

CHAPTER 12

The apostle (~~802~~Galatians 4:25, 26) distinguishes between “Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children” — the remaining carcass of the Jewish church that rejected Christ, and “Jerusalem that is from above, that is free, and is the mother of us all” — the Christian church, the spiritual Jerusalem, which God has chosen to put his name there; in the foregoing chapter we read the doom of the former, and left that carcass to be a prey to the eagles that should be gathered to it. Now, in this chapter, we have the blessings of the latter, many precious promises made to the gospel-Jerusalem by him who (v. 1) declares his power to make them good. It is promised,

I. That the attempts of the church's enemies against her shall be to their own ruin, and they shall find that it is at their peril if they do her any hurt (v. 2-4, 6).

II. That the endeavours of the church's friends and patrons for her good shall be pious, regular, and successful (v. 5).

III. That God will protect and strengthen the meanest and weakest that belong to his church, and work salvation for them (v. 7, 8).

IV. That as a preparative for all this mercy, and a pledge of it, he will pour upon them a spirit of prayer and repentance, the effect of which shall be universal and very particular (v. 9-14). These promises were of use then to the pious Jews that lived in the troublous times under Antiochus, and other persecutors and oppressors; and they are still to be improved in every age for the directing of our prayers and the encouraging of our hopes with reference to the gospel-church.

~~811~~ ZECHARIAH 12:1-8

THE SECURITY OF THE CHURCH

Here is,

I. The title of this charter of promises made to God's Israel; it is the *burden of the word of the Lord*, a divine prediction; it is of weight in the delivery of it; it is to be pressed upon people, and will be very pressing in

the accomplishment of it; it is a *burden*, a heavy burden, to all the church's enemies, like that *talent of lead*, ^{<387>}Zechariah 5:7, 8. But it is *for Israel*; it is for their comfort and benefit. As even the *fiery law* (^{<388>}Deuteronomy 33:2), so the fiery prophecies and fiery providences that come from God's right hand, come for them; the word that speaks terror to their enemies speaks peace to them, as the pillar of cloud and fire, which turned a bright side towards the Israelites, to direct and encourage them, but a black side towards the Egyptians, to terrify and dispirit them. Happy are those that have even the burdens of God's word for them, as well as the blessings of it.

II. The title of him that grants this charter, which is prefixed to it to show that he has both authority to make these promises and ability to make them good, for he is the Creator of the world and our Creator, and therefore has an incontestable irresistible dominion.

1. He *stretches out the heavens*; not only he did so at the first, when he said, *Let there be a firmament*, and he *made the firmament*, but he does so still; he keeps them stretched out *like a curtain*, keeps them from running in, and will do so till the end come, when *the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll*. No bounds can be set to his power who stretches out the heavens, nor can any thing be too hard for him.

2. He *lays the foundation of the earth*, and keeps it firm and fixed on its own basis, or rather on its own axis, though it is *founded on the seas* (^{<389>}Psalm 24:1, 2), nay, though it is *hung upon nothing*, ^{<390>}Job 26:7. The founder of this earth is no doubt the ruler of it, and judges in it, and those deceive themselves who say, *The Lord has forsaken the earth*, for, if he had, it would have sunk, since it is he that not only did lay its foundations at first, but does still lay them, still uphold them.

3. He *forms the spirit of man within him*. He *made us these souls*, ^{<391>}Jeremiah 38:16. He not only breathed into the first man, but still breathes into every man the breath of life; the body is derived from the *fathers of our flesh*, but the soul is infused by the *Father of spirits*, ^{<392>}Hebrews 12:9. He *fashions men's hearts*; they are *in his hand*, and he turns them *as the rivers of water*, and casts them into what mould he pleases, so as to serve his own purposes with them; and he can therefore save his church by inspiriting his friends and dispiriting his enemies, and will eternally save all his chosen by forming their spirits anew.

III. The promises themselves that are here made them, by which the church shall be secured, and in which all its friends may enjoy a holy security.

1. It is promised that, whatever attacks the enemies of the church may make upon her purity or peace, they will certainly issue in their own confusion. The enemies of God and of his kingdom bear a great deal of malice and ill-will to Jerusalem, and form designs for its destruction; but it will prove, at last, that they are but preparing ruin for themselves; Jerusalem is in safety, and those are in all the danger who fight against it. This is here illustrated by three comparisons: —

(1.) *Jerusalem shall be a cup of trembling* to all that lay siege to it, v. 2. They promise themselves that it shall be to them a cup of wine, which they shall easily and with pleasure drink off, and they thirst for its spoils, nay, they thirst for its blood, as for such a cup; but it shall prove a *cup of slumber*, nay, a *cup of poison*, to them, which, when they take it into their hands, and think it is all their own, they shall not be able to drink off: the fumes of it shall give them enough. When *the kings were assembled* against her, and saw how *God was known in her palaces for a refuge*, they *trembled and hasted away; fear took hold upon them*, as we find, ^{<98B>}Psalm 48:3-6. Thus Alexander the Great was struck with amazement when he met Jaddus the high priest, and was deterred thereby from offering any violence to Jerusalem. When Sennacherib laid siege *against Judah and Jerusalem* he found them such a cup of stupifying wine as laid all his mighty men asleep, ^{<97B>}Psalm 76:5, 6. Some read it, *I will make Jerusalem a post of contrition or breaking*. Those that make any attempts upon Jerusalem do but run their heads against a post, which they cannot move, but are sure to hurt themselves. The *blast of the terrible ones* is *as a storm against the wall* (^{<23B>}Isaiah 25:4), broken by it, but not shaking it. God's church is a cup of consolation to all her friends (^{<26B>}Isaiah 66:11), but a cup of trembling to all that would either debauch her by errors and corruptions or destroy her by wars and persecutions. See ^{<25D>}Isaiah 51:22, 23.

(2.) *Jerusalem shall be a burdensome stone* to all that attempt to remove it or carry it away, v. 3. All *the people of the earth* are here supposed to be *gathered together against it*, some one time and some another; there has been a succession of enemies, from age to age, making war upon the church. But though they were all at once in a confederacy against it, and had formed a resolution to *cut off the name of Israel, that it should be no*

more in remembrance (¹⁸³⁰Psalm 83:4), they will find it a task too hard for them. Those that are for keeping up and advancing the kingdom of sin in the world look upon Jerusalem, even the church of God, as the great obstacle to their designs, and they must have it out of the way; but they will find it heavier than they think it is; so that,

[1.] They cannot remove it. God will have a church in the world, in spite of them; it is *built upon a rock*, and is as *Mount Zion, that abides for ever*, ¹⁸³¹Psalm 125:1. This *stone, cut out of the mountain without hands*, will not only keep its ground, but fill the earth, ¹⁸³⁵Daniel 2:35. Nay,

[2.] It will *break in pieces all that burden themselves* with it, as that stone *smote the image*, ¹⁸³⁵Daniel 2:45. All that think themselves a match for it shall be *cut in pieces* by it. Some think it is an allusion to a sport which Jerome, upon this place, says was in use among the Jews, as among us: young men tried their strength, and strove for mastery, by heaving up great stones, which, if they proved too heavy for them, fell upon them, and bruised them. Those that make a jest of religion, and banter sacred things, will find them a burdensome stone, that it is ill-jesting with edged-tools, and though they make light of it (saying, *Am not I in sport?*) they bring upon themselves an insupportable sinking load of guilt. Our Saviour seems to allude to these words when he speaks of himself as a burdensome stone to those that will not have him for their foundation-stone, which shall *fall upon them and grind them to powder*, ¹⁸³⁴Matthew 21:44.

[3.] The governors of Judah shall be among their enemies like *a hearth of fire among the wood, and a torch of fire in a sheaf*, v. 6. Not that their own passions shall make them incendiaries and firebrands to all about them; no; Zion's King is *meek and lowly*, and all subordinate governors must be like him; but God's justice will make them avengers of his cause, and theirs, upon their enemies. Those that contend with them will find it is like an opposition given by briars and thorns to a consuming fire, ¹⁸³⁴Isaiah 27:4. It will go through them, and burn them together. It is God's wrath, and not theirs, that is the fire which devours the adversaries. God's fire is said to be *in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem*. ¹⁸³⁹Isaiah 31:9. The enemies thought to be as water to this fire, to extinguish it and put it quite out; but God will make them as wood, nay, as a sheaf of corn (which is more combustible), to this fire, not only to be consumed by it, but to be made thereby to burn the more strongly. When God would make Abimelech and the men of Shechem one another's destroyers fire is said to

come out from the one to devour the other, ^(v. 20)Judges 9:20. So here, Fire shall come out from the *governors of Judah to devour all the people round about*, as from the mouth of God's witnesses to consume those who offer to hurt them, ^(v. 5)Revelation 11:5. The persecutors of the primitive church found this fulfilled in it, witness Lactantius's history of God's judgments upon the primitive persecutors, and the confession of Julian the apostate at last. *Thou hast overcome me, O thou Galilean!* The church's motto may be, *Nemo me impune lacesset — He that assails me does it at his peril. If you are weary of your life, persecute the Christians*, was once a proverb.

2. It is promised that God will infatuate the counsels and enfeeble the courage of the church's enemies (v. 4): "*In that day, when the people of the earth are gathered together against Jerusalem, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness;*" and again, "*I will smite every horse of the people with blindness, so that they shall be no way serviceable to them; blinding the horses will be as bad as houghing them.*" The horses and their horsemen shall both forget the military exercise to which they were trained, and, instead of keeping ranks and observing the rules of their discipline, they shall both grow mad, and ruin themselves. The church's infantry shall be too hard for the enemy's cavalry; and those who were upbraided with trusting in horses shall be baffled by those who were forbidden to multiply horses.

3. It is promised that Jerusalem shall be re-peopled and replenished (v. 6): *Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.* The natives of Jerusalem shall not incorporate in a colony in some other country, and build a city there, and call that *Jerusalem*, and see the promises fulfilled in that, as those in New England called their towns by the names of towns in Old England. No; they shall have a new Jerusalem upon the same foundation, the same spot of ground, with the old one. They had so after their return out of captivity, but this was to have its full accomplishment in the gospel-church, which is a Jerusalem inhabited *in its own place*; for, the gospel being to be preached to all the world, it may call every place its own.

4. It is promised that the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be enabled to defend themselves, and yet shall be taken under the divine protection, v. 8. See here in what method God preserves his church, and those that are his, from the gates of hell to and through the gates of heaven.

(1.) He does himself secure them: *In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, not only Jerusalem itself from being taken and destroyed, but every inhabitant of it from being any way damaged. God will not only be a *wall of fire* about the city, to fortify that, but he will encompass particular persons with his favour *as with a shield*, so that no dart of the besiegers shall touch them.

(2.) He does it by giving them strength and courage to help themselves. What God works in his people by his grace contributes more to their preservation and defence than what he works for them by his providence. *The God of Israel gives strength and power to his people*, that they may do their part, and then he will not be wanting to do his. it is the glory of God to strengthen the weak, that most need his help, that see and own their need of it, and will be the most thankful for it.

[1.] In that day the feeblest of the inhabitants of Jerusalem *shall be as David*, shall be men of war, as bold and brave, as skilful and strong, as David himself, shall attempt and accomplish great things, as David did, and become as serviceable to Jerusalem in guarding it as David himself was in founding it, and as formidable as he was to the enemies of it. See what divine grace does; it makes children not only men, but champions, makes weak saints to be not only good soldiers, but great soldiers, like David. And see how God often does his own work as easily and effectually, and more to his own glory, by weak and obscure instruments than by the most illustrious.

[2.] *The house of David shall be as God*, that is, *as the angel of the Lord, before them*. Zerubbabel was now the top-branch of the house of David; he shall be endued with wisdom and grace for the service to which he is called, and shall go before the people as an angel, as that angel (so some think) which went before the people of Israel through the wilderness, which was God himself, ^{<0230>}Exodus 23:20. God will increase the gifts and abilities both of the people and princes, in proportion to the respective services for which they are designed. It was said of David that he was *as an angel of God, to discern good and bad*, ^{<0417>}2 Samuel 14:17. Such shall the house of David now be. The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be as strong and fit for action as nature made David, and their magistrates as wise and fit for counsel as grace made him. But this was to have its full accomplishment in Christ; now the house of David looked little and mean, and its glory was eclipsed, but in Christ the house of David shone more

brightly than ever, and its countenance was as that of an angel; in him it became more blessed, and more a blessing, than ever it had been.

5. It is promised that there shall be a very good understanding between the city and the country, and that the balance shall be kept even between them; there shall be no mutual envies or jealousies between them; they shall not keep up any separate interests, but shall heartily unite in their counsels, and act in concert for the common good; and this happy agreement between the city and the country, the head and the body, is very necessary to the health, welfare, and safety of any nation.

(1.) *The governors of Judah*, the magistrates and gentry of the country, shall think honourably of the citizens, *the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, the merchants and tradesmen; they shall not run them down, and contrive how to keep them under, but they *shall say in their hearts*, not in compliment but in sincerity, *The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength*, the strength of my country, of my family, *in the Lord of hosts their God*, v. 5. They will therefore, upon all occasions, pay respect and deference to Jerusalem, as the mother-city, the ruling-city, and the city that is to be first served, because they look upon it to be the bulwark of the nation and its strongest fortification in times of public danger and distress, which therefore they would all come in to the assistance of and come under the protection of, and this not so much because it was a rich city, and money is the sinews of war, nor because it was a populous city and could bring the greatest numbers into the field, nor because its inhabitants were generally the most ingenious active men, the best soldiers and the best commanders (*of Zion it shall be said, This and that brave man were born there*), but because it was a *holy city*, where God's house and household, the temple and the priests, were, where his worship was kept up and his feasts were observed, and because it should now be more than ever a praying city, for *upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem God will pour a spirit of supplication* (v. 10); therefore the governors of Judah shall say, *These are my strength*; they are so upon the account of their relation to, their interest in, and their communion with, *the Lord of hosts, their God*. Because *the Lord of hosts* is in a particular manner *their God* (*for in Salem is his tabernacle and his dwelling-place in Zion*), therefore *they shall be my strength*. Note, It is well with a kingdom when its great men know how to value its good men, when its governors look upon religion and religious people to be their strength, and consider it their interest to support them, and learn to call godly praying people, and skilful faithful ministers, *the chariots and*

horsemen of Israel, as Joash called Elisha, and not the troublers of the land, as Ahab called Elijah.

(2.) The court and the city shall not despise, nor look with contempt upon, the inhabitants of the country; no, not the meanest of them, much less upon the governors of Judah; for God will put signal honour upon Judah, and so save them from the contempt of their brethren. As Jerusalem was dignified by special ordinances, so Judah shall be dignified with special providences. God says (v. 4), *I will open my eyes upon the house of Judah*, upon the poor country people. Proud men scornfully overlook them, but the great God will graciously look upon them and look after them. Nay, (v. 7), *the Lord shall save the tents of Judah first*. Those that dwell in tents lie most exposed; but God will remarkably protect and deliver them before those that dwell in Jerusalem. He will appear glorious in what he does for the *inhabitants of his villages in Israel*, ^{<051>}Judges 5:11. Thus, in the mystical body, God *gives more abundant honour to that part which lacked, that there may be no schism in the body* (see ^{<422>}1 Corinthians 12:22-25), which is the reason here given why *the glory of the house of David*, which has great power, and *the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, who have great wealth, and both which live in great pomp and pleasure, *may not magnify themselves against Judah* and the *tents of Judah*, the dwellers in which work hard, and fare hard, and perhaps are not so well bred. Note, Courtiers and citizens ought not to despise country people, nor look with disdain upon those whom God *opens his eyes upon* and who are *first saved*, while it is so hard for the rich and great to *enter the kingdom of God*. If God by his grace has magnified the dwellers in the tents of Judah, having chosen the weak and foolish things of the world and chosen to employ them, we affront him if we vilify them, or magnify ourselves against them, ^{<305>}James 2:5, 6. This promise has a further reference to the gospel-church, in which no difference shall be made between high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, circumcision and uncircumcision, but all shall be alike welcome to Christ, and partake of his benefits, ^{<511>}Colossians 3:11. Jerusalem shall not then be thought, as it had been, more holy than other parts of the land of Israel.

ZECHARIAH 12:9-14

PROMISES TO JUDAH

The *day* here spoken of is the day of Jerusalem's defence and deliverance, that glorious day when God will appear for the salvation of his people, which, if it do refer to the successes which the Jews had against their enemies in the time of the Maccabees, yet certainly looks further, to the *gospel-day*, to Christ's victories over the powers of darkness and the great salvation he has wrought for his chosen. Now we have here an account of two remarkable works designed *in that day*.

I. A glorious work of God to be wrought for his people: "*I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem, v. 9.* Nations come against Jerusalem, many and mighty nations; but they shall all be destroyed, their power shall be broken, and their attempts baffled; the mischief they intend shall return upon their own head." God will seek to destroy them, not as if he were at a loss for ways and means to bring it about (Infinite Wisdom was never nonplussed), but his seeking to do it intimates that he is very earnest and intent upon it (he is jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and has the *day of vengeance* in his heart) and that he overrules means and instruments, and all the motions and operations of second causes, in order to it. He is *framing evil* against them; when he seems to be setting them up he is seeking to destroy them. In Christ's first coming, he *sought to destroy him that had the power of death*, and did destroy him, bruised the serpent's head, and broke all the *powers of darkness* that fought against God's kingdom among men and against the faithful friends and subjects of that kingdom; he *spoiled* them, and *made a show of them openly*. In his second coming, he will complete their destruction, when he shall *put down all opposing rule, principality, and power*, and *death* itself shall be *swallowed up* in that victory. *The last enemy shall be destroyed* of all that *fought against Jerusalem*.

II. A gracious work of God to be wrought in his people, in order to the work that is to be wrought for them. When he seeks to destroy their enemies he will *pour upon them the Spirit of grace and supplication*. Note, When God intends great mercy for his people the first thing he does is to set them a praying; thus he seeks to destroy their enemies by stirring them up to seek to him that he would do it for them; because, though he

has proposed it and promised it, and it is for his own glory to do it, yet he will *for this be enquired of by the house of Israel*, ^{<367>}Ezekiel 36:37. *Ask, and it shall be given.* This honour will he have to himself, and this honour will he put upon prayer and upon praying people. And it is a happy presage to the distressed church of deliverance approaching, and is, as it were, the dawning of its day, when his people are stirred up to cry mightily to him for it. But this promise has reference to, and is performed in, the graces of the Spirit given to all believers, as that ^{<348>}Isaiah 44:3, *I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed*, which was fulfilled when *Jesus was glorified*, ^{<419>}John 7:39. It is a promise of the Spirit, and with him of all *spiritual blessings in heavenly things by Christ*. Now observe here,

1. On whom these blessings are poured out.

(1.) *On the house of David*, on the great men; for they are no more, and no better, than the grace of God makes them. It was promised (v. 8) that *the house of David* should be *as the angel of the Lord*. Now, in order to that, the Spirit of grace is poured upon them; for the more the saints have of the Spirit of grace the more like they are to the holy angels. When God was about to appear for the land, he poured his Spirit of grace upon the house of David, the leading men of the land. It bodes well to a people when princes and great men go before the rest in that which is good, as ^{<415>}2 Chronicles 20:5. The house of David is all summed up in Jesus Christ, *the Son of David*; and upon him, as the head, the Spirit of grace is poured out, from him to be diffused to all his members; *from his fulness we receive, and grace for grace*.

(2.) *On the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, the common people; for the operations of the Spirit are the same upon the mean and weak Christians that they are upon the strong and more grown. The inhabitants of Jerusalem cannot influence public affairs by their powers and policies, as the great men of the house of David may, yet they may do good service by their prayers, and therefore upon them the Spirit shall be poured out. The church is Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem; all true believers, that have their conversation in the heaven, are inhabitants of this Jerusalem, and to them this promise belongs. God will *pour his Spirit upon them*. This is the earnest which all that *believe in Christ shall receive*; thus they are sanctified; thus they are sealed.

2. What these blessings are: *I will pour upon them the Spirit*. That includes all good things, as it qualifies us for the favour of God, and all his other gifts. He will pour out the Spirit,

(1.) As a *Spirit of grace*, to sanctify us and to make us gracious.

(2.) As a *Spirit of supplications*, inclining us to, instructing and assisting us in, the duty of prayer. Note, Wherever the Spirit is given as a Spirit of grace, he is given as a Spirit of sanctification. Wherever he is a Spirit of adoption, he *teaches to cry, Abba, Father*. As soon as ever Paul was converted, *Behold, he prays*, ^{<401>}Acts 9:11. You may as soon find a living man without breath as a living saint without prayer. There is a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit of prayer now under the gospel than was under the law; and the further the work of sanctification is carried in us the better is the work of supplication carried on by us.

3. What the effect of them will be: *I will pour upon them the Spirit of grace*. One would think that it should follow, “And they shall look on him whom they have believed, and shall rejoice” (and it is true that that is one of the fruits of the pouring out of the Spirit, whence we read of *the joy of the Holy ghost*), but it follows, *They shall mourn*; for there is a holy mourning, that is the effect of the pouring out of the Spirit, a mourning for sin, which is of use to quicken faith in Christ and qualify for joy in God. It is here made the matter of a promise that they shall mourn, for there is a mourning that will end in rejoicing and has a blessing entailed upon it. This mourning is a fruit of the Spirit of grace, an evidence of a work of grace in the soul, and a companion of the Spirit of supplication, as it expresses lively affections working in prayer; hence prayers and tears are often put together, ^{<215>}2 Kings 20:5. Jacob, that wrestler with God, *wept and made supplication*. But here it is a mourning for sin that is the effect of the pouring out of the Spirit.

(1.) It is a mourning grounded upon a sight of Christ: *They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him*. Here,

[1.] It is foretold that Christ should be pierced, and this scripture is quoted as that which was fulfilled when Christ's side was pierced upon the cross; see ^{<215>}John 19:37.

[2.] He is spoken of as one whom we have pierced; it is spoken primarily of the Jews, who persecuted him to death (and we find that *those who*

pierced him are distinguished from the other *kindreds of the earth* that shall *wail because of him*, (Rev. Revelation 1:7); yet it is true of us all as sinners, we have pierced Christ, inasmuch as our sins were the cause of his death, for he was *wounded for our transgressions*, and they are the *grief of his soul*; he is *broken with the whorish heart* of sinners, who *therefore* are said to *crucify him afresh* and put him to open shame.

[3.] Those that truly repent of sin look upon Christ as one whom they have pierced, who was pierced for their sins and is pierced by them; and this engages them to *look unto him*, as those that are deeply concerned for him.

[4.] This is the effect of their looking to Christ; it makes them mourn. This was particularly fulfilled in those to whom Peter preached Christ crucified; when they heard it those who had had a hand in piercing him were *pricked to the heart*, and cried out, *What shall we do?* It is fulfilled in all those who sorrow for sin after a godly sort; they look to Christ, and *mourn for him*, not so much for his sufferings as for their own sins that procured them. Note, The genuine sorrows of a penitent soul flow from the believing sight of a pierced Saviour. Looking by faith upon the cross of Christ will set us a mourning for sin after a godly sort.

(2.) It is a great mourning.

[1.] it is like the mourning of a parent for the death of a beloved child. They shall mourn for sin *as one mourns for an only son*, in whose grave the hopes of his family are buried, and shall be inwardly *in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his first-born*, as the Egyptians were when there was a cry throughout all their land for the death of their first-born. The sorrow of children for the death of their parents is sometimes counterfeited, is often small, and soon wears off and is forgotten; but the sorrow of parents for a child, for a son, for an only son, for a first-born, is natural, sincere, unforced, and unaffected, it is secret and lasting; such are the sorrows of a true penitent, flowing purely from love to Christ above any other.

[2.] It is like the mourning of a people for the death of a wise and good prince. It shall be *like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon*, where good king Josiah was slain, for whom there was a general lamentation (v. 11), and perhaps the greater because they were told that it was their sin that provoked God to deprive them of so great a blessing; therefore they cried out, *The crown has fallen from our head*.

Woe unto us, for we have sinned! ^{<2186>}Lamentations 5:16. Christ is our King; our sins were his death, and, for that reason, ought to be our grief.

(3.) It is a general universal mourning (v. 12): *The land shall mourn*. The land itself put on mourning at the death of Christ, for there was then *darkness over all the land*, and the earth trembled; but this is a promise that, in consideration of the death of Christ, multitudes shall be effectually brought to sorrow for sin and turn to God; it shall be such a universal gracious mourning as was when *all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord*, ^{<1012>}1 Samuel 7:2. Some think this is yet to have its complete accomplishment in the general conversion of the Jewish nation.

(4.) It is also a private particular mourning. There shall be not only a mourning of *the land*, by its representatives in a general assembly (as ^{<1015>}Judges 2:5, when the place was called *Bochim — A place of weepers*), but it shall spread itself into all corners of the land: *Every family apart shall mourn* (v. 12), *all the families that remain*, v. 14. All have contributed to the guilt, and therefore all shall share in the grief. Note, The exercises of devotion should be performed by private families among themselves, besides their joining in public assemblies for religious worship. National fasts must be observed, not only in our synagogues, but in our houses. In the mourning here foretold the wives mourn apart by themselves, in their own apartment, as Esther and her maids. And some think it intimates their denying themselves the use even of lawful delights in a time of general humiliation ^{<4105>}1 Corinthians 7:5. Four several families are here specified as examples to others in this mourning: —

[1.] Two of them are royal families: the *house of David*, in Solomon, and the *house of Nathan*, another son of David, brother to Solomon, from whom Zerubbabel descended, as appears by Christ's genealogy, ^{<4127>}Luke 3:27-31. The house of David, particularly that of Nathan, which is now the chief branch of that house, shall go before in this good work. The greatest princes must not think themselves exempted from the law of repentance, but rather obliged most solemnly to express it, for the exciting of others, as Hezekiah humbled himself (^{<4126>}2 Chronicles 32:26), the princes and the king (^{<4116>}2 Chronicles 12:6), and the king of Nineveh, ^{<3186>}Jonah 3:6.

[2.] Two of them are sacred families (v. 13), *the family of the house of Levi*, which was God's tribe, and in it particularly the family of Shimei, which was a branch of the tribe of Levi (^{<3187>}1 Chronicles 6:17), and probably some of the descendants of that family were now of note for

preachers to the people or ministers to the altar. As the princes must mourn for the sins of the magistracy, so must the priests for the *iniquity of the holy things*. In times of general tribulation and humiliation the Lord's ministers are concerned to *weep between the porch and the altar* (²⁹¹⁷Joel 2:17), and not only there, but in their houses apart; for in what families should godliness, both in the form and in the power of it, be found, if not in ministers' families?