

THE ENEMY GONE

A SERMON

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by Mister JAMES WELLS

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“And it shall come to pass, that everyone that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles.” Zechariah 14:16

IF the Old Testament dispensation were a shadow of good things to come, what is more profitable than to make perpetual reference to that dispensation to illustrate spiritual and eternal things? And if the land of Canaan itself was also a type, a representation of another and a better country, what is more proper than to make from time to time such references to that land as shall instruct us into the ultimate object, the everlasting gospel of the blessed God? And so, this chapter must be either literally or else figuratively or spiritually understood. If we understand it literally, then the meaning is very contracted and very unimportant. The cleaving asunder of the Mount of Olives, if that be taken literally, it seems to me to have a very insignificant meaning; and the people flying to that valley for one does not know what; and then the river, if a literal river, how unimportant! And for the mountains to be levelled round about Jerusalem, I do not know that that would make it more pleasant than it is now, for what would that amount to? Then again, the literal twilight, where would be the use of that? And then, again, “Holiness unto the Lord” on the bells of the horses, where would be the good that? I really myself do not see what importance there is in all this, if it be taken in the literal sense. And yet Millenarian’s tell us that Jesus Christ is coming down to the old Jerusalem, to turn the old Jerusalem into a new one; so that we shall then have two new Jerusalem’s; and that he is coming to do all that literally that is set forth in this same chapter. Now they are very welcome to such childish sort of doctrines. I only say this that there is in the Lord Jesus Christ quite importance enough and quite glories enough to absorb all the similes and figures that can be made use of to set forth the wonders of his eternal salvation. Is there anything that even approaches, is there anything that comes within an infinite distance, I was going to say, in importance to the salvation of the soul? And this salvation of the soul is by Jesus Christ. Is it any wonder, therefore, that such a vast variety of imagery should be used to set forth for our instruction a subject of such infinite importance? And then remember in the next place, that the work of Christ and the life which he brings are everlasting. His salvation is everlasting; His righteousness is not to be abolished, and he dies no more, neither can his people die. Now, with these views, take this chapter spiritually, and then it all falls in as easy as possible. We can see then that the Mount of

Olives would be a natural impediment to the waters getting down to the Dead Sea, but that the Savior's feet should stand upon this mount, and it should cleave in two, and make a way both for the waters to get to the Dead Sea and for the people to get to God. Here we have the Mount of Olives representing sin; Christ comes with the whole weight of his mediatorial work, and sin is cloven asunder, and hereby the mercy of the Lord reaches the Dead Sea of this world, and quickens sinners into eternal life. And as they were to flee to this valley as fleeing from an earthquake, so we fly to God by the way that Christ has opened, as from an earthquake. And then the literal levelling here spoken of must be understood spiritually, that Christ has made everything level, that he has established a spiritual level, that the Christian, by the mediatorial work of Christ, stands on a perfect level with the law of God, with the holiness, justice, glory, and all the perfections of God. "My foot," said David, "stands in an even place." And then as to the river, that also, taken spiritually, will mean the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and the blessings therein contained and brought to us. Thus, it all falls in, and has an infinity and an eternity of meaning and of importance. Therefore, for myself, I have taken, I do take, and I think I always shall take, this chapter, not in the literal, but in the figurative and in the spiritual sense.

Our text presents itself in a threefold form. First, *here is a note of distinction,*" It shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem." The Jerusalem here, of course, means the new Jerusalem, the true city of God; and all the nations are enemies to this city that Abraham looked for; all of us by nature are enemies to the truth of God, to the true Jerusalem; none of us by nature know our way to this city, referred to by the apostle when he said, "Therefore you are no more strangers, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Secondly, *the service of those that are thus left,* "They shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts." Thirdly and lastly, *their joyfulness,* "And to keep the feast of tabernacles."

First, then, I notice *the note of distinction,* "It shall come to pass that every one that is left." Now I think this being left means three things: first, that the enemy has left them; second, that the sword of justice has left them; third that they shall be left in Zion. First, then, here is a people that the enemy has left. It is a very humiliating and a very mortifying truth, but it is no less a truth for that, that Satan has power over every soul of man and woman in the whole universe until the grace of God comes and casts him out. This, I say, is our state. The question then is, has a parting taken place between us and Satan? If so, the enemy has left us; and the world of course, as we shall presently have to notice, has left us, and we, in that sense, have left it. How am I to know whether the enemy and my soul have parted? Well, let us have a circumstance first to help us out with this; a circumstance very likely recorded in the shape and form that it is in order that we may gather from it a lesson of instruction upon this very subject. You recollect the Egyptian that David's servants found in the field, and the man appeared as though he were nearly dead. He said, "I fell sick three days ago, and my master left me." And there you have the record of how David's servants dealt with him; and how this same man, who before this was on the side of the enemies of David, was now brought over to the side of Israel. How the man had fallen sick. It is an awful truth that there is nothing Satan dreads, next to Jesus Christ himself, more than he does to see a man in soul-trouble. Satan is a great enemy to soul-trouble. He keeps the palace, and the goods are in peace; so that until he is cast out of the soul by the power of God, such a one has no real concern about his state; he has no real soul-sickness, no real soul-affliction, no real conviction; he is unconcerned; he is more like a man, as the word of God has it, that attempts to sleep on the top of the mast, or

as one that lies down in the midst of the sea. This subject of soul-trouble is one of the most difficult things to speak upon, and one of the most difficult things in the experience of professed Christians to treat of; because it is clear to me that Satan does sometimes voluntarily go out; and when that is the case that man is in trouble about his soul, that man is concerned for eternal things. He asks, what is to become of me? But mark, Satan is not cast out; he is only gone out, and he takes, as it were, the key of the man's soul, or the key of the town of Mansoul, as John Bunyan expresses it, with him. Now this man is concerned about his state. What does Satan do? He goes to work then to find some false doctrine in order to quiet that man. And if Satan can incline the man to go and hear some of his (Satan's) own ministers, those ministers will settle the man down, and they will say, "Away with your experience; you believe in Jesus Christ, that is quite enough; you rest on him, that is quite enough; trust in him, that is quite enough." Well, says the man, I am happy to hear this; I am happy and comfortable now. Away goes all his trouble, down he settles, and Satan comes back, and brings seven more spirits with him, and makes that man as proud as Satan himself, and sets the man's mind with ten times more determination and strength against God's truth than it was before he made any profession at all. So, the Savior said, "You compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, you make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." See the importance, then, of ascertaining if we know anything of soul-trouble; whether our soul-trouble is real or not; whether it is connected with a conviction of our need of Christ, and of the grace of God as represented by his truth. If so, then I will tell you this, that you will seek God in that soul-trouble; and there is one thing that you will learn, and that one thing that you will learn will be of vast use to you. I am sure I never should have been what I am but for that one thing, and that is this, that while I felt I was guilty, and saw that I was lost, and, as Isaiah expresses it, unclean; yes, as a stronger scripture says, full of wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores; an autumnal leaf, a piece of stubble, could not be more helpless in eternal things than I felt myself to be. When I heard a doing ministry, why, in that case I did all they told me to do as far as I could. I said a great many prayers, and kept my heart and mind, did everything I could, but all this doing left me where it found me. What I wanted was a sight and sense of pardoning mercy. Besides, I began to see there was a people to be saved and a people to be lost. I began to see if sinners were not saved after the order of eternal election, they could not be saved at all. When brought thus far, I could not listen to any but God's own gospel; It must now be a gospel where God is all and in all. Real soul-trouble will thus humble us, and will thus bring us down. The apostle Paul gives another sign of the reality of soul-trouble, that is, a sign of Satan having departed from us, and our being brought to know something of the truth. He says, "If our gospel be hid." Now mark that he does not say, If God be hid; he does not say, if Christ be hid; he does not say, if the Holy Spirit be hid; he does not say, if the church be hid; he does not say if salvation be hid; he does not say, if hell be hid and he does not say if heaven be hid, It is well, it is instructive to notice the very form of expressions sometimes, when these matters of vital importance are brought before us. He said, "If our gospel be hid." Take his first chapter to the Ephesians, as well as many other parts of God's word, and you will see what his gospel was. Take the 17th of John, and take the apostle's testimony when he said, "That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." "If our gospel be hid." Satan cares naught about your knowledge of Christ if you do not know him by God's gospel. And what is the gospel? Why, I can tell you in very few words. We read that the gospel was preached unto Abraham. Now what was the gospel that God preached to Abraham? Did not the everlasting God swear by himself that in blessing he would bless, as sure as he had a being, and that that blessing should be after the order of Melchizedek? after the order of a person who thought it not robbery to be equal with God? For he was equal with God. "If our

gospel be hid.” Notice the expression. There are volumes of instruction in it. “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” God never saved a soul yet only in gospel order. There is but one way of salvation, and that way is the gospel way. “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” If that be true, what becomes of your common, frivolous saying, it is solemn trifling with immortal souls when men say, “We do not mind about doctrine, and we do not preach doctrine.” Why, the word of God never speaks so. There is the gospel, then, to Abraham, the sworn, the yea and amen gospel; and “if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel” (gospel again) “of Christ, who is the image of God,” the representative of God in his covenant counsels and decisions, “should shine unto them.” Now the apostle kindly informs us how he came by the light he had; and I trust most of us are prepared to bear testimony of the same. “God,” he says, “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness.” Now I ask this assembly, one and all, had the passive, chaotic earth, that was “without form, and void,” had that any hand in bringing the light? No. There was the earth “without form, and void,” a good representation of the desolate, solitary, destitute, dead condition of the soul by nature. “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Thus, then, if the enemy has left you, your soul-trouble will bring you down, down, down, till you have not a vestige of creature sovereignty, of creature holiness, of creature wisdom, of creature strength left. You will feel and see what a poor, destitute creature you are. And then the promise picks you up, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of God.” If the enemy has left you, also the light of this glorious gospel; preached to Abraham has shone into your soul, and you can see in that light into the eternity of the gospel, that the provisions of the gospel are everlastingly sure. You will be brought down, down, and down, and then this light shining will enable you distinguish the glorious gospel of God from all other gospels; and these will be standing proofs that the enemy has forsaken you, that you are left of the enemy. You are fallen sick, and if he could have done anything with you, he would have remained with you; but he could not do anything with you, and so he left you. David’s servants found the man, as God’s ministers find out the spiritually sick, and they gave the man some bread, and some figs, and some raisins, and some water; and revived him and cheered him. The man was very timid, just as the soul is, “Can you bring me down to this company?” Why, hitherto I have fought against the God of Israel;

“Against the God that rules the sky,
I fought with hand uplifted high;”

and now you want me to be a soldier in his army. Well, he said, if you will not kill me. Kill you! No, we will not kill you; why, we have given you some figs, and some raisins, and some bread, and some water; is that killing you? No, that is keeping me alive. Well, then, it is a pretty thing to think we are going to kill you. We did not sell you these things, we gave them to you without money and without price. Well, but if you will not kill me yourselves, perhaps you will give me over to the enemy afterwards. So, they took an oath that they would not kill the man, and that they would not give him up to his old master. If your heart is right, stop with us, and God shall be your master, and his way shall be, and his heaven shall be your heaven. So, he brought them down to the company, and they gained the victory, and recovered all they had lost. And you may depend upon it the man joined in the dance as merrily as any of the rest. So, when there is real soul-sickness, Satan leaves the soul, and light comes in, the light of the glorious gospel of God. These

are they that are “left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem.” And of course, the world will leave you in this sense. If, then, the gospel be not hidden from you, if it is lovely in your eyes, pleasing in your ears, sweet to your taste, precious to your soul, it is the Lord that has done this. The enemy has left you, sin has left you, for it was put away by Jesus Christ; death has left you, hell has left you, all your adversaries have virtually left you; you are born of God, and are now in a region, by regeneration, where there is no adversary, nor real or fatal evil occurrent.

But, second, such are left, not only by the enemy, but they are also left by the sword of justice. “Thus said the Lord, The people which were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness, even Israel, when I went to cause him to rest.” Some understand the sword there to be the sword of Pharaoh. Well, that is a truth, they did escape the sword of Pharaoh; but I should rather take that scripture that I am now dealing with, in the 31st of Jeremiah, in a way that will apply to all the people of God. And if I took the sword there literally, it would not apply to all; because it is not true that all the people of God have escaped the sword of the enemy; thousands of the people of God have been cut off by the sword of men as far as the body is concerned; “They shall fall,” said Daniel, “by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days.” And so, they did; yet, as the apostle sings, “we are more than conquerors” through it all; I therefore take the sword there to refer to the angel of death. You are aware that the sword is sometimes spoken of figuratively to represent judgment; and therefore, to be left of the sword is for the sword of judgment to pass by. You recollect that scripture in Zephaniah, “The Lord has taken away your judgments, he has cast out your enemy; the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of you; you shall not see evil anymore.” Now how did the sword leave them? Beautifully; it is beautiful to contemplate. The sword left them by the blood of the lamb; they received the paschal lamb, and sprinkled the blood, and the sword left them. Just so with us, if we are favored to receive Christ Jesus the Lord. And as they sprinkled the blood on the lintel and on the side posts to denote that they were not ashamed to own that it was by the blood of the lamb as God’s own institution, that they were thus exempted; so, if we thus receive the spotless Lamb, place our hope there, then we have escaped the sword of judgment, the sword has left us. Now “they found grace in the wilderness.” Who found grace in the wilderness? The word “grace” there means “favor;” but who were they that found this favor? Those, and those only, that continued to believe in the God of the Hebrews; those that held fast the covenant of their God; those that abode by him, and saw and understood that it was God himself that brought them out of Egypt; and that the daily manna and the water from the rock were from his hand; and that their victory over the Amalekites, and over all their enemies, serpents and scorpions, hunger and thirst, or whatever it might be, was of God. Hence, said Moses at the end of his journey, “You that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you unto this day.” I cannot set this forth as I could wish, but the idea is this, that those who continued to believe, they had their rebellions in other respects, as well as other people, and they had their faults as well as other people, for “there is not a just man upon the earth that does good, and sins not.” Ministers are very proud sometimes in setting forth the Christian as though he were a sinless creature almost quite as good as Christ himself; but there is not a real Christian in all the world that would answer to such a description, and none but a downright deceived man would pretend to any such thing. But at the same time, while they had their faults, they held fast God’s truth, and God kept them from the adversary, and from ten thousand things that others fell into. And so, standing fast in God’s truth, what was there the Lord did not do that was essential to their welfare? Why, some of the right-minded would say, “Some of you do not like this manna; why, you could not have had better food. See what a wretched lot we were when we came out of Egypt; we had been eating

onions and leeks, and out of the flesh-pots: what a wretched looking lot we were! One was a leper, another had this disease, and another the other, a wretched lot altogether. But since we have been eating this pure manna and drinking this pure water, my spots are gone, my disease has gone, my head is clear, my heart light, and my hand nimble, and my foot active; I am a new creature altogether. Ah, what does not the manna of heaven do for us! When the Lord is pleased to give us a little manna, we are indeed ready then to bless his holy name that he forgives all our iniquities, heals all our diseases, redeems our life from destruction, crowns us with loving kindnesses and with tender mercies. "The people who were left of the sword found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went." I like that expression. They could not find it before. The Lord said, "When I went," not before: He steps in, shows the tree, sweetens the bitter waters; he steps in, smites the rock, out rush the waters; he steps in, down comes the manna; he steps in, back rolls the Jordan, down fall the walls of Jericho, and they march on to dignity and glory. "They found grace in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went." The Savior said, "I will come unto you, I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice;" so, "When I went to cause him to rest." And where did God cause his own people to rest? Why, in himself. "O Lord, you have been our dwelling-place in all generations." He is the rest; resting in his love.

It is the lot of some of us to stand amazed at some of the dealings of the most high God in what he suffers and in what he does. We are driven sometimes to our wits' end. The very things you prayed for, something just flatly contradictory you have in place of them; the very mercies and favors that you have agonized for are not only withheld, but something comes as reverse as anything can well be. Why, here is the testimony of Job, that "Job was a perfect man and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil." You would have thought, from such a testimony as that that something good would fall upon him. Instead of that, his property and his family are swept away. Mysterious! Mysterious! But then God sees the end from the beginning. And when you read in the first verse of the ninth of the Acts, "Saul, yet breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," Ah, say you, something will follow soon; he will be cut down presently; he will be in hell before long. Instead of that, the Savior stops him in mercy, directs him to Damascus, sends a messenger to him, raises him up, and makes him the greatest preacher that ever lived. Mysterious! Very mysterious! Depend upon it the poet was right:

"Chained to his throne a volume lies,
With all the fates of men;
With every angel's form and size,
Drawn by the eternal pen."

We are therefore made to feel sometimes many difficulties; crooks that can be made straight only when he comes; rough places that can be smoothed only when he comes; and clouds that seem charged with deadly electricity, ready to flash their fatal contents upon us and destroy what little hope we have, these clouds will lower and murmur over our heads until he shall come, pass the clouds off, and Jesus, as the Sun of righteousness, shall be unto us as a morning without clouds. The Lord, then, will not allow his people to rest anywhere but in himself. I dare to say some of you that are getting on pretty well in the world, think when you get as much property as you mean to get, dear me! what a happy man you will be. That is the natural feeling. I shall retire then; I shall be this and that and the other. What a mistake that is! You just ask some of those that have been so favored, and they will tell you this: Well, brother, when I was prospering, I had food and

raiment, and a place for my head, and my chief comfort was then in the Lord; and now I do not need any more, and have enough to serve me for my lifetime, I find now that my real comfort is in the Lord. Depend upon it, if we cherish the idea of finding any cistern that will not be broken, any creature thing that will not fail, we shall deceive ourselves; but in looking to the Lord, however mysterious many of his dealings are, it shall come right at last.

But, thirdly, they shall be left in Zion. You see our sermon this morning is only an introduction, for these things have detained me, and I could not help dwelling upon them. Now I question whether there is a Christian man or woman under the canopy of heaven that has read the following scriptures without some degree of solemn feeling: "They shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend." Ah, shall I be one? I am offensive to myself, and perhaps I am offensive to him. "And them which do iniquity." Ah, perhaps I am one; not understanding what that iniquity is that it means any of the systems of hostility to God's truth, called "workers of iniquity." The child of God reads that with a solemn feeling. Then, again, "Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up." You know it is commonly said, we hear it in every pulpit, "Him that comes to me I will in no way cast out." Well, numbers of sermons have been preached upon that text, and they tell us that Jesus Christ will not cast out one that comes to him. Now is that true? I think not. We're not the five foolish virgins cast out? Did not they come? We're not the murmurers in the vineyard cast out? and did not they come to the work? And many others. "Many will say in that day, Lord, have we not done wonderful works in your name?" and he shall cast them out. When we mention that scripture, "Him that comes to me I will, in no way cast out," we should always quote the whole verse. Do not put that asunder that God has joined together. It reads thus: "All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and him that comes to me I will in no way cast out." "Him" so given to me by my father, "that comes to me I will in no way cast out." If I am not handed over to Christ by God the Father, Jesus Christ will receive me from no one else's hands. He received us from the hands of the Father from eternity, and he will receive us now from no one else's hands. And I will tell you something else; our God will receive the people at the last into heaven at no one else's hands but at the hands of Jesus Christ; and if he does not present us, no one else can; he will receive no one else. "All that the Father gives me;" how shall we know they are given of the Father? Go back to what I have said, "If our gospel be hid." You know what is said in the 54th of Isaiah. Now that is a new covenant, high doctrine, hyper-Calvinist chapter, and it is in that chapter that it said, "All your children shall be taught of the Lord." And yet, according to men, they are not to be taught the high and dreadful doctrines, as they consider them that are in that chapter. Well, that is fine logic certainly. So, then, if the Father has given me to Christ, he will bring me into submission to the gospel. No man can know the Son after a gospel order but he to whom the Father has revealed him; and when the Father shines into the soul, and opens up by the Holy Spirit his eternal counsels, then that soul comes into the hands of Christ after the due order; such shall never, no, never be cast out.

Now, "every one that is left of all the nations." Let us again notice in conclusion some of the characteristics of those he will not cast out, "I will leave in the midst of you an affected and poor people." I have heard that quoted this way; "I will leave in the midst of you a poor and afflicted people; but it does not say so. There is a great difference between the two. "I will leave in the midst of you an afflicted and poor people." Let the affliction stand first. 33rd of Job; there is a man in deep affliction; "his soul draws near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers." In steps "a messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand; deliver him from going down to the pit; I have

found a ransom. Here is a man in spiritual affliction. I cannot work; and I cannot work at the gospel, and I cannot eat anything that is gospel, for they could not eat till Samuel came and blessed the sacrifice. Here then the Father brings you down into submission; this is the way that he gives the soul to Christ. "I will leave in the midst of you an afflicted and poor people." Well! Then, after that they get a little bit rich again, and a little bit consequential; then comes some bodily affliction, some family affliction, something or other to bring them down. Ah, I was getting on very comfortably; this is dreadful. But so, it is. "By terrible things", terrible to flesh and blood, "in righteousness will you answer us, O God of our salvation." It is to keep you spiritually poor in yourself, that you may not grow too proud for the riches of his grace. "And they shall trust in the name of the Lord;" in the name of the God of Abraham Isaac, and Jacob. "This is my name, and this is my memorial forever. These are they that he will not cast out. If I may trespass on your patience a moment longer, the dear Savior describes in the 6th of Luke very beautifully those that he will not cast out. He looked on his disciples; and one can almost imagine Andrew saying before the Savior spoke, Well, John, the Master is looking hard at us, I am afraid to look up, such a poor creature as I am. So am I, says Peter. So am I, says Philp. And so am I, says Thomas, such an unbelieving heart as I have, won't believe anything unless I can see it. I try to believe, but I can't believe all he says, somehow or another. We are all poor creatures together. He is looking very sternly upon us; there is something coming; we had better pack up and be off. "And he said, blessed", Well, come, that is a very different beginning from what we expected, "blessed be you poor." Why, that is the very reason we thought he, would not have us; and that is the very reason, then, he won't send us away, "Blessed be you poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you that hunger now: for you shall be filled. Blessed are you that Weep now: for you shall laugh. Blessed are you when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice you in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets." But "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers unto the false prophets." So then, bless the Lord, he will never cast away the poor and the needy.

How great, then, the distinction that I have feebly set before you this morning! First, to be severed from the enemy; second, to escape the sword of justice; third, to be left in Zion, never to be sent out. The Lord will never send us out of his house; the sons of God reside in his house forever. May the Lord lead us more and more into these great mysteries, for his name's sake.