

# CHAPTER 7

In this chapter the approaching ruin of the land of Israel is most particularly foretold in affecting expressions often repeated, that if possible they might be awakened by repentance to prevent it. The prophet must tell them,

- I.** That it will be a final ruin, a complete utter destruction, which would make an end of them, a miserable end (v. 1-6).
- II.** That it is an approaching ruin, just at the door (v. 7-10).
- III.** That it is an unavoidable ruin, because they had by sin brought it upon themselves (v. 10-15).
- IV.** That their strength and wealth should be no fence against it (v. 16-19).
- V.** That the temple, which they trusted in, should itself be ruined (v. 20-22).
- VI.** That it should be a universal ruin, the sin that brought it having been universal (v. 23-27).

## ~~207~~ EZEKIEL 7:1-15

### THE DESOLATION OF ISRAEL

We have here fair warning given of the destruction of the land of Israel, which was now hastening on apace. God, by the prophet, not only sends notice of it, but will have it inculcated in the same expressions, to show that the thing is certain, that it is near, that the prophet is himself affected with it and desires they should be so too, but finds them deaf, and stupid, and unaffected. When the town is on fire men do not seek for fine words and quaint expressions in which to give an account of it, but cry about the streets, with a loud and lamentable voice, "Fire! fire!" So the prophet here proclaims, *An end! an end! it has come, it has come; behold, it has come. He that hath ears to hear let him hear.*

**I.** *An end has come, the end has come* (v. 2), and again (v. 3, 6), *Now has the end come upon thee* — the end which all their wickedness had a

tendency to, and which God had often told them it would come to at last, when by his prophets he had asked them, *What will you do in the end hereof?* — the end which all the foregoing judgments had been working towards, as means to bring it about (their ruin shall now be completed) — or *the end*, that is, the period of their state, the final destruction of their nation, as the deluge was *the end of all flesh*, <sup>(1613)</sup>Genesis 6:13. They had flattered themselves with hopes that they should shortly *see an end* of their troubles. “Yea,” says God, “*An end has come*, but a miserable one, not *the expected end*” (which is promised to the pious remnant among them, <sup>(241)</sup>Jeremiah 29:11); “*it is the end, that end* which you have been so often warned of, *that last end* which Moses wished you to *consider* (<sup>(1529)</sup>Deuteronomy 32:29), and which, because *Jerusalem remembered not, therefore she came down wonderfully*,” <sup>(210)</sup>Lamentations 1:9. This end was long in coming, but *now it has come*. Though the ruin of sinners comes slowly, it comes surely. “*It has come; it watches for thee, ready to receive thee.*” This perhaps looks further, to the last destruction of that nation by the Romans, which that by the Chaldeans was an earnest of; and still further to the final destruction of the world of the ungodly. *The end of all things is at hand*; and Jerusalem's last end was a type of *the end of the world*, <sup>(1418)</sup>Matthew 24:3. Oh that we could all see that end of time and days very near, and the end of our own time and days much nearer, that we may secure a happy lot *at the end of the days!* <sup>(2713)</sup>Daniel 12:13. This *end comes upon the four corners of the land*. The ruin, as it shall be final, so it shall be total; no part of the land shall escape; no, not that which lies most remote. Such will the destruction of the world be; all these things shall be dissolved. Such will the destruction of sinners be; none can avoid it. *Oh that the wickedness of the wicked might come to an end*, before it bring them to *an end!*

**II.** *An evil, an only evil, behold, has come*, v. 5. Sin is *an evil, an only evil, an evil* that has no good in it; it is the worst of evils. But this is spoken of the evil of trouble; it is *an evil, one evil*, and that one shall suffice to affect and complete the ruin of the nation; there needs no more to do its business; this one shall *make an utter end*, affliction needs not *rise up a second time*, <sup>(3109)</sup>Nahum 1:9. It is *an evil* without precedent or parallel, *an evil* that stands alone; you cannot produce such another instance. It is to the impenitent *an evil, an only evil*; it hardens their hearts and irritates their corruptions, whereas there were those to whom it was sanctified by the grace of God and made a means of much good; they were

sent into Babylon for their good, <sup><2415></sup>Jeremiah 24:5. The wicked have the dregs of that cup to drink which to the righteous is full of mixtures of mercy, <sup><1788></sup>Psalms 75:8. The same affliction is to us either a half evil or an only evil according as we conduct ourselves under it and make use of it. But when an end, the end, has come upon the wicked world, then an evil, an only evil, comes upon it, and not till then. The sorest of temporal judgments have their allays, but the torments of the damned are an evil, an only evil.

**III.** *The time has come*, the set time, for the inflicting of this only evil and the making of this full end; for to all God's purposes *there is a time*, a proper time, and that prefixed, in which the purpose shall have its accomplishment; particularly the time of reckoning with wicked people, and rendering to them according to their desserts, is fixed, *the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of god*; and *he sees*, whether we see it or no, that *his day is coming*. This they are here told of again and again (v. 10): *Behold, the day that has lingered so long has come at last, behold, it has come. The time has come, the day draws near, the day of trouble is near*, v. 7, 12. Though threatened judgments may be long deferred, yet they shall not be dropped; the time for executing them will come. Though God's patience may put them off, nothing but man's sincere repentance and reformation will put them by. *The morning has come unto thee* (v. 7), and again (v. 10), *The morning has gone forth*; the day of trouble dawns, the day of destruction is already begun. *The morning* discovers that which was hidden; they thought their secret sins would never come to light, but now they will be brought to light. They used to try and execute malefactors in the morning, and such a morning of judgment and execution is now coming upon them, *a day of trouble to sinners, the year of their visitation*. See how stupid these people were, that, though the day of their destruction was already begun, yet they were not aware of it, but must be thus told of it again and again. *The day of trouble*, real trouble, *is near, and not the sounding again of the mountains*, that is, not a mere echo or report of troubles, as they were willing to think it was, nothing but a groundless surmise; as if the *men that came against them* were but *the shadow of the mountains* (as Zebul suggested to Gaal, <sup><1038></sup>Judges 9:36) and the intelligence they received were but *an empty sound*, reverberated from the mountains. No; the trouble is not a fancy, and so you will soon find.

**IV.** All this comes from God's wrath, not allayed, as sometimes it has been, with mixtures of mercy. This is the fountain from which all these calamities flow; and this is *the wormwood and the gall in the affliction and the misery*, which make it bitter indeed (v. 3): *I will send my anger upon thee*. Observe, God is Lord of his anger; it does not break out but when he pleases, nor fasten upon any but as he directs it and gives it commission. The expression rises higher (v. 8): *Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee in full vials, and accomplish my anger*, all the purposes and all the products of it, *upon thee*. This wrath does not single out here and there one to be made examples, but it is *upon all the multitude thereof* (v. 12, 14); the whole body of the nation has become a *vessel of wrath, fitted for destruction*. God does sometimes *in wrath remember mercy*, but now he says, *My eye shall not spare thee, neither will I have pity*, v. 4 and again v. 9. Those shall *have judgment without mercy* who made light of mercy when it was offered them.

**V.** All this is the just punishment of their sins, and it is what they have by their own folly brought upon themselves. This is much insisted on here, that they might be brought to justify God in all he had brought upon them. God never sends his anger but in wisdom and justice; and therefore it follows, "*I will judge thee according to thy ways*, v. 3. I will examine what thy ways have been, compare them with the law, and then deal with thee according to the merit of them, and *recompense* them to *thee*," v. 4. Note, In the heaviest judgments God inflicts upon sinners he does but *recompense their own ways upon them*; they are beaten with their own rod. And, when God comes to reckon with a sinful people, he will bring every provocation to account: "*will recompense upon thee all thy abominations* (v. 3); and now *thy iniquity shall be found to be hateful* (<sup>186</sup>Psalm 36:2) *and thy abominations shall be in the midst of thee*" (v. 4); that is, the secret wickedness shall now be brought to light, and that shall appear to have been in the midst of thee which before was not suspected; and thy sin shall now become an *abomination* to thyself. So the abomination of iniquity will be when it comes to be an *abomination of desolation*, <sup>425</sup>Matthew 24:15. Or, *Thy abominations* (that is, the punishments of them) *shall be in the midst of thee*; they shall *reach to thy heart*. See <sup>248</sup>Jeremiah 4:18. Or therefore *God will not spare, nor have pity*, because, even when he is *recompensing their ways* upon them, yet *in their distress they trespass yet more*; their *abominations* are still *in the midst of them*, indulged and harboured in their hearts. It is repeated again

(v. 8, 9), *I will judge thee, I will recompense thee*. Two sins are particularly specified as provoking God to bring these judgments upon them — pride and oppression.

**1.** God will humble them by his judgments, for they have magnified themselves. *The rod of affliction has blossomed*, but it was *pride* that *budded*, v. 10. What buds in sin will blossom in some judgment or other. The pride of Judah and Jerusalem appeared among all orders and degrees of men, as buds upon the tree in spring.

**2.** Their enemies shall deal hardly with them, for they have dealt hardly with one another (v. 11): *Violence has risen up into a rod of wickedness*; that is, their injuriousness to one another is protected and patronised by the power of the magistrate. The rod of government had become a *rod of wickedness*, to such a degree of impudence was *violence risen up*. *I saw the place of judgment, that wickedness was there*, <sup>2186</sup>Ecclesiastes 3:16; <sup>2187</sup>Isaiah 5:7. Whatever are the fruits of God's judgments, it is certain that our sin is the root of them.

**VI.** There is no escape from these judgments nor fence against them, for they shall be universal and shall bear down all before them, without remedy.

**1.** Death in its various shapes shall ride triumphantly, both in town and in country, both within the city and without it, v. 15. Men shall be safe nowhere; for *he that is in the field shall die by the sword* (every field shall be to them a field of battle) *and he that is in the city*, though it be a holy city, yet it shall not be his protection, but *famine and pestilence shall devour him*. Sin had abounded both in city and country, *Iliacos intra muros peccator et extra* — *Trojans and Greeks offend alike*; and therefore among both desolations are made.

**2.** None of those that are marked for death shall escape: There *shall none of them remain*. None of those proud oppressors that did violence to their poor neighbours with *the rod of wickedness*, none of them shall be left, but they shall be all swept away by the desolation that is coming (v. 11): *None of their multitude*, that is, of the rabble, whom they set on to do mischief, and to countenance them in doing it, to cry, “Crucify, crucify,” when they were resolved on the destruction of any, *none of them shall remain, nor any of theirs*; their families shall all be destroyed, and neither root nor branch left them. This multitude, this mob, divine vengeance will in a

particular manner fasten upon; *for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof* (v. 12, 14) and *the vision was touching the whole multitude thereof* (v. 13), the bulk of the common people. The judgments coming shall carry them away by wholesale, and they shall neither secure themselves nor their masters whose creatures and tools they were. God's judgments, when they come with commission, cannot be overpowered by multitudes. *Though hand join in hand, yet shall not the wicked go unpunished.*

**3.** Those that fall shall not be lamented (v. 11): *There shall be no wailing for them*, for there shall be none left to bewail them, but such as are hastening apace after them. And the times shall be so bad that men shall rather congratulate than lament the death of their friends, as reckoning those happy that are taken away from seeing these desolations and sharing in them, <sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 16:4, 5.

**4.** They shall not be able to make any resistance. The decree has gone forth, and *the vision concerning them shall not return*, v. 13. God will not reveal it, and they cannot defeat it; and therefore it *shall not return re infecta* — *without having accomplished any thing*, but shall *accomplish that for which he sends it*. God's word will take place, and then,

**(1.)** Particular persons cannot make their part good against God: No man *shall strengthen himself in the iniquity of his life*; it will be to no purpose for sinners to set God and his judgments at defiance as they used to do. *None ever hardened his heart against God and prospered*. Those that strengthen themselves in their wickedness will be found not only to weaken, but to ruin, themselves, <sup><457></sup>Psalms 52:7.

**(2.)** *The multitude* cannot resist the torrent of these judgments, nor make head against them (v. 14): *They have blown the trumpet*, to call their soldiers together, and to animate and encourage those whom they have got together, and thus they think *to make all ready*; but all in vain; none enlist themselves, or those that do have not courage to face the enemy. Note, If God be against us, none can be for us to do us any service.

**5.** They shall have no hope of the return of their prosperity, with which to support themselves in their adversity; they shall have given up all for gone; and therefore, “*Let not the buyer rejoice that he is increasing his estate and has become a purchaser; nor let the seller mourn that he is lessening his estate and has become a bankrupt,*” v. 12. See the vanity of the things of this world, and how worthless they are — that in a time of

trouble, when we have most need of them, we may perhaps make least account of them. Those that have sold are the more easy, having the less to lose, and those that have bought have but increased their own cares and fears. Because *the fashion of this world passes away*, let *those that buy be as though they possessed not*, because they know not how soon they may be dispossessed, <sup><417></sup>1 Corinthians 7:29-31. It is added (v. 13), “*The seller shall not return, at the year of jubilee, to that which is sold*, according to the law, though he should escape the sword and pestilence, and live till that year comes; for no inheritances shall be enjoyed here till the seventy years be accomplished, and then men shall return to their possessions, shall claim and have their own again.” In the belief of this, Jeremiah, about this time, *bought his uncle's field*, yet, according to the charge, the buyer did not rejoice, but complain, <sup><425></sup>Jeremiah 32:25.

**6.** God will be glorified in all: “*You shall know that I am the Lord* (v. 4), *that I am the Lord that smiteth*, v. 9. You look at second causes, and think it is Nebuchadnezzar that smites you, but you shall be made to know he is but the staff: it is the hand of the Lord that smiteth you, and who knows the weight of his hand?” Those who would not know it was the *Lord that did them goo* shall be made to know it is *the Lord that smiteth* them; for, one way or other, he will be owned.

## <sup><376></sup>EZEKIEL 7:16-22

### THE DESOLATION OF ISRAEL

We have attended the fate of those that are cut off, and are now to attend the flight of those that have an opportunity of escaping the danger; some of them *shall escape* (v. 16), but what the better? As good die once as, in a miserable life, die a thousand deaths, and escape only like Cain to be *fugitives and vagabonds*, and afraid of being slain by every one they meet; so shall these be.

**I.** They shall have no comfort or satisfaction in their own minds, but be in continual anguish and terror; for, wherever they go, they carry about with them guilty consciences, which make them a burden to themselves.

**1.** They shall be always solitary and under prevailing melancholy; they shall not be in the cities, or places of concourse, but all alone *upon the*

*mountains*, not caring for society, but shy of it, as being ashamed of the low circumstances to which they are reduced.

**2.** They shall be always sorrowful. Those have reason to be so that are under the tokens of God's displeasure; and God can make those so that have been most jovial and have set sorrow at defiance. Those that once thought themselves as the lions of the mountains, so daring were they, now become as the *doves of the valleys*, so timid are they, and so dispirited, ready to *flee when none pursues* and to tremble at the shaking of a leaf. They are all of them mourning (not with a *godly sorrow*, but with the *sorrow of the world*, which works death), *every one for his iniquity*, that is, for those calamities which they now see their iniquity has brought upon them, not only the iniquity of the land, but their own: they shall then be brought to acknowledge what they have each of them contributed to the national guilt. Note, Sooner or later sin will have sorrow of one kind or other; and those that will not repent of their iniquity may justly be left to pine away in it; those that will not mourn for it as it is an offence to God shall be made to mourn for it as it is a shame and ruin to themselves, to *mourn at the last, when the flesh and the body are consumed, and to say, How have I hated instruction!* <sup><2011></sup>Proverbs 5:11, 12.

**3.** They shall be deprived of all their strength of body and mind (v. 17): *All hands shall be feeble*, so that they shall not be able to fight, or defend themselves, and *all knees shall be weak as water*, so that they shall neither be able to flee nor to stand their ground; they shall feel a universal colligation: their knees *shall flow as water*, so that they must fall of course. Note, It is folly for the *strong man to glory in his strength*, for God can soon weaken it.

**4.** They shall be deprived of all their hopes and shall abandon themselves to despair (v. 18); they shall have nothing to hold up their spirits with; their aspects shall show what are their prospects, all dreadful, for they shall *gird themselves with sackcloth*, as having no expectation ever to wear better clothing. *Horror shall cover them, and shame, and baldness*, all the expressions of a desperate sorrow, <sup><2071></sup>Isaiah 17:11. Note, Those that will not be kept from sin by fear and shame shall by fear and shame be punished for it; such is the confusion that sin will end in.

**II.** They shall have no benefit from their wealth and riches, but shall be perfectly sick of them, v. 19. Those that were reduced to this distress were



such as had had abundance of *silver and gold*, money, and plate, and jewels, and other valuable goods, from which they promised themselves a great deal of advantage in times of public trouble. They thought their wealth would be *their strong city*, that with it they could bribe enemies and buy friends, that it would be the ransom of their lives, that they could never want bread as long as they had money, and that *money would answer all things*; but see how it proved.

**1.** Their wealth had been a great temptation to them in the *day of their prosperity*; they set their affections upon it, and put their confidence in it. By their eager pursuit of it they were drawn into sin, and by their plentiful enjoyment of it they were hardened in sin; and thus it was the stumbling-block of their iniquity; it occasioned their falling into sin and obstructed their return to God. Note, There are many whose wealth is their snare and ruin. The gaining of the world is the losing of their souls; it makes them proud, secure, covetous, oppressive, voluptuous; and that which, it well used, might have been the servant of their piety, being abused, becomes *the stumbling-block of their iniquity*.

**2.** It was no relief to them now in the day of their adversity; for,

**(1.)** Their *gold and silver* could not protect them from the judgments of God. They *shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord*; they shall not serve to atone his justice, or turn away his wrath, nor to screen them from the judgments he is bringing upon them. Note, *Riches profit not in the day of wrath*, <sup>2014</sup>Proverbs 11:4. They neither set them so high that god's judgments cannot reach them nor make them so strong that they cannot conquer them. There is a day of wrath coming, when it will appear that men's wealth is utterly unable to deliver them or do them any service. What the better was the rich man for his full barns when his soul was required of him, or that other rich man for his *purple, and scarlet, and sumptuous fare*, when in hell he could not procure a drop of water to *cool his tongue*? Money is no defence against the arrests of death, nor any alleviation to the miseries of the damned.

**(2.)** Their *gold and silver* could not give them any content under their calamities.

**[1.]** They could not fill their bowels; when there was no bread left in the city, none to be had for love or money, their silver and gold could not satisfy their hunger, nor serve to make one meal's meat for them. Note, We

could better be without mines of gold than fields of corn; the products of the earth, which may easily be gathered from the surface of it, are much greater blessings to mankind than its treasures, which are with so much difficulty and hazard dug out of its bowels. If God give us daily bread, we have reason to be thankful, and no reason to complain, though silver and gold we have none.

[2.] Much less could they satisfy their souls, or yield them any inward comfort. Note, The wealth of this world has not that in it which will answer the desires of the soul, or be any satisfaction to it in a day of distress. *He that loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver*, much less he that loses it.

(3.) Their *gold and silver shall be thrown into the streets*, either by the hands of the enemy, who shall have more spoil than they care for or can carry away (silver shall be nothing accounted of; they shall *cast that in the streets*; but the *gold*, which is more valuable, shall be removed and brought to Babylon); or they themselves shall *throw away their silver and gold*, because it would be an incumbrance to them and retard their flight, or because it would expose them and be a temptation to the enemy to cut their throats for their money, or in indignation at it, because, after all the care and pains they had taken to scrape it together and hoard it up, they found that it would stand them in no stead, but do them a mischief rather. Note, *The world passes away, and the lusts thereof*, <sup><4017></sup>1 John 2:17. The time may come when worldly men will be as weary of their wealth as now they are wedded to it, when those will fare best that have least.

**III.** God's temple shall stand them in no stead, v. 20-22. This they had prided themselves in, and promised themselves security from (<sup><2410></sup>Jeremiah 7:4; <sup><3311></sup>Micah 3:11); but this confidence of theirs shall fail them. Observe,

**1.** The great honour God had done to that people in setting up his sanctuary among them (v. 20): *As for the beauty of his ornament, that holy and beautiful house*, where *they and their fathers praised God* (<sup><2611></sup>Isaiah 64:11), which was therefore beautiful because holy (it was called the *beauty of holiness*, and holiness is the beauty of its ornament; it was also adorned with gold and gifts) — as for this, *he set it in majesty*; every thing was contrived to make it magnificent, that it might help to make the people of Israel the more illustrious among their neighbours. *He built his*

sanctuary like high palaces, <sup><3889></sup>Psalm 78:69. It was a *glorious high throne from the beginning*, <sup><2472></sup>Jeremiah 17:12. But,

2. Here is the great dishonour they had done to God in profaning his sanctuary; they *made the images of their* counterfeit deities, which they set up in rivalry with God, and which are here called *their abominations* and *their detestable things* (for so they were to God, and so they should have been to them), and these they set up in God's temple, than which a greater affront could not be put upon him. And therefore,

3. It is here threatened that they shall be deprived of the temple, and it shall be no succour to them: *Therefore have I set it far from them*, that is, sent them far from it, so that it is out of the reach of their services and they are out of the reach of its influences. Note, God's ordinances, and the privileges of a profession of religion, will justly be taken away from those that despise and profane them. Nay, they shall not only be kept at a distance from the temple, but the temple itself shall be involved in the common desolation (v. 21); the Chaldeans, who are *strangers*, and therefore have no veneration for it, who are *the wicked of the earth*, and therefore have an antipathy to it, shall *have it for a prey* and for a *spoil*; all the ornaments and treasures of it shall fall into their hands, who will make no difference between that and other plunder. This was a grief to the saints in Zion, who complained of nothing so much as of that which *the enemy did wickedly in the sanctuary* (<sup><3918></sup>Psalm 74:3); but it was the punishment of the sinners in Zion, who, by profaning the temple with *strange gods*, provoked God to suffer it to be profaned by *strange nations*, and to *turn his face from those that did it* as if he had not seen them and their crimes and from those that deprecated it as not regarding them and their prayers. Let the soldiers do as they will; let them *enter into the secret place*, into the holy of holies, as robbers; let them strip it, let them pollute it; its defence has departed, and then farewell all its glory. Note, Those are unworthy to be honoured with the form of godliness who will not be governed by the power of godliness.

## <sup><3023></sup>EZEKIEL 7:23-27

### THE DESOLATION OF ISRAEL

Here is,

**I.** The prisoner arraigned: *Make a chain*, in which to drag the criminal to the bar, and set him before the tribunal of divine justice; let him stand in fetters (as a notorious malefactor), stand pinioned to receive his doom. Note, Those that break the bands of God's law *asunder*, and *cast away those cords from them*, will find themselves bound and held by the chains of his judgments, which they cannot break nor cast from them. The chain signified the siege of Jerusalem, or the slavery of those that were carried into captivity, or that they were all bound over to the righteous judgment of God, *reserved in chains*.

**II.** The indictment drawn up against the prisoner: *The land is full of bloody crimes*, full of *the judgments of blood* (so the word is), that is, of the guilt of blood which they had shed under colour of justice and by forms of law, with the solemnity of a judgment. The innocent blood which Manasseh shed, probably thus shed, by the *judgment of the blood*, was the measure-filling sin of Jerusalem, ~~1220\*~~ 2 Kings 24:4. Or, It is full of such crimes as by the law were to be punished with death, *the judgment of blood*. Idolatry, blasphemy, witchcraft, Sodomy, and the like, were *bloody crimes*, for which particular sinners were to die; and therefore, when they had become national, there was no remedy but the nation must be cut off. Note, Bloody crimes will be punished with bloody judgments. *The city*, the city of David, the holy city, that should have been the pattern of righteousness, the protector of it, and the punisher of wrong, *is now full of violence*; the rulers of that city, having greater power and reputation, are greater oppressors than any others. This was sadly to be lamented. *How has the faithful city become a harlot!*

**III.** Judgment given upon this indictment. God will reckon with them not only for the profaning of his sanctuary, but for the perverting of justice between man and man; for, as *holiness becomes his house*, so the *righteous Lord loves righteousness* and is the avenger of unrighteousness. Now the judgment given is,

**1.** That since they had walked in the way of the heathen, and done worse than they, God would *bring the worst of the heathen upon them* to destroy them and lay them waste, the most barbarous and outrageous, that have the least compassion to mankind and the greatest antipathy to the Jews. Note, Of the heathen some are worse than others, and God sometimes picks out the worst to be a scourge to his own people, because he intends them for the fire when the work is done.

2. That since they had filled their houses with goods unjustly gotten, and used their pomp and power for the crushing and oppressing of the weak, God would give their houses to be possessed and all the furniture of them to be enjoyed by strangers, and *make the pomp of the strong to cease*, so that their great men should not dazzle the eyes of the weak-sighted with their pomp, nor with their might at any time prevail against right, as they had done.

3. That, since they had *defiled the holy places* with their idolatries, God would defile them with his judgments, since they had set up the images of other gods in the temple, God would remove thence the tokens of the presence of their own God. When the holy places are deserted by their God they will soon be defiled by their enemies.

4. Since they had followed one sin with another, God would pursue them with one judgment upon another: "*Destruction comes, utter destruction* (v. 25); for there shall come *mischief upon mischief* to ruin you, and *rumour upon rumour* to frighten you, like the waves in a storm, one upon the neck of another." Note, Sinners that are marked for ruin shall be prosecuted to it; for God will overcome when he judges.

5. Since they had disappointed God's expectations from them, he would disappoint their expectations from him; for,

(1.) They shall not have the *deliverance out of their troubles* that they expect. They shall *seek peace*; they shall desire it and pray for it; they shall aim at and expect it: but *there shall be none*; their attempts both to court their enemies and to conquer them shall be in vain, and their troubles shall grow worse and worse.

(2.) They shall not have the direction in the trouble that they expect (v. 26): *They shall seek a vision of the prophet*, shall desire, for their support under their troubles, to be assured of a happy issue out of them. They did not desire a vision to reprove them for sin, nor to warn them of danger, but to promise them deliverance. Such messages they longed to hear. But *the law shall perish from the priest*; he shall have no words either of counsel or comfort to say to them. They would not hear what God had to say to them by ways of conviction, and therefore he has nothing to say to them by way of encouragement. *Counsel shall perish from the ancients*; the elders of the people, that should advise them what to do in this difficult juncture, shall be infatuated and at their wits' end. It is bad with a people

when those that should be their counsellors know not how to consider within themselves, consult with one another, or counsel them.

**6.** Since they had animated and encouraged one another to sin, God would dispirit and dishearten them all, so that they should not be able to make head against the judgments of God that were breaking in upon them. All orders and degrees of men shall lie down by consent under the load (v. 27): *The king*, that should inspire life into them, and *the prince*, that should lead them onto attack the enemy, *shall mourn* and be *clothed with desolation*; their heads and hearts shall fail, their politics and their courage; and then no wonder if *the hands of the people of the land*, that should fight for them, be *troubled*. None of the men of might shall *find their hands*. What can men contrive or do for themselves when God has departed from them and appears against them? All must needs be in *tears*, all in *trouble*, when God comes to *judge them according to their deserts*, and so make them know, to their cost, that he is the Lord, the *God to whom vengeance belongs*.