

CHAPTER 9

At this chapter begins another sermon, which is continued to the end of Zechariah 11. It is called, “The burden of the word of the Lord,” for every word of God has weight in it to those who regard it, and will be a heavy weight upon those who do not, a dead weight. Here is,

I. A prophecy against the Jews' unrighteous neighbours — the Syrians, Tyrians, Philistines, and others (v. 1-6), with an intimation of mercy to some of them, in their conversion (v. 7), and a promise of mercy to God's people, in their protection (v. 8).

II. A prophecy of their righteous King, the Messiah, and his coming, with a description of him (v. 9) and of his kingdom, the nature and extent of it (v. 10).

III. An account of the obligation the Jews lay under to Christ for their deliverance out of their captivity in Babylon (v. 11, 12).

IV. A prophecy of the victories and successes God would grant to the Jews over their enemies, as typical of our great deliverance by Christ (v. 13-15).

V. A promise of great plenty, and joy, and honour, which God had in reserve for his people (v. 16, 17), which was written for their encouragement.

III ZECHARIAH 9:1-8

PROPHECY AGAINST THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL

After the precious promises we had in the foregoing chapter of favour to God's people, their persecutors, who hated them, come to be reckoned with, those particularly that bordered close upon them.

I. The Syrians had been bad neighbours to Israel, and God had a controversy with them. The word of the Lord shall be a *burden in the land of Hadrach*, that is, of *Syria*, but it does not appear why it was so called. That that kingdom is meant is plain, because Damascus, the metropolis of

that kingdom, is said to be the *rest* of this burden; that is, the judgments here threatened shall light and lie upon that city. Those are miserable upon whom the burden of the word of the Lord rests, upon whom *the wrath of God abides* (^{483b}John 3:36); for it is a weight that they can neither shake off nor bear up under. There are those whom God *causes his fury to rest* upon. Those whom the wrath of God makes its mark it will be sure to hit; those whom it makes its rest it will be sure to sink. And the reason of this burden's resting on Damascus is because *the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel* (or rather, *even of all the tribes of Israel*), are *towards the Lord*, because the people of God by faith and prayer look up to him for succour and relief and depend upon him to take their part against their enemies. Note, It is a sign that God is about to appear remarkably for his people when he raises their believing expectations from him and dependence upon him, and when by his grace he turns them from idols to himself. ^{487b}Isaiah 17:7, 8, *At that day shall a man look to his Maker*. It may be read thus, *for the Lord has an eye upon man, and upon all the tribes of Israel*; he is King of nations as well as King of saints; he governs the world as well as the church, and therefore will punish the sins of other people as well as those of his own people. God is *Judge of all*, and therefore all must give account of themselves to him. When St. Paul was converted at Damascus, and preached there, and disputed with the Jews, then the word of the Lord might be said to rest there, and then *the eyes of men*, of other men besides *the tribes of Israel*, began to be *towards the Lord*; see ^{492b}Acts 9:22. Hamath, a country which lay north of Damascus, and which we often read of, *shall border thereby* (v. 2); it joins to Syria, and shall share in the *burden of the word of the Lord* that rests upon Damascus. The Jews have a proverb, *Woe to the wicked man, and woe to his neighbour*, who is in danger of partaking in his sins and in his plagues. *Woe to the land of Hadrach, and woe to Hamath that borders thereby*.

II. Tyre and Zidon come next to be called to an account here, as in other prophecies, v. 2-4. Observe here,

1. Tyrus flourishing, thinking herself very safe, and ready to set God's judgments, not only at a distance, but at defiance: for,

(1.) She is *very wise*. It is spoken ironically; she thinks herself very wise, and able to outwit even the wisdom of God. It is granted that her king is a great politician, and that her statesmen are so, ^{498b}Ezekiel 28:3. But with all their wit and policy they shall not be able to evade the judgments of God

when they come with commission; there is no *wisdom* nor *counsel against the Lord*; nay, it is his honour to take the wise in their own craftiness.

(2.) She is very strong, and well fortified both by nature and art: *Tyrus did build herself a strong-hold*, which she thought could never be brought down nor got over.

(3.) She is very rich; and *money is a defence*; it is the sinews of war, ^{<2072>}Ecclesiastes 7:12. By her vast trade she has *heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets*, that is, she has an abundance of them, heaps of silver as common as heaps of sand, ^{<1276>}Job 27:16. Solomon made silver to be in Jerusalem as the *stones of the streets*; but Tyre went further, and made *fine gold* to be as *the mire of the streets*. It were well if we could all learn so to look upon it, in comparison with the merchandise of wisdom and grace and the gains thereof.

2. Tyrus falling, after all. Her wisdom, and wealth, and strength, shall not be able to secure her (v. 4): *The Lord will cast her out* of that strong-hold wherein she has fortified herself, will *make her poor* (so some read it); there have been instances of those that have fallen from the height of plenty to the depth of poverty, and great riches have come to nothing. God will *smite her power in the sea*; her being surrounded by the water shall not secure her, but *she shall be devoured with fire*, and burnt down to the ground. Tyrus, being seated in the midst of the water, was, one would have thought, in danger of being some time or other overflowed or washed away by that; yet God chooses to destroy it by the contrary element. Sometimes he brings ruin upon his enemies by those means which they least suspect. Water enough was nigh at hand to quench the flames of Tyre, and yet by them she shall be devoured; for who can put out the fire which the breath of the Almighty blows up?

III. God next contends with the Philistines, with their great cities and great lords, that bordered southward upon Israel.

1. They shall be alarmed and affrighted by the word of the Lord lighting and resting upon Damascus (v. 5); the disgraces of Israel had many a time been *published in the streets of Ashkelon*, and they had triumphed in them; but now *Ashkelon shall see* the ruin of her friends and allies, and shall *fear*; *Gaza also shall see it, and be very sorrowful, and Ekron*, concluding that their own turns come next, now that the cup of trembling goes round. What will become of their house when their neighbour's is on fire? They

had looked upon Tyre and Zidon as a barrier to their country; but, when those strong cities were ruined, their *expectations* from them *were ashamed*, as our expectation from all creatures will be in the issue.

2. They shall themselves be ruined and wasted.

(1.) The government shall be dissolved: *The king shall perish from Gaza*, not only the present king shall be cut off, but there shall be no succession, no successor,

(2.) The cities shall be dispeopled: *Ashkelon shall not be inhabited*; the rightful owners shall be expelled, either slain or carried into captivity.

(3.) Foreigners shall take possession of their land and become masters of all its wealth (v. 6): *A bastard shall dwell in Ashdod*; a spurious brood of strangers shall enter upon the inheritances of the natives, which they have no more right to than a bastard has to the estates of the legitimate children. And thus God will *cut off the pride of the Philistines*, all the strength and wealth which they prided themselves in, and which were the ground of their confidence in themselves and their contempt of the Israel of God. This prophecy of the destruction of the Philistines, and of Damascus, and Tyre, was accomplished, not long after this, by Alexander the Great, who ravaged all these countries with his victorious army, took the cities, and planted colonies in them, which Quintus Curtius gives a particular account of in the history of his conquests. And some think he is meant by the bastard that shall dwell in Ashdod, for his mother Olympia owned him begotten in adultery, but pretended it was by Jupiter. The Jews afterwards got ground of the Philistines, Syrians, and others of their neighbours, took some of their cities from them and possessed their countries, as appears by the histories of Josephus and the Maccabees, and this was foretold before, ~~~~ Zephaniah 2:4, etc.; Obad. 20.

3. Some among them shall be converted, and brought home to God, by his gospel and grace; so some understand v. 7, as a promise,

(1.) That God would take away the sins of these nations — *their blood* and *their abominations*, their cruelties and their idolatries. God will part between them and these sins which they have rolled under their tongue as a sweet morsel, and are as loth to part with as men are to part with the meat out of their mouths, and which they hold fast between their teeth. Nothing is too hard for the grace of God to do.

(2.) That he would accept of a remnant of them for his own: *He that remains shall be for our God*. God would preserve a remnant even of these nations, that should be the monuments of his mercy and grace and be set apart for him; and the disadvantages of their birth shall be no bar to their acceptance with God, but a Philistine shall be as acceptable to God, upon gospel-terms, as one of Judah, nay, as a governor, or chief one, in Judah, and a man of Ekron shall be as a Jebusite, or a man of Jerusalem, as a proselyted Jebusite, as Araunah the Jebusite, ^{<1296>}2 Samuel 24:16. In Christ Jesus there is no distinction of nations, but all are one in him, all alike welcome to him.

IV. In all this God intends mercy for Israel, and it is in kindness to them that God will deal thus with the neighbouring nations, to avenge their quarrel for what is past and to secure them for the future.

1. Thus some understand the seventh verse, as intimating,

(1.) That thus God would deliver his people from their bloody adversaries, who hated them, and to whom they were an abomination, when they were just ready to devour them and make a prey of them: I will *take away his blood* (that is, the blood of Israel) out of the mouth of the Philistines and *from between their teeth* (^{<3182>}Amos 3:12), when, in their hatred of them and enmity to them, they were greedily devouring them.

(2.) That he would thus give them victory and dominion over them: And *he that remains* (that is, the remnant of Israel) *shall be for our God*, shall be taken into his favour, shall own him and be owned by him, and *he shall be as a governor in Judah*; though the Jews have been long in servitude, they shall recover their ancient dignity, and be victorious, as David and other governors in Judah formerly were; and Ekron (that is, the Philistines) shall be as the Jebusites, and the rest of the devoted nations, who were brought into subjection under them.

2. However, this is plainly the sense of v. 8, that God will take his people under his special protection, and *therefore* will weaken their neighbours, that it may not be in their power to do them a mischief: *I will encamp about my house because of the army*. Note, God's house lies in the midst of an enemy's country, and his church is as a lily among thorns; and therefore God's power and goodness are to be observed in the special preservation of it. The *camp of the saints*, being a little flock in comparison with the numerous armies of the powers of darkness that are

set against it round about, would certainly be swallowed up if the angels of God did not encamp about it, as they did about Elisha, to deliver it, ~~610~~ Revelation 20:9; ~~498~~ Psalm 34:7. When the times are unusually perilous, when armies are marching and counter-marching, and all bearing ill-will to Zion, then Providence will as it were double its guards upon the church of God, *because of him that passes by and because of him that returns*, that whether he return a conqueror or conquered he may do it no harm. And, as none that pass by shall hurt them, so *no oppressor shall pass through them any more*; they shall have no enemy within themselves to rule them with rigour, and *to make their lives bitter* to them *with sore bondage*, as of old in Egypt. This was fulfilled when, for some time after the struggles of the Maccabees, Judea was a free and flourishing state, or perhaps when Alexander the Great, struck with an awe of Jaddus the high priest, favoured the Jews, and took them under his protection, at the same time when he wasted the neighbouring countries. And the reason given for all this is, “*For now have I seen with my eyes*, now have I carefully distinguished between my people and other people, with whom before they seemed to have their lot in common, and have made it to appear that I know those that are mine,” This agrees with ~~494~~ Psalm 34:15, *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous*; now his eyes, which *run to and fro through the earth*, shall fix upon them, that he may show himself tender of them, and *strong on their behalf*, ~~446~~ 2 Chronicles 16:9.

~~300~~ ZECHARIAH 9:9-11

PREDICTIONS RELATING TO MESSIAH

That here begins a prophecy of the Messiah and his kingdom is plain from the literal accomplishment of the ninth verse in, and its express application to, Christ's riding in triumph into *Jerusalem*, ~~421~~ Matthew 21:5; ~~425~~ John 12:15.

I. Here is notice given of the approach of the Messiah promised, as matter of great joy to the Old-Testament church: *Behold, thy king cometh unto thee*. Christ is a king, invested with regal powers and prerogatives, a sovereign prince, an absolute monarch, having all power both in heaven and on earth. He is Zion's king. God has *set him upon his holy hill of Zion*, ~~416~~ Psalm 2:6. In Zion his glory as a king shines; thence *his law went forth*,

even the *word of the Lord*. In the gospel-church his spiritual kingdom is administered; it is by him that the ordinances of the church are instituted, and its officers commissioned; and it is taken under his protection; he fights the church's battles and secures its interests, as its king. "This King has been long in coming, but now, *behold, he cometh*; he is at the door. There are but a few ages more to run out, and he that shall come will come. He *cometh unto thee*; the Word will shortly be made flesh, and dwell within thy borders; he will *come to his own*. And therefore *rejoice, rejoice greatly, and shout for joy*; look upon it as *good news*, and be assured it is true; please thyself to think that he is coming, that he is on his way towards thee; and be ready to go forth to meet him with acclamations of joy, as one not able to conceal it, it is so great, nor ashamed to own it, it is so just; cry *Hosanna* to him." Christ's approaches ought to be the church's applauses.

II. Here is such a description of him as renders him very amiable in the eyes of all his loving subjects, and his coming to them very acceptable.

- 1.** He is a righteous ruler; all his acts of government will be exactly according to the rules of equity, for *he is just*.
- 2.** He is a powerful protector to all those that bear faith and true allegiance to him, for he *has salvation*; he has it in his power; he has it to bestow upon all his subjects. He is the *God of salvation*; treasures of salvation are in him. He is *servatus* — *saving himself* (so some read it), rising out of the grave by his own power and so qualifying himself to be our Saviour.
- 3.** He is a *meek, humble, tender Father* to all his subjects as his children; he is *lowly*; he is *poor* and *afflicted* (so the word signifies), so it denotes the meanness of his condition; having *emptied himself*, he was *despised and rejected of men*. But the evangelist translates it so as to express the temper of his spirit: he is *meek*, not taking state upon him, nor resenting injuries, but *humbling himself* from first to last, condescending to the mean, compassionate to the miserable; this was a bright and excellent character of him as a prophet (^{41B}Matthew 11:29, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart*), and no less so *as a king*. It was a proof of this that, when he made his public entry into his own city (and it was the only passage of his life that had any thing in it magnificent in the eye of the world), he chose to ride, not upon a stately horse, or in a chariot, as great men used to ride, but *upon an ass*, a beast of service indeed, but a poor

silly and contemptible one, low and slow, and in those days ridden only by the meaner sort of people; nor was it an ass fitted for use, but an *ass's colt*, a little foolish unmanageable thing, that would be more likely to disgrace his rider than be any credit to him; and that not his own neither, nor helped off, as sometimes a sorry horse is, by good furniture, for he had no saddle, no housings, no trappings, no equipage, but his disciples' clothes thrown upon the colt;' for he *made himself of no reputation* when he visited us in great humility.

III. His kingdom is here set forth in the glory of it. This king has, and will have, a kingdom, not of this world, but a spiritual kingdom, a *kingdom of heaven*.

1. It shall not be set up and advanced by external force, by an arm of flesh or carnal weapons of warfare. No; he *will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horses from Jerusalem* (v. 10), for he shall have no occasion for them while he himself rides upon an ass. He will, in kindness to his people, cut off their horses and chariots, that they may not cut themselves off from God by putting that confidence in them which they should put in the power of God only. He will himself undertake their protection, will himself be *a wall of fire about Jerusalem* and give his angels charge concerning it (those *chariots of fire and horses of fire*), and then the chariots and horses they had in their service shall be discarded and cut off as altogether needless.

2. It shall be propagated and established by the preaching of the gospel, the *speaking of peace to the heathen*; for *Christ came and preached peace to those that were afar off and to those that were nigh*; and so established his kingdom by proclaiming *on earth peace, and good-will towards men*.

3. His kingdom, as far as it prevails in the minds of men and has the ascendant over them, will make them peaceable, and slay all enmities; it will cut off the battle-bow, and *beat swords into plough-shares*. It will not only command the peace, but will *create the fruit of the lips, peace*.

4. It shall extend itself to all parts of the world, in defiance of the opposition given to it. "The chariot and horse that come against Ephraim and Jerusalem, to oppose the progress of Zion's King, shall be cut off; his gospel shall be preached to the world, and be received among the heathen, so that *his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth*, as was foretold by David," ¹⁷¹⁸ Psalm 72:8. The

preachers of the gospel shall carry it from one country, one island, to another, till some of the remotest corners of the world are enlightened and reduced by it.

IV. Here is an account of the great benefit procured for mankind by the Messiah, which is redemption from extreme misery, typified by the deliverance of the Jews out of their captivity in Babylon (v. 11): “*As for thee also* (thee, O daughter of Jerusalem! or thee, O Messiah the Prince!) *by the blood of thy covenant*, by force and virtue of the covenant made with Abraham, sealed with the blood of circumcision, and the covenant made with Israel at Mount Sinai, sealed with the blood of sacrifices, in pursuance and performance of that covenant, *I have now of late sent forth thy prisoners*, thy captives out of Babylon, which was to them a most uncomfortable place, as *a pit* in which was *no water*.” It was part of the covenant that, if in the land of their captivity, they sought the Lord, he would be found of them, ~~LEV~~ Leviticus 26:42, 44, 45; ~~DEU~~ Deuteronomy 30:4. It was *by the blood of that covenant*, typifying the blood of Christ, in whom all God's covenants with man are yea and amen, that they were released out of captivity; and this was but a shadow of the great salvation wrought out by *thy King, O daughter of Zion!* Note, A sinful state is a state of bondage; it is a spiritual prison; it is a pit, or a dungeon, in which *there is no water*, no comfort at all to be had. We are all by nature prisoners in this pit; the *scripture has concluded us all under sin*, and bound us over to the justice of God. God is pleased to deal upon new terms with these prisoners, to enter into another covenant with them; the blood of Christ is the blood of that covenant, purchased it for us and all the benefits of it; by that blood of the covenant effectual provision is made for the sending forth of these prisoners upon easy and honourable terms, and proclamation made of *liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those that were bound*, like Cyrus's proclamation to the Jews in Babylon, which all those whose spirits God stirs up will come and take the benefit of.

3992 ZECARIAH 9:12-17

PROMISES OF GOD'S FAVOUR TO ISRAEL

The prophet, having taught those that had returned out of captivity to attribute their deliverance to the *blood of the covenant* and to the promise of the Messiah (for they were so wonderfully helped because that blessing was in them, was yet in the womb of their nation), now comes to encourage them with the prospect of a joyful and happy settlement, and of glorious times before them; and such a happiness they did enjoy, in a great measure, for some time; but these promises have their full accomplishment in the spiritual blessings of the gospel which we enjoy by Jesus Christ.

I. They are invited to look unto Christ, and flee unto him as their city of refuge (v. 12): *Turn you to the strong-hold, you prisoners of hope.* The Jews that had returned out of captivity into their own land were yet, in effect, but *prisoners* (*We are servants this day,* 4085 Nehemiah 9:36), yet *prisoners of hope, or expectation*, for God had given them a *little reviving in their bondage,* 4008 Ezra 9:8, 9. Those that yet continued in Babylon, detained by their affairs there, yet lived in hope some time or other to see their own land again. Now both these are directed to turn their eyes upon the Messiah, set before them in the promise as their strong-hold, to shelter themselves in him, and stay themselves upon him, for the perfecting of the mercy which by his grace, and for his sake, was so gloriously begun. *Look unto him, and be you saved,* 2352 Isaiah 45:22. The promise of the Messiah was the strong-hold of the faithful long before his coming; they saw his day at a distance and were glad, and the believing expectation of the *redemption in Jerusalem* was long the support and *consolation of Israel,* 4025 Luke 2:25, 38. They, in their dangers and distresses, were ready to turn towards this and the other creature for relief; but the prophets directed them still to turn to Christ, and to comfort themselves with the joy of their king coming to them with salvation. But, as their deliverance was typical of our redemption by Christ (v. 11), so this invitation to the strong-hold speaks the language of the gospel-call. Sinners are prisoners, but they are prisoners of hope; their case is sad, but it is not desperate; yet now there is hope in Israel concerning them. Christ is a strong-hold for them, a strong tower, in whom they may be safe and quiet from the fear of the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and the assaults of their spiritual enemies. To

him they must turn by a lively faith; to him they must flee, and trust in his name.

II. They are assured of God's favour to them: "*Even to day do I declare, when things are at the worst, and you think your case deplorable to the last degree, yet I solemnly promise that I will render double unto thee, to thee, O Jerusalem! to every one of you prisoners of hope. I will give you comforts double to the sorrows you have experienced, or blessings double to what I ever bestowed upon your fathers, when their condition was at the best; the glory of your latter state, as well as of your latter house, shall be greater, shall be twice as great as that of your former.*" And so it was no otherwise than by the coming of the Messiah, the preaching of his gospel, and the setting up of his kingdom; these spiritual blessings in heavenly things were double to what they had ever enjoyed in their most prosperous state. As a pledge of this, in the fulness of time God here promises to the Jews victory, plenty, and joy, in their own land, which yet should be but a type and shadow of more glorious victories, riches, and joys, in the kingdom of Christ.

1. They shall triumph over their enemies. The Jews, after their return, were surrounded with enemies on all sides. They were *as a speckled bird*; all the birds of the field were against them. Their land lay between the two potent kingdoms of Syria and Egypt, branches of the Grecian monarchy, and what frequent dangers they should be in between them was foretold, Daniel 11. But it is here promised that out of them all the Lord would deliver them; and this promise had its primary accomplishment in the times of the Maccabees, when the Jews made head against their enemies, kept their head above water, and, after many struggles and difficulties, came to be head over them. It is promised,

(1.) That they shall be instruments in God's hand for the defeating and baffling of their persecutors: "*I have bent Judah for me, as my bow of steel; that bow I have filled with Ephraim as my arrows, have drawn it up to its full bent, till the arrow be at the head;*" for some think that this is signified by the phrase of *filling the bow*. The expressions here are very fine, and the figures lively. Judah had been *taught the use of the bow* (¹¹⁸2 Samuel 1:18), and Ephraim had been famous for it, ¹³⁰Psalm 78:9. But let them not think that they gain their successes by their own bow, for they themselves are no more than God's bow and his arrows, tools in his hands, which he makes use of and manages as he pleases, which he holds as his

bow and directs to the mark as his arrows. The best and bravest of men are but what God makes them, and do no more service than he enables them to do. The preachers of the gospel were the bow in Christ's hand, with which he went forth, he went on, *conquering and to conquer*,

^{<66B>}Revelation 6:2. The following words explain this: *I have raised up and animated thy sons, O Zion! against thy sons, O Greece!* This was fulfilled when *against Antiochus*, one of the kings of the Grecian monarchy, the people that knew their God were *strong and did exploits*, ^{<21B>}Daniel 11:32. And they in the hand of an almighty God were made *as the sword of a mighty man*, which none can stand before. Wicked men are said to be God's sword (^{<97B>}Psalm 17:13), and sometimes good men are made so; for he employs both as he pleases.

(2.) That God will be captain, and commander-in-chief, over them, in every expedition and engagement (v. 14): *The Lord shall be seen over them*; he shall make it appear that he presides in their affairs, and that in all their motions they are under his direction, as apparently, though not as sensibly, as he was *seen over Israel* in the pillar of cloud and fire when he led them through the wilderness.

[1.] Is their army to be raised, or mustered, and brought into the field? *The Lord shall blow the trumpet*, to gather the forces together, to proclaim the war, to sound the alarm, and to give directions which way to march, which way to move; for, if God blow the trumpet, it shall not give an uncertain sound, nor a feeble ineffectual one.

[2.] Is the army taking the field, and entering upon action? Whatever enterprise the campaign is opened with, God shall go forth at the head of their forces, *with whirlwinds of the south*, which were of incredible swiftness and fierceness; and before these whirlwinds thy sons, O Greece! shall be as chaff.

[3.] Is the army actually engaged? God's *arrows shall go forth as lightning*, so strongly, so suddenly, so irresistibly; his *lightnings* shall go forth *as arrows* and *scattered them*, that is, he *shot out his lightnings and discomfited them*. This alludes to that which God had done for Israel of old when he brought them out of Egypt, and into Canaan, and had its accomplishment partly in the wonderful successes which the Jews had against their neighbours that attacked them in the time of the Maccabees, by the special appearances of the divine Providence for them, and perfectly in the glorious victories gained by the cross of Christ and the

preaching of the cross over Satan and all the powers of darkness, whereby we are made more than conquerors.

[4.] Are they in danger of being overpowered by the enemy? *The Lord of hosts shall defend them* (v. 15); *The Lord their God shall save them* (v. 16); so that their enemies shall not prevail over them, nor prey upon them. God shall be unto them for defence as well as offence, *the shield of their help* as well as *the sword of their excellency*, and this as *the Lord of hosts*, who has power to defend them, and as *their God*, who is engaged by promise to defend them, and by the property he has in them. He shall save them in *that day*, that critical dangerous day, *as the flock of his people*, with the same care and tenderness that the shepherd protects his sheep with. Those are safe whom God saves.

[5.] Did their enemies hope to swallow them up? It shall be turned upon them, and they shall *devour* their enemies, and shall *subdue with sling-stones*, for want of better weapons, those that come forth against them. The *stones of the brook*, when God pleases, shall do as great execution as the best train of artillery; for the *stars in their courses* shall fight on the same side. Goliath was subdued with a sling-stone. Having subdued, they shall *devour, shall drink* the blood of their enemies, as it were, and, as conquerors are wont to do, they shall *make a noise as through wine*. It is usual for conquerors with loud huzzas and acclamations to glory in their victories and proclaim them. We read of those that *shout for mastery*, and of the *shout of a king* among God's people. They shall be filled with blood and spoil, as the bowls and basins of the temple, or the *corners of the altar*, were wont to be filled with the blood of the sacrifices; for their enemies shall fall as victims to divine justice.

2. They shall triumph in their God. They shall take the comfort and give God the glory of their successes. So some read v. 15. *They shall eat* (that is, they shall quietly enjoy) what they have got; God will give them power to eat it *after they have subdued the sling-stones* (that is, their enemies that slung stones at them), and *they shall drink and make a noise*, a joyful noise, before the Lord their maker and protector, *as through wine*, as men are merry at a banquet of wine. *Being not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but filled with the Spirit*, they shall *speak* to themselves and one another *in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs*, as those that are drunk do with vain and foolish songs, ⁴⁸⁸Ephesians 5:18, 5:18, 19. And, in the fulness of their joy, they shall offer abundance of sacrifices to the honour

of God, so that *they shall fill both the bowls and the corners of the altar* with the fat and blood of their sacrifices. And, when they thus triumph in their successes, their joy shall terminate in God as their God, the God of their salvation. They shall triumph,

(1.) In the love he has for them, and the relation wherein they stand to him, that they are *the flock of his people* and he is their Shepherd, and that they are to him *as the stones of a crown*, which are very precious and of great value, and which are kept under a strong guard. Never was any king so pleased with the jewels of his crown as God is, and will be, with his people, who are near and dear unto him, and in whom he glories. They are a *crown of glory* and a *royal diadem* in his hand, ^{<36D>}Isaiah 62:2, 3. And *they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels,* ^{<38T>}Malachi 3:17. And *they shall be lifted up as an ensign upon his land*, as the royal standard is displayed in token of triumph and joy. God's people are his glory; so he is pleased to make them, so he is pleased to reckon them. He sets them up as a banner upon his own land, waging war against those who hate him, to whom it is a flag of defiance, while it is a centre of unity to all that love him, to all the children of God, that are scattered abroad, who are invited to come and enlist themselves under this banner, ^{<38D>}Isaiah 11:10, 12.

(2.) In the provision he makes for them, v. 15. This is the matter of their triumph (v. 17): *For how great is his goodness and how great is his beauty!* This is the substance, this the burden, of the songs wherewith they shall *make a noise* before the Lord. We are here taught,

[1.] To admire and praise the amiableness of God's being: *How great is his beauty!* All the perfections of God's nature conspire to make him infinitely lovely in the eyes of all that know him. They are to him as the *stones of a crown*; but what is he to them? Our business in the temple is to *behold the beauty of the Lord* (^{<127D>}Psalm 27:4), and *how great is that beauty!* How far does it transcend all other beauties, particularly the *beauty of his holiness*. This may refer to the Messiah, to Zion's *King that cometh*. See *that king in his beauty* (^{<238T>}Isaiah 33:17), who is *fairer than the children of men*, the *fairest of ten thousand*, and *altogether lovely*. Though, in the eye of the world, he had no form or comeliness, in the eye of faith how great is his beauty!

[2.] To admire and give thanks for the gifts of God's favour and grace, his bounty as well as his beauty; for *how great is his goodness!* How rich in

mercy is he! How deep, how full, are its springs! How various, how plenteous, how precious, are its streams! What a great deal of good does God do! How rich in mercy is he! Here is an instance of his goodness to his people: *Corn shall make the young men cheerful and new wine the maids*; that is, God will bless his people with an abundance of the fruits of the earth. Whereas they had been afflicted with scarcity to such a degree that the *young men* and the *maidens* were ready to swoon and faint away for hunger and thirst (~~2012~~ Lamentations 2:12, 21; 4:7, 8; 5:10), now they shall have bread enough and to spare, not water only, but *wine, new wine*, which shall make the young people grow and be cheerful, and (which some have observed to be the effect of plenty and the cheapness of corn) the poor will be encouraged to marry, and re-people the land, when they shall have wherewithal to maintain their families. Note, What good gifts God bestows upon us we must serve him cheerfully with, and must race the streams up to the fountain, and, when we are refreshed with corn and wine, must say, *How great is his goodness!*