

# CHAPTER 14

Divers things were foretold, in the two foregoing chapters, which should come to pass “in that day;” this chapter speaks of a “day of the Lord that cometh,” a day of his judgment, and ten times in the foregoing chapters, and seven times in this, it is repeated, “in that day;” but what that day is that is here meant is uncertain, and perhaps will be so (as the Jews speak) till Elias comes; whether it refer to the whole period of time from the prophet’s days to the days of the Messiah, or to some particular events in that time, or to Christ’s coming, and the setting up of his kingdom upon the ruins of the Jewish polity, we cannot determine, but divers passages here seem to look as far forward as gospel-times. Now the “day of the Lord” brings with it both judgment and mercy, mercy to his church, judgment to her enemies and persecutors.

**I.** The gates of hell are here threatening the church (v. 1, 2) and yet not prevailing.

**II.** The power of Heaven appears here for the church and against the enemies of it (v. 3, 5).

**III.** The events concerning the church are here represented as mixed (v. 6, 7), but issuing well at last.

**IV.** The spreading of the means of knowledge is here foretold, and the setting up of the gospel-kingdom in the world (v. 8, 9), which shall be the enlargement and establishment of another Jerusalem (v. 10, 11).

**V.** Those shall be reckoned with that fought against Jerusalem (v. 12-15) and those that neglect his worship there (v. 17-19).

**VI.** It is promised that there shall be great resort to the church, and great purity and piety in it (v. 16, 20, 21).

## 384 ZECHARIAH 14:1-7

### PRESERVATION OF THE CHURCH

God's providences concerning his church are here represented as strangely changing and strangely mixed.

**I.** As strangely changing. Sometimes the tide runs high and strong against them, but presently it turns, and comes to be in favour of them; and God has, for wise and holy ends, set the one over against the other.

**1.** God here appears against Jerusalem; judgment begins at the house of God. When the *day of the Lord comes* (v. 1) Jerusalem must pass through the fire to be refined. God himself *gathers all nations against Jerusalem to battle* (v. 2); he gives them a charge, as he did Sennacherib, to *take the spoil* and to *take the prey* (<sup>2906</sup>Isaiah 10:6), for the people of Jerusalem have now become the *people of his wrath*. And who can stand before him or before nations gathered by him? Where he gives commission he will give success. The *city shall be taken by the Romans*, who have *nations* at command; the houses shall be rifled, and all the riches of them taken away, by the enemy; and, to gratify an insatiable lust of uncleanness as well as avarice, *the women shall be ravished*, as if victory were a license to the worst of villanies, *jusque datum sceleri — and crimes were sanctioned by law*. *One-half of the city* shall then be carried *into captivity*, to be sold or enslaved, and shall not be able to help itself, such is the destruction that shall be made in the great and terrible *day of the Lord*.

**2.** He presently changes his way, and appears for Jerusalem; for, though judgment begin at the house of God, yet, as it shall not end there, so it shall not make a full end there, (<sup>2907</sup>Jeremiah 4:27; 30:11).

**(1.)** A remnant shall be spared, the same with that *third part* spoken of, (<sup>3838</sup>Zechariah 13:8. *One-half shall go into captivity*, whence they may hereafter be fetched back, *and the residue of the people shall not be cut off*, as one would have feared, *from the city*. Many of the Jews shall receive the gospel, and so shall prevent their being cut off from the city of God, his church upon earth. *In it shall be a tenth*, (<sup>2963</sup>Isaiah 6:13; See <sup>3838</sup>Ezekiel 5:3.

(2.) Their cause shall be pleaded against their enemies (v. 3): *Then*, when God has made use of these nations as a scourge to his people, he shall *go forth and fight against them* by his judgments, *as when he fought* against the enemies of his church formerly *in the day of battle*, with the Egyptians, Canaanites, and others. Note, The instruments of God's wrath will themselves be made the objects of it; for it will come to their turn to drink of the cup of trembling; and whom God fights against he will be sure to overcome and be too hard for. And every former *day of battle*, which God has made to his people a *day of triumph*, as it is an engagement to God to appear for his people, because he is the same, so it is an encouragement to them to trust in him. It is observable that the Roman empire never flourished, after the destruction of Jerusalem as it had done before, but in many instances God fought against it.

(3.) Though Jerusalem and the temple be destroyed, yet God will have a church in the world, into which Gentiles shall be admitted, and with whom the believing Jews shall be incorporated, v. 4, 5. These verses are dark and hard to be understood; but divers good expositors take this to be the meaning of them.

[1.] God will carefully inspect Jerusalem, even then when the enemies of it are laying it waste: *His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives*, whence he may take a full view of the city and temple, <sup><413></sup>Mark 13:3. When the refiner puts his gold into the furnace he stands by it, and has his eye upon it, to see that it receive no damage; so when Jerusalem, God's gold, is to be refined, he will have the oversight of it. He will stand by *upon the mount of Olives*; this was literally fulfilled when our Lord Jesus was often upon this mountain, especially when thence he *ascended up into heaven*, <sup><412></sup>Acts 1:12. It was the last place on which his feet stood on this earth, the place from which he took rise.

[2.] The partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles shall be taken away. The *mountains about Jerusalem*, and particularly this, signified it to be an enclosure, and that it stood in the way of those who would approach to it. Between the Gentiles and Jerusalem this *mountain of Bether*, of *division*, stood, <sup><217></sup>Song of Solomon 2:17. But by the destruction of Jerusalem this mountain shall be made to *cleave in the midst*, and so the Jewish pale shall be taken down, and the church laid in common with the Gentiles, who were made one with the Jews by the breaking down of this *middle wall of partition*, <sup><414></sup>Ephesians 2:14. *Who art thou, O great mountain?* And a

great mountain the ceremonial law was in the way of the Jews' conversion, which, one would think, could never have been got over; yet before Christ and his gospel it was made plain. This *mountain departs*, this *hill removes*, but the *covenant of peace cannot be broken*; for peace is still *preached to him that is afar off and to those that are nigh*.

[3.] A new and living way shall be opened to the new Jerusalem, both to see it and to come into it. The mountain being divided, one-half *towards the north* and the other half *towards the south*, there shall be a *very great valley*, that is, a broad way of communication opened between Jerusalem and the Gentile world, by which the Gentiles shall have free admission into the gospel-Jerusalem, and the word of the Lord, that *goes forth from Jerusalem*, shall have a *free course* into the Gentile world. Thus the *way of the Lord* is prepared, for *every mountain and hill shall be brought low*, and plain and pleasant valleys shall come in the room of them, <sup><340></sup>Isaiah 40:4.

[4.] Those of the Jews that believe shall come in, and join themselves to the Gentiles, and incorporate with them in the gospel-church: *You shall flee to the valley of the mountains*, that valley that is opened between the divided halves of the mount of Olives; they shall hasten into the church with the Gentiles, as formerly the Gentiles with them, <sup><302></sup>Zechariah 8:23. The *valley of the mountains* is the gospel-church, to which there were added of the Jews daily *such as should be saved*, who fled to that valley as to their refuge. This *valley of the mountains* is said to *reach unto Azal*, or *to the separate place*, that is, to all those whom God has *set apart for himself*. When God *makes his mountains a way* (<sup><341></sup>Isaiah 49:11), by making them a valley, the way shall be opened to all the *way-faring men* (<sup><338></sup>Isaiah 35:8), and, *though fools*, they shall not err therein. Or, to those that are now separated from God this valley shall reach; for the Gentiles, who are afar off, shall be made nigh, with the Jews, who are a *people near unto him*, and both have an *access*, a mutual access to each other and a joint access to God as a Father by one Spirit, <sup><405></sup>Ephesians 2:18.

[5.] They shall flee to *the valley of the mountains*, to the gospel-church, under dreadful apprehensions of their danger from the curse of the law. They shall *flee from the wrath to come*, from the avenger of blood, who is in pursuit of them, to the church as to a *city of refuge*, or *as doves to their windows*, as they *fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah*, <sup><300></sup>Amos 1:1. Therefore the gospel reveals the wrath of God from heaven

(~~418~~Romans 1:18) that we might be awakened to *escape for our lives*, to flee as from an earthquake, for we feel the earth ready to sink under us, and we can find no firm footing in it, and therefore must flee to Christ, in whom alone we can stand fast and be easy.

(4.) God shall appear in his glory for the accomplishing of all this: *The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee*, which may refer to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, or to destroy the enemies of Jerusalem, or his coming to set up his kingdom in the world, which is called the *coming of the Son of man* (~~418~~Matthew 24:37), or to his last coming, at the end of time; however, it teaches us,

[1.] That the Lord will come; it has been the faith of all the saints, *Behold, the Lord comes* to fulfil every word that he has spoken in its season.

[2.] When he comes all his saints come with him; they attend his motions and are ready to serve his interests. Christ will come at the end of time with *ten thousands of his saints*, as when he came to give the law upon Mount Sinai.

[3.] Every particular believer, being related to God as his God, may triumph in the expectation of his coming and speak of it with pleasure, *The Lord my God shall come*, shall come to the comfort of all that are his; for, "Blessed Lord, *all the saints shall be with thee*, and it shall be their everlasting happiness to dwell in thy presence; and therefore *come, Lord Jesus.*" And some think that this may be read as a prayer, *Yet, O Lord my God! come, and bring all the saints with thee.*

**II.** God's providences appear here strangely mixed (v. 6, 7): *In that day of the Lord the light shall not be clear nor dark, not day nor night; but at evening time it shall be light.* Some refer this to all the time from hence to the coming of the Messiah; the Jewish church had neither perfect peace nor constant trouble, but a cloudy day, neither rain nor sunshine. But it may be taken more generally, as designed to represent the method God usually takes in the administration of the kingdom both of providence and grace. Here is,

**1.** An idea of the usual course and tenour of God's dispensations; the day of his grace and the day of his providence are *neither clear nor dark, not day nor night*. It is so with the church of God in this world; where the Sun of righteousness has risen it cannot be dark night, and yet short of heaven

it will not be clear day. It is so with particular saints; they are not darkness, but *light in the Lord*, and yet, while there is so much error and corruption remaining in them, it is not perfect day. So it is as to the providences of God that relate to his church; in general the affairs of the church are neither good nor bad in any extremity, but there is a mixture of both; we are singing both of mercy and judgment, and are uncertain which will prevail, whether it be an evening or a morning twilight. We are between hope and fear, not knowing what to make of things.

**2.** An intimation of comfort with reference hereunto: *It shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord.* This intimates,

(1.) The beauty and harmony of such mixed events; there is one and the same design and tendency in all; all the wheels make but one wheel, all the revolutions but one day.

(2.) The brevity of them; it is, as it were, but for one day, for a little moment; the cloud that darkens the light will soon blow over.

(3.) The eye God has upon all these events, and the hand he has in them all; they are *known to the Lord*; he takes notice of them, and orders and disposes of all for the best, according to the counsel of his will.

**3.** An issue very joyful secured at last: *At evening-time it shall be light*: it shall be clear light, and no longer dark; we are sure of it in the other world, and we hope for it in this world — at *evening-time*, when our hopes are quite spent with waiting all day to no purpose, nay, when we fear it will be quite dark, when things are at the worst and the case of the church is most deplorable. As to the church's enemies *the sun goes down at noon*, so to the church it rises at night; unto the upright springs *light out of darkness* (<sup><344></sup>Psalm 112:4); deliverance comes when the tale of bricks is doubled, and when God's people have done looking for it, and so it comes with a pleasing surprise.

## <348> ZECHARIAH 14:8-15

### JUDGMENTS THREATENED

Here are,

**I.** Blessings promised to Jerusalem, the gospel-Jerusalem, in the day of the Messiah, and to all the earth, by virtue of the blessings poured out on Jerusalem, especially to the land of Israel.

**1.** Jerusalem shall be a spring of living waters to the world; it was made so when there the Spirit was poured out upon the apostles, and thence the word of the Lord diffused itself to the nations about (v. 8): *Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem*; for there they began, and thence those set out who were to preach *repentance and remission of sins unto all nations*, <sup><227></sup>Luke 24:47. Note, Where the gospel goes, and the graces of God's Spirit go along with it, there living waters go; those streams that *make glad the city of our God* make glad the country also, and make it like paradise, like the *garden of the Lord*, which was *well watered*. It was the honour of Jerusalem that *thence the word of the Lord went forth* (<sup><228></sup>Isaiah 2:3); and thus far, even in its worst and most degenerate age, for old acquaintance-sake, it was made a blessing, and to be so is to be blessed. Half of these waters shall go *towards the former sea* and *half towards the hinder sea*, as all rivers bend their course towards some sea or other, some eastward, others westward. The gospel shall spread into all parts of the world, into some that lie remote from Jerusalem one way and others that lie as far off another way; for the dominion of the Redeemer, which was thereby to be set up, must be *from sea to sea* (<sup><229></sup>Psalm 72:8), and the earth must be *full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*, and as the waters that in various channels run to the sea. The knowledge of God shall diffuse itself,

**(1.)** Every way. These living waters shall produce both eastern churches and western churches, that shall each of them in its turn be illustrious.

**(2.)** Every day: In *summer and in winter it shall be*. Note, Those who are employed in spreading the gospel may find themselves work both *winter and summer*, and are to serve the Lord therein at all seasons, <sup><408></sup>Acts 20:18. And such a divine power goes along with these living waters that they shall not be dried up, nor the course of them be obstructed, either by the droughts in summer or by the frosts in winter.

**2.** The kingdom of God among men shall be a universal and united kingdom, v. 9.

**(1.)** It shall be a universal kingdom: *The Lord shall be King over all the earth*. He is, and ever was, so of right, and in the sovereign disposals of

his providence his kingdom does *rule over all* and none are exempt from his jurisdiction; but it is here promised that he shall be so by actual possession of the hearts of his subjects; he shall be acknowledged King by all in all places; his authority shall be owned and submitted to, and allegiance sworn to him. This will have its accomplishment with that word (~~4115~~ Revelation 11:15), *The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.*

**(2.)** It shall be a united kingdom: *There shall be one Lord, and his name one.* All shall worship one God only, and not idols, and shall be unanimous in the worship of him. All false gods shall be abandoned, and all false ways of worship abolished; and as God shall be the centre of their unity, in whom they shall all meet, so the scripture shall be the rule of their unity, by which they shall all walk.

**3.** The land of Judea, and Jerusalem, its mother-city, shall be repaired and replenished, and taken under the special protection of Heaven, v. 10, 11. Some think this denotes particular favour to the people of the Jews, and points at their conversion and restoration in the latter days; but it is rather to be understood figuratively of the gospel-church, typified by Judah and Jerusalem, and it signifies the abundant graces with which the church shall be crowned, and the fruitfulness of its members, and the vast numbers of them.

**(1.)** The church shall be like a fruitful country, abounding in all the rich products of the soil. The whole land of Judea, which is naturally uneven and hilly, shall be *turned as a plain*; it shall become a smooth level valley, from Geba, or Gibeah, its utmost border north, to Rimmon, which lay *south of Jerusalem* and was the utmost southern limit of Judea. The gospel of Christ, where it comes in its power, levels the ground; mountains and hills are brought low by it, that the Lord alone may be exalted.

**(2.)** It shall be like a populous city. As the holy land shall be levelled, so the holy city shall be peopled, shall be rebuilt and replenished. *Jerusalem shall be lifted up* out of its low estate, shall be raised out of its ruins; when *the land is turned as a plain*, and not only the *mount of Olives* removed (v. 4), but other mountains too, then Jerusalem shall be *lifted up*, that is, shall appear the more conspicuous; she *shall be inhabited in her place, even in Jerusalem*, ~~3816~~ Zechariah 12:6. The whole city shall be inhabited in the utmost extent of it, and no part of it left to lie waste. The utmost limits of it are here mentioned, between which there shall be no ground lost, but all



built upon, from *Benjamin's-gate* north-east to the *corner-gate* north-west, and from the *tower of Hananeel* in the south to the *king's wine-presses* in the north; when the churches of Christ in all places are replenished with great numbers of holy, humble, serious Christians, and many such are daily added to it, then this promise is fulfilled.

**(3.)** This country and this city shall both be safe, both the meat in the country and the mouths in the city: *Those that dwell in it* shall dwell securely, and there shall be none to make them afraid; there shall be no more of that utter destruction that has laid both town and country waste, no more anathema (as some read it), no more cutting off, no more curse, or separation from God to evil, no more such desolating judgments as you have been groaning under, but Jerusalem *shall be safely inhabited*; there shall be no danger, nor any apprehension of it; neither shall its friends be fearful to disquiet themselves nor its enemies formidable to disquiet them. That promise of Christ explains this — that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church*; and so do the holy security and serenity of mind which believers enjoy in relying on the divine protection.

**II.** Here are judgments threatened against the enemies of the church, that *have fought*, or do fight, against Jerusalem; and the *threatening of these* judgments is in order to the preservation of the church in safety. Men that read and hear of these plagues will be afraid of fighting against Jerusalem, much more when these threatenings are fulfilled in some will others hear and fear. Those that fight against the city of God, and his people, will be found fighting against God, against whom none ever hardened his heart and prospered (v. 12): *This shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem*; whoever they are, God will punish them for the affront done to him, and avenge Jerusalem upon them.

**1.** They shall waste away under grievous and languishing diseases: *Their flesh shall consume away*, and they shall be miserably emaciated, even *while they stand on their feet*, so that they shall be walking skeletons; nothing shall remain but skin and bones. The flesh which they pampered and indulged, and made provision for, when they were fed to the full with the spoils of God's people, shall now *consume away, that it cannot be seen, and the bones that were not seen shall stick out*, ~~as~~ Job 33:21. They *keep their feet*, and hope to *keep their ground*, crawling about as long as they can; but they must yield at last. The organs of sight, the outlets of sin,

*their eyes, shall consume away in their holes, shall sink into their heads or perhaps start out of them; their envious malicious, adulterous eyes, the eyes they had so often fed with spectacles of misery, these shall consume, which shall make not only their countenances ghastly, but their lives wretched. The organs of speech, the outlets of sin, their tongue, shall consume away in their mouth, whereby God will reckon with them for all their blasphemies against himself and invectives against his people. Thus their own tongues shall fall upon them, and their punishment shall be legible in their sin, as his was whose tongue was tormented in hell-flames. Thus Antiochus and Herod consumed away.*

**2.** They shall be dashed in pieces one against another (v. 13): *A great tumult from the Lord shall be among them.* But are tumults from the Lord, who is the *God of order, and not of confusion?* As they are the sin of those that raise them they are not from the Lord, but from the wicked one, and from men's own lusts; but, as they are the punishment of those that suffer by them, they are from the Lord, who serves his own purposes, and carries on his intentions, by the sins, and follies, and restless spirits, of men. It is of themselves that they *bite and devour one another*, but it is of the Lord, the righteous Judge, that thus they are *consumed one of another* (<sup><RIS</sup>Galatians 5:15); as Ahab was deceived by a lying spirit from the Lord, so Abimelech and the men of Shechem were *divided*, and so *destroyed*, by an *evil spirit from the Lord*, (<sup><RIS</sup>Judges 9:23. Note, Those that are confederate and combined against the church will justly be separated, and set against one another; and their tumults raised against God will be avenged in tumults among themselves. And they shall *lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour*, to hold him from striking, or to bind him as his prisoner; nay, *his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour*, to strike and wound him. Note, Those that aim to destroy the church are often made to destroy one another; and every man's sword is sometimes set against his fellow, by him whose sword they all are. Some think this was fulfilled in the factions and dissensions that were among the Jews, when the Romans were destroying them all; for they had fought against the spiritual Jerusalem, the gospel-church; and to that well enough agrees v. 14, *Thou also, O Judah! shalt fight against Jerusalem;* the Jewish nation shall be ruined by itself, shall die by its own hands; the city and country shall be at war with each other, and so both shall be destroyed. *Suis et ipsa Roma viribus ruit — Rome was urged into ruin by its very strength.*

**3.** The plunder of their camp shall greatly enrich the people of God, or the spoils of their country (v. 14): *Judah also shall eat at Jerusalem* (so one learned interpreter reads it); people shall come from all parts to share in the prey; as when Sennacherib's army was routed before Jerusalem there was *the prey of a great spoil divided* (~~3346~~ Isaiah 33:23), so it shall be now; *the wealth of all the heathen round about, that had spoiled Jerusalem, shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance*, that an equal dividend may be made among all the parties entitled to a share of the prize. Note, *The wealth of the sinner is often laid up for the just*, and the Israel of God enriched with the spoil of the Egyptians.

**4.** The very cattle shall share in the plague with which the enemies of God's church shall be cut off, as they did in divers of the plagues of Egypt (v. 15): *All the beasts that shall be in the tents of these wicked men, when God comes to contend with them, shall perish with them, not only beasts used in war, as the horse, but those used for travel, or in the plough, as the mule, the camel, and the ass.* Note, The inferior creatures often suffer for the sin of man and in his plagues. Thus God will show his indignation against sin, and will make the creature that is thus *subject to vanity* groan to be *delivered* into the glorious liberty of the children of God, ~~8121~~ Romans 8:21, 22.

## ~~3446~~ ZECHARIAH 14:16-21

### THREATENINGS AND PROMISES

Three things are here foretold: —

**I.** That a gospel-way of worship being set up in the church there shall be a great resort to it and a general attendance upon it. Those that were left of the enemies of religion shall be so sensible of the mercy of God to them in their narrow escape that they shall apply themselves to the worship of the God of Israel, and pay their homage to him, v. 16. Those that were not consumed shall be converted, and this makes their deliverance a mercy indeed, a double mercy. It is a great change that the grace of God makes upon them; those that had *come against Jerusalem*, finding their attempts vain and fruitless, shall become as much her admirers as ever they had been her adversaries, and shall *come to Jerusalem* to worship there, and go

in concurrence with those whom they had gone contrary to. Note, As some of Christ's foes shall be made his footstool, so others of them shall be made his friends; and, when the principle of enmity is slain in them, their former acts of hostility are pardoned to them, and their services are admitted and accepted, as though they had never *fought against Jerusalem*. They shall *go up to worship* at Jerusalem, because that was the place which God had chosen, and there the temple was, which was a type of Christ and his mediation. Converting grace sets us right,

**1.** In the object of our worship. *They shall* no longer *worship* the Molochs and Baals, the *kings* and *lords*, that the Gentiles worship, the creatures of their own imagination, but *the King*, the *Lord of hosts*, the everlasting King, the King of kings, the sovereign Lord of all.

**2.** In the ordinances of worship, those which God himself has appointed. Gospel-worship is here represented by the *keeping of the feast of tabernacles*, for the sake of those two great graces which were in a special manner *acted* and *signified* in that feast — contempt of the world, and joy in God, <sup>4087</sup>Nehemiah 8:17. The life of a good Christian is a constant *feast of tabernacles*, and, in all acts of devotion, we must retire from the world and rejoice in the Lord, must worship as in that feast.

**3.** In the *Mediator* of our worship; we must go to Christ our temple with all our offerings, for in him only our *spiritual sacrifices* are acceptable to God, <sup>4025</sup>1 Peter 2:5. If we rest in ourselves, we come short of pleasing God; we must go up to him, and mention his righteousness only.

**4.** In the time of it; we must be constant. They shall go up *from year to year*, at the times appointed for this solemn feast. Every day of a Christian's life is a day of the *feast of tabernacles*, and every Lord's day especially (that is the *great day of the feast*); and therefore every day we must worship the Lord of hosts and every Lord's day with a peculiar solemnity.

**II.** That those who neglect the duties of gospel-worship shall be reckoned with for their neglect. God will compel them to come and worship before him, by suspending his favours from those that keep not his ordinances: *Upon them there shall be no rain*, v. 17. Some understand it figuratively; the rain of heavenly doctrine shall be withheld, and of the heavenly grace, which should accompany that doctrine. God will *command the clouds that they rain no rain upon them*. Note, It is a righteous thing with God to

withhold the blessings of grace from those that do not attend the means of grace, to deny the *green pastures* to those that attend not the *shepherd's tents*. Or we may take it literally: *On them there shall be no rain*, to make their ground fruitful. Note, The gifts of common providence are justly denied to those that neglect and despise instituted ordinances. Those that neglected to build the temple were punished with the want of rain (~~SCOT~~ Haggai 2:17), and so were those that neglected to attend there when it was built. If we be barren and unfruitful towards God, justly is the earth made so to us. Many are crossed, and go backward, in their affairs, and this is at the bottom of it — they do not keep close to the worship of God as they should; they go off from God, and then he walks contrary to them. If we omit or postpone the duties he expects from us, it is just with him to deny the favours we expect from him. But what shall be done to the defaulters of the land of Egypt, to whom the threatening of the want of rain is no threatening, for they have no rain at any time; they need none; they desire none; the river Nilus is to them instead of the clouds of heaven, waters their land, and makes it fruitful, so that what is a punishment to others is none to them? v. 18, 19. It is threatened that *if the family of Egypt go not up, that have no rain*, yet God will find out a way to meet with them, for there shall be, in effect, the same plague wherewith other nations are smitten for their neglect. God can, and often did, restrain the overflowing of the river, which was equivalent to the shutting up of the clouds; or if the river did its part, and rose as high as it used to do, God had other ways of bringing famine upon them, and destroying the fruits of their ground, as he did by several of the ten plagues of Egypt, so that *this* (that is, the same) shall be *the punishment of Egypt* that is the punishment of other *nations* who come not up to *keep the feast of tabernacles*. Note, Those who think themselves least indebted to, and depending on, the mercy of heaven, cannot *therefore* think themselves guarded against the justice of Heaven. It does not follow that those who can live without rain can therefore live without God; for not the heavens only, but all other creatures, are that to us that God makes them to be, and no more; nor can any man's way of living enable him to set light by the judgments of God. This shall be the *punishment* — margin, *This shall be the sin of Egypt, and the sin of all nations, that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles*. The same word signifies both *sin* and the *punishment* of sin, so close and inseparable is the connexion between them (as ~~SCOT~~ Genesis 4:7), and sin is often its own punishment. Note, Omissions are sins, and we must come into judgment for them; those contract guilt that *go not up to worship* at

the times appointed, as they have opportunity; and it is a sin that is its own *punishment*, for those who forsake the duty forfeit the privilege of communion with God.

**III.** That those who perform the duties of gospel-worship shall have grace to adorn their profession by the duties of a gospel-conversation too. This is promised (v. 20, 21), and it is necessary to the completing of the beauty and happiness of the church. In general, all shall be *holiness to the Lord*.

**1.** The name and character of holiness shall not be so confined as formerly. *Holiness to the Lord* had been written only upon the high priest's forehead, but now it shall not be so appropriated. All Christians shall be *living temples*, and *spiritual priests*, dedicated to the honour of God and employed in his service.

**2.** Real holiness shall be more diffused than it had been, because there shall be more powerful means of sanctification, more excellent rules, more cogent arguments, and brighter patterns of holiness, and because there shall be a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit of holiness and sanctification, after Christ's ascension than ever before.

**(1.)** There shall be holiness introduced into common things; and those things shall be devoted to God that seemed very foreign.

**[1.]** The furniture of their horses shall be consecrated to God. "*Upon the bells of the horses shall be engraven Holiness to the Lord*, or upon the *bridles* of the horses (so the margin) or the *trappings*. The horses used in war shall no longer be used against God and his people, as they have been, but for him and them. Even their wars shall be holy wars, their troopers serving under God's banner. Their great men, who ride in state with a pompous retinue, shall reckon it their greatest ornament to honour God with their honours. *Holiness to the Lord* shall be written on the harness of their chariot-horses, as great men have sometimes their coat of arms with their motto painted on their coaches; every gentleman shall take the high priest's motto for his, and glory in it, and make it a memento to himself not to do any thing unworthy of it. Travellers shall have it upon their bridles, with which they guide their horses, as those who desire always to be put in mind of it, by having it continually before them, and to guide themselves in all their motions by this rule. The *bells of the horses*, which are designed to quicken them in their journey and to give notice of their approach, shall have *Holiness to the Lord* upon them," to signify that this

is that which we ought to be influenced by ourselves, and make profession of to others, wherever we go.

[2.] The furniture of their houses too shall be consecrated to God, to be employed in his service. *First*, The furniture of the priests' houses, or apartments adjoining to the house of the Lord. The common drinking cups they used shall be *like the bowls before the altar*, that were used either to receive the blood of the sacrifices or to present the wine and oil in, which were for the *drink-offerings*. The vessels which they used for their own tables shall be used in such a religious manner, with such sobriety and temperance, such devotedness to the glory of God, and such a mixture of pious thoughts and expressions, that their meals shall look like sacrifices; they shall eat and drink, not to themselves, but to him that spreads their tables and fills their cups. And thus, in ministers' families especially, should common actions be done after a godly sort, however they are done in other families. *Secondly*, The furniture of other houses, those of the common people: "*Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness to the Lord*. The pots in which they boil their meat, the cups out of which they drink their wine (<sup>281B</sup>Jeremiah 35:5), in these God's good creatures shall never be abused to excess, nor that made the food and fuel of lust which should be oil to the wheels of obedience," as had formerly been, when *all tables were full of vomit and filthiness*, (<sup>288B</sup>Isaiah 28:8. "What they eat and drink out of these shall nourish their bodies for the service of God; and out of these they shall give liberally for the relief of the poor;" then are they *Holiness to the Lord*, as the merchandise and the hire of the converted Tyrians are said to be (<sup>238B</sup>Isaiah 23:18); for both in our gettings and in our spendings we must have an eye to the will of God as our rule and the glory of God as our end. *Thirdly*, When there shall be such an abundance of real holiness people shall not be nice and curious about ceremonial holiness: "*Those that sacrifice shall come and take of these common vessels, and seethe their sacrifices therein*, making no distinction between them and the *bowls before the altar*." In gospel-times the true worshippers shall worship God *in spirit and in truth*, and *neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem*, (<sup>402B</sup>John 4:21. One place shall be as acceptable to God as another (*I will that men pray every where*); and one vessel shall be as acceptable as another. Little regard shall be had to the circumstance, provided there be nothing indecent or disorderly, while the substance is religiously preserved and adhered to. Some think it intimates that there should be greater numbers of sacrifices offered than the vessels

of the sanctuary would serve for; but, rather than any should be turned back or deferred. they shall make no difficulty at all of using common vessels, as the Levites in a case of necessity helped the priests to kill the sacrifices, ~~1428~~ 2 Chronicles 29:34.

(2.) There shall be no unholiness introduced into their sacred things, to corrupt them: *In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts.* Some read it, There shall be no more *the merchant*, for so a Canaanite sometimes signifies; and they think it was fulfilled when Christ once and again drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple. Or though those that were Canaanites, strangers and foreigners, shall be brought into the house of the Lord, yet they shall cease to be Canaanites; they shall have nothing of the spirit or disposition of Canaanites in them. Or it intimates that though in gospel-times people should grow indifferent as to holy vessels, yet they should be very strict in church-discipline, and careful not to admit the profane to special ordinances, but to separate between the precious and the vile, between Israelites and Canaanites. Yet this will not have its full accomplishment short of the heavenly Jerusalem, that *house of the Lord of hosts*, into which *no unclean thing shall enter*; for at the end of time, and not before, Christ shall gather out of his kingdom every thing that offends, and the tares and wheat shall be perfectly and eternally separated.