jerusalem; but they, instead of that, taking all opportunities either to debauch or to disturb that holy city, when God came to reckon with Jerusalem because it learned so much of the *way of the nations*, he reckoned with the nations because they learned so little of the way of Jerusalem.

They will soon be aware of Nebuchadrezzar's making war upon them; but the prophet is here directed to tell them that it is God himself that makes war upon them, a God with whom there is no contending.

**1.** The war is here proclaimed (v. 30): *The Lord shall roar from on high; not from Mount Zion and Jerusalem* (as ~~296~~ Joel 3:16, ~~300~~ Amos 1:2), but from *heaven*, from *his holy habitation* there; for now Jerusalem is one of the places against which he roars. *He shall mightily roar upon his habitation* on earth from that above. He has been long silent, and seemed not to take notice of the wickedness of the nations; the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now *he shall give a shout*, as the assailants in battle do, *against all the inhabitants of the earth*, to whom it shall be a shout of terror, and yet a shout of joy in heaven, as theirs that *tread the grapes*; for, when God is reckoning with the proud enemies of his kingdom among men, there is a *great voice of much people heard in heaven, saying, Hallelujah*, ~~691~~ Revelation 19:1. *He roars as a lion* (~~308B~~ Amos 3:4, 8), as a lion that has *forsaken his covert* (v. 38), and is going abroad to seek his prey, upon which he roars, that he may the more easily seize it.

**2.** The manifesto is here published, showing the causes and reasons why God proclaims this war (v. 31): *The Lord has a controversy with the nations*; he has just cause to contend with them, and he will take this way of pleading with them. His quarrel with them is, in one word, for their wickedness, their contempt of him, and his authority over them and kindness to them. *He will give those that are wicked to the sword*. They have provoked God to anger, and thence comes all this destruction; it is *because of the fierce anger of the Lord* (v. 37 and again v. 38), the *fierceness of the oppressor*, or (as it might better be read) *the fierceness of*

*the oppressing sword* (for the word is feminine) is *because of his fierce anger*; and we are sure that he is never angry without cause; but *who knows the power of his anger?*

**3.** The alarm is here given and taken: *A noise will come even to the ends of the earth*, so loud shall it roar, so far shall it reach, v. 31. The alarm is not given by sound of trumpet, or beat of drum, but by a *whirlwind, a great whirlwind, storm, or tempest*, which shall be *raised up from the coasts*, the remote coasts *of the earth*, v. 32. The Chaldean army shall be like a hurricane raised in the north, but thence carried on with incredible fierceness and swiftness, bearing down all before it. It is like the whirlwind out of which God answered Job, which was exceedingly terrible, <sup><330></sup>Job 37:1; 38:1. And, when the wrath of God thus roars like a lion from heaven, no marvel if it be echoed with shrieks from earth; for who can choose but tremble when God thus speaks in displeasure? See <sup><310></sup>Hosea 11:10. Now the shepherds shall *howl and cry*, the kings, and princes, and the great ones of the earth, the *principal of the flock*. They used to be the most courageous and secure, but now their hearts shall fail them; *they shall wallow themselves in the ashes*, v. 34. Seeing themselves utterly unable to make head against the enemy, and seeing their country, which they have the charge of and a concern for, inevitably ruined, they shall abandon themselves to sorrow. There shall be *a voice of the cry of the shepherds*, and *a howling of the principal of the flock shall be heard*, v. 36. Those are great calamities indeed that strike such a terror upon the great men, and put them into this consternation. *The Lord hath spoiled their pasture*, in which they fed their flock, and out of which they fed themselves; the spoiling of that makes them cry-out thus. Perhaps, carrying on the metaphor of a lion roaring, it alludes to the great fright that shepherds are in when they hear a roaring lion coming towards their flocks, and find they have *no way to flee* (v. 35) for their own safety, neither can the *principal of their flock escape*. The enemy will be so numerous, so furious, so sedulous, and the extent of their armies so vast, that it will be impossible to avoid falling into their hands. Note, As we cannot out-face, so we cannot out-run, the judgments of God. This is that for which the shepherds *howl and cry*.

**4.** The progress of this war is here described (v. 32): *Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation*; as the cup goes round, every nation shall have its share and take warning by the calamities of another to repent and reform. Nay, as if this ere to be a little representation of the last and

general judgment, it shall reach *from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth*, v. 33. The day of vengeance is in his heart, and now *his hand shall find out all his enemies*, wherever they are, ~~4208~~ Psalm 21:8. Note, When our neighbour's house is on fire it is time to be concerned for our own. When one nation is a seat of war every neighbouring nation should hear, and fear, and make its peace with God.

**5.** The dismal consequences of this war are here foretold: *The days of slaughter and dispersions are accomplished*, that is, they are fully come (v. 34), the time fixed in the divine counsel for the slaughter of some and the dispersion of the rest, which will make the nations completely desolate. Multitudes shall fall by the sword of the merciless Chaldeans, so that *the slain of the Lord* shall be every where found: they are slain by commission from him, and are sacrificed to his justice. The slain for sin are the *slain of the Lord*. To complete the misery of their slaughter, *they shall not be lamented* in particular, so general shall the matter of lamentation be. Nay, they shall not *be gathered* up, nor *buried*, for they shall have no friends left to bury them, and the enemies shall not have so much humanity in them as to do it; and then they shall be *as dung upon the earth*, so vile and noisome: and it is well if, as dung manures the earth and makes it fruitful, so these horrid spectacles, which lie as monuments of divine justice, might be a means to awaken the inhabitants of the earth to *learn righteousness*. The effect of this war will be the *desolation of the whole land* that is the seat of it (v. 38), one land after another. But here are two expressions more that seem to make the case in a particular manner piteous.

**(1.)** *You shall fall like a pleasant vessel*, v. 34. The most desirable persons among them, who most valued themselves and were most valued, who were looked upon as *vessels of honour*, shall fall by the sword. You shall fall as a Venice glass or a China dish, which is soon broken all to pieces. Even the tender and delicate shall share in the common calamity; the sword devours one as well as another.

**(2.)** *Even the peaceable habitations are cut down*. Those that used to be quiet, and not molested, the habitations in which you have long dwelt in peace, shall now be no longer such, but *cut down* by the war. Or, Those who used to be quiet, and not molesting any of their neighbours, those who lived in peace, easily, and gave no provocation to any, even those shall not escape. This is one of the direful effects of war, that even those

who were most harmless and inoffensive suffer hard things. Blessed be God, there is a *peaceable habitation* above for all the sons of peace, which is out of the reach of fire and sword.