

CHAPTER 11

This chapter concludes the vision which Ezekiel saw, and this part of it furnished him with two messages: —



I. A message of wrath against those who continued still at Jerusalem, and were there in the height of presumption, thinking they should never fall (v. 1-13).

II. A message of comfort to those who were carried captives into Babylon and were there in the depth of despondency, thinking they should never rise. And, as the former are assured that God has judgments in store for them notwithstanding their present security, so the later are assured that God has mercy in store for them notwithstanding their present distress (v. 14-21). And so the glory of God removes further (v. 22, 23). The vision disappears (v. 24), and Ezekiel faithfully gives his hearers an account of it (v. 25).

EZEKIEL 11:1-13

MESSAGE OF WRATH TO JERUSALEM

We have here,

I. The great security of the prince's of Jerusalem, notwithstanding the judgements of God that were upon them, The prophet was brought, in vision, to the gate of the temple where these princes sat in council upon the present arduous affairs of the city: *The Spirit lifted me up, and brought me to the east gate of the Lord's house, and behold twenty-five men were there.* See how obsequious the prophet was to the Spirit's orders and how observant of all the discoveries that were made to him. It should seem, these twenty-five men were not the same with those twenty-five whom we saw at the door of the temple, *worshipping towards the east* ( Ezekiel 8:16); those seen to have been priests or Levites, for they were between the porch and the altar, but these were princes sitting *in the gate of the Lord's house*, to try causes ( Jeremiah 26:10), and they are here charged, not with corruptions in worship, but with mal-administration in the government; two of them are named, because they were the most active

leading men, and perhaps because the prophet knew them, though he had been some years absent — *Pelatiah* and *Jaazaniah*, not that mentioned ⁽³⁸¹⁾ Ezekiel 8:11, for he was the son of *Shaphan*, this is the *son of Azur*. Some tell us that Jerusalem was divided into twenty-four wards, and that these were the governors or aldermen of those wards, with their mayor or president. Now observe,

1. The general character which God gives of these men to the prophet (v. 2): “*These are the men that devise mischief; under pretence of concerting measures for the public safety they harden people in their sins, and take off their fear of God's judgements which they are threatened with by the prophets; they gave wicked counsel in this city, counselling them to restrain and silence the prophets, to rebel against the king of Babylon, and to resolve upon holding the city out to the last extremity.*” Note, It is bad with a people when the things that belong to their peace are hidden from the eyes of those who are entrusted with their counsels. And, when mischief is done, God knows at whose door to lay it, and, in the day of discovery and recompence, will be sure to lay it at the right door, and will say, *These are the men that devised it*, though they are great men, and pass for wise men, and must not now be contradicted or controlled.

2. The particular charge exhibited against them in proof of this character. They are indicted for words spoken at their council-board, which he that *stands in the congregation of the mighty* would take cognizance of (v. 3); they said to this effect, “*It is not near; the destruction of our city, that has been so often threatened by the prophets, is not near, not so near as they talk of.*” They are conscious to themselves of such an enmity to reformation that they cannot but conclude it will come at last; but they have such an opinion of God's patience (though they have long abused it) that they are willing to hope it will not come this great while. Note, Where Satan cannot persuade men to look upon the judgement to come as a thing doubtful and uncertain, yet he gains his point by persuading them to look upon it as a thing at a distance, so that it loses its force: if it be sure, yet *it is not near*; whereas, in truth, *the Judge stands before the door*. Now, if the destruction is not near, they conclude, *Let us build houses; let us count upon a continuance, for this city is the caldron and we are the flesh*. This seems to be a proverbial expression, signifying no more than this, “We are as safe in this city as flesh in a boiling pot; the walls of the city shall be to us as *walls of brass*, and shall receive no more damage from the besiegers about it than the *cauldron* does from *the fire under it*. Those that think to

force us out of our city into captivity shall find it to be as much at their peril as it would be to take the flesh out of a boiling pot with their hands.” This appears to be the meaning of it, by the answer God gives to it (v. 9): “*I will bring you out of the midst of the city, where you think yourselves safe, and then it will appear (v. 11) that this is not your caldron, neither are you the flesh.*” Perhaps it has a particular reference to *the flesh of the peace-offerings*, which it was so great an offence for the priests themselves to take out of the *caldron* while it was in seething (as we find ⁴⁹¹³1 Samuel 2:13, 14), and then it intimates that they were the more secure because Jerusalem was the holy city, and they thought themselves a holy people in it, not to be meddled with. Some think this was a banter upon Jeremiah, who in one of his first visions saw Jerusalem represented by a *seething pot*, ²⁰¹³Jeremiah 1:13. “Now,” say they, in a way of jest and ridicule, “if it be a seething pot, we are as the flesh in it, and who dares meddle with us?” Thus they continued mocking the messengers of the Lord, even while they suffered for so doing; but *be you not mockers, lest your bands be made strong*. Those hearts are indeed which are made more secure by those words of God which were designed for warning to them.

II. The method taken to awaken them out of their security. One would think that the providences of God which related to them were enough to startle them; but, to help them to understand and improve those, the word of God is sent to them to give them warning (v. 4): *Therefore prophesy against them, and try to undeceive them; prophesy, O son of man! upon these dead and dry bones*. Note, The greatest kindness ministers can do to secure sinners is to preach against them, and to show them their misery and danger, though they are ever so unwilling to see them. We then act most for them when we appear most against them. But the prophet, being at a loss what to say to men that were hardened in sin, and that bade defiance to the judgments of God, *the Spirit of the Lord fell upon him*, to make him full of power and courage, and *said unto him, Speak*. Note, When sinners are flattering themselves into their own ruin it is time to speak, and to tell them that they shall have no peace if they go on. Ministers are sometimes so bashful and timorous, and so much at a loss, that they must be put on to speak, and to speak boldly. But he that commands the prophet to speak gives him instructions what to say; and he must address himself to them as *the house of Israel* (v. 5), for not the princes only, but all the people, were concerned to know the truth of their cause, to know the worst of it. They are the *house of Israel*, and therefore

the *God of Israel* is concerned, in kindness to them, to give them warning; and they are concerned in duty to him to take the warning. And what is it that the must say to them in God's name?

1. Let them know that the God of heaven takes notice of the vain confidences with which they support themselves (v. 5): “*I know the things which come into your minds every one of them*, what secret reasons you have for these resolutions, and what you aim at in putting so good a face upon a matter you know to be bad.” Note, God perfectly knows not only the things that come out of our mouths, but the things that come into our minds, not only all we say, but all we think; even those thoughts that are most suddenly darted into our minds, and that as suddenly slip out of them again, so that we ourselves are scarcely aware of them, yet God knows them. He knows us better than we know ourselves; *he understands our thoughts afar off*. The consideration of this should oblige us to keep our hearts with all diligence, that no vain thoughts come into them or lodge within them.

2. Let them know that those who advised the people to stand it out should be accounted before God the murderers of all who had fallen, or should yet fall, in Jerusalem, by the sword of the Chaldeans; and those slain were the only ones that should *remain in the city*, as the *flesh in the caldron*. “*You have multiplied your slain in the city*, not only those whom you have by the sword of justice unjustly put to death under colour of law, but those whom you have by your wilfulness and pride unwisely exposed to the sword of war, though you were told by the prophets that you should certainly go by the worst. Thus you, with your stubborn humour, have *filled the streets of Jerusalem with the slain*,” v. 6. Note, Those who are either unrighteous or imprudent in beginning or carrying on a war bring upon themselves a great deal of the guilt of blood; and those who are slain in the battles or sieges which they, by such a reasonable peace as the war aimed at, might have prevented, will be called *their slain*. Now these slain are the only flesh that shall be left in this *caldron*, v. 7. There shall none remain to keep possession of the city but those that are buried in it. There shall be no inhabitants of Jerusalem but the inhabitants of the graves there, no freemen of the city but the free among the dead.

3. Let them know that, how impregnable soever they thought their city to be, they should be forced out of it, either driven to flight or dragged into captivity: *I will bring you forth out of the midst of it*, whether you will or

no, v. 7, 9. They had provoked God to forsake the city, and thought they should do well enough by their own policy and strength when he was gone; but God will make them know that there is no peace to those that have left their God. If they have by their sins driven God from his house, he will soon by his judgments drive them from theirs; and it will be found that those are least safe that are most secure: “This city shall not be your *caldron*, neither shall you be the *flesh*; you shall not soak away in it as you promise yourselves, and die in your nest; you think yourself safe *in the midst thereof*, but you shall not be long there.”

4. Let them know that when God has got them out of the midst of Jerusalem he will pursue them with his judgments wherever he finds them, the judgments which they thought to shelter themselves from by keeping close in Jerusalem. They feared the sword if they should go out to the Chaldeans, and therefore would abide in their *caldron*, but, says God, I will *bring a sword upon you* (v. 8) and *you shall fall by the sword*, v. 10. Note, The fear of the wicked shall come upon him. And there is no fence against the judgments of God when they come with commission, no, not in walls of brass. They were afraid of trusting to the mercy of strangers. “But,” says God, “I will deliver you into the hands of strangers, whose resentments you shall feel, since you were not willing to lie at their mercy.” See ~~3887~~ Jeremiah 38:17, 18. They thought to escape the judgments of God, but God says that he will *execute judgments upon them*; and whereas they resolved, if they must be judged, that it should be in Jerusalem, God tells them (v. 10 and again v. 11) that he will judge them *in the borders of Israel*, which was fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar slew all the nobles of Judah at Riblah in the land of Hamath, on the utmost border of the land of Canaan. Note, Those who have taken ever so deep root in the place where they live cannot be sure that in that place they shall die.

5. Let them know that all this is the due punishment of their sin, and *the revelation of the righteous judgment of God* against them: *You shall know that I am the Lord*, v. 10 and again v. 12. Those shall be made to know by the sword of the Lord who would not be taught by his word what a hatred he has to sin, and what a fearful thing it is for impenitent sinners to fall into his hands. *I will execute judgments*, and then you shall know that *I am the Lord*, for the Lord is known by the judgments which he executes upon those *that have not walked in his statutes*. Hereby it is known that he made the law, because he punishes the breach of it. *I will execute judgments*

among you (says God) because *you have not executed my judgments*, v. 12. Note, The executing of the judgments of God's mouth by us, in a uniform steady course of obedience to his law, is the only way to prevent the executing of the judgments of his hand upon us in our ruin and confusion. One way or other. God's judgments will be executed; the law will take place either in its precept or in its penalty. If we do not give honour to God by executing his judgments as he has commanded, he will *get him honour* upon us by executing his judgments as he has threatened; and thus we shall know that he is the Lord, the sovereign Lord of all, that will not be mocked. And observe, When they cast off God's statutes, and walked not in them, they did *after the manners of the heathen that were round about them*, and introduced into their worship all their impure, ridiculous, and barbarous usages. When men leave the settled rule of divine institutions, they wander endlessly. Justly therefore was this made the reason why they should *keep God's ordinances*, that they might not *commit the abominable customs of the heathen*, ~~(LXX)~~ Leviticus 18:30.

III. This awakening word is here immediately followed by an awakening providence, v. 13. Here we may observe,

1. With what power Ezekiel prophesied, or, rather, what a divine power went along with it: *It came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died*; he was mentioned (v. 1) as a principal man among the twenty-five princes that made all the mischief in Jerusalem. It should seem, this was done in vision now, as the slaying of the ancient men (~~(2006)~~ Ezekiel 9:6) upon occasion of which Ezekiel prayed (v. 8) as he did here; but it was an assurance that when this prophecy should be published it should be done in fact. The death of Pelatiah was an earnest of the complete accomplishment of this prophecy. Note, God is pleased oftentimes to single out some sinners, and to make them monuments of his justice, for warning to others of what is coming; and some that thought themselves very safe and snatched away suddenly, and drop down dead in an instant, as Ananias and Sapphira at Peter's feet when he prophesied.

2. With what pity Ezekiel prayed. Thought the sudden death of Pelatiah was a confirmation of Ezekiel's prophecy, and really an honour to him, yet he was in deep concern about it, and laid it to heart as if he had been his relation or friend: *He fell on his face and cried with a loud voice*, as one in earnest, "*Ah! Lord God, wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel? Many are swept away by the judgments we have been under; and*

shall the remnant which have escaped the sword die thus by the immediate hand of heaven? Then thou wilt indeed make a full end.” Perhaps it was Ezekiel's infirmity to bewail the death of this wicked prince thus, as it was Samuel's to mourn so long for Saul; but thus he showed how far he was from desiring the woeful day he foretold. David lamented the sickness of those that hated and persecuted him. And we ought to be much affected with the sudden death of others, yea, though they are wicked.

~~23114~~ EZEKIEL 11:14-21

SUFFERINGS AND HOPES OF PIOUS CAPTIVES

Prophecy was designed to exalt *every valley* as well as to bring low *every mountain and hill* (~~23114~~ Isaiah 40:4), and prophets were to speak not only conviction to the presumptuous and secure, but comfort to the despised and desponding that trembled at God's word. The prophet Ezekiel, having in the former part of this chapter received instructions for the awakening of those that were *at ease in Zion*, is in these verses furnished with comfortable words for those that mourned in Babylon and *by the rivers* there sat *weeping* when they *remembered Zion*. Observe,

I. How the pious captives were trampled upon and insulted over by those who continued in Jerusalem, v. 15. God tells the prophet what the inhabitants of Jerusalem said of him and the rest of them that were already carried away to Babylon. God had owned them as *good figs*, and declared it was for their good that he had sent them into Babylon; but the inhabitants of Jerusalem abandoned them, supposing those that were really the best saints to be the greatest sinners of all men that dwelt in Jerusalem. Observe,

1. How they are described: They are *thy brethren* (says God to the prophet), whom thou hast a concern and affection for; they are *the men of thy kindred* (*the men of thy redemption*, so the word is), thy next of kin, to whom the right of redeeming the alienated possession belongs, but who are so far from being able to do it that they have themselves gone into captivity. They are *the whole house of Israel*; God so accounts of them because they only have retained their integrity, and are bettered by their captivity. They were not only of the same family and nation with Ezekiel, but of the same spirit; they were his hearers, and he had communion with

them in holy ordinances; and perhaps upon that account they are called *his brethren and the men of his kindred*.

2. How they were disowned by *the inhabitants of Jerusalem*; they said of them, *Get you far from the Lord*. Those that were at ease and proud themselves scorned their brethren that were humbled and under humbling providences.

(1.) They cut them off from being members of their church. Because they had separated themselves from their rulers and in compliance with the will of God had surrendered themselves to the king of Babylon, they excommunicated them, and said, "*Get you far from the Lord*; we will have nothing to do with you." Those that were superstitious were very willing to shake off those that were conscientious, and were severe in their censures of them and sentences against them, as if they were forsaken and forgotten of the Lord and were cut off from the communion of the faithful.

(2.) They cut them off from being members of the commonwealth too, as if they had no longer any part or lot in the matter: "*Unto us is this land given in possession*, and you have forfeited your estates by surrendering to the king of Babylon, and we have thereby become entitled to them." God takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the contempt which those that are in prosperity put upon their brethren that are in affliction.

II. The gracious promises which God made to them in consideration of the insolent conduct of their brethren towards them. Those that hated them and cast them out said, *Let the Lord be glorified*; but *he shall appear to their joy*, ²¹⁶⁵ Isaiah 66:5. God owns that his hand had gone out against them, which had given occasion to their brethren to triumph over them (v. 16): "It is true *I have cast them far off among the heathen and scattered them among the countries*; they look as if they were an abandoned people, and so mingled with the nations that they will be lost among them; but I have mercy in store for them." Note, God takes occasion from the contempts which are put upon his people to speak comfort to them, as David hoped God would reward him good for Shimei's cursing. His time to support his people's hopes is when their enemies are endeavouring to drive them to despair. Now God promises,

1. That he will make up to them the want of the temple and the privileges of it (v. 16): *I will be to them as a little sanctuary, in the countries where*

they shall come. Those at Jerusalem have the temple, but without God; those in Babylon have God, though without the temple.

(1.) *God will be a sanctuary to them;* that is, a place of refuge; to him they shall flee, and in him they shall be safe, as he was that took hold on *the horns of the altar.* Or, rather, they shall have such communion with God in the land of their captivity as it was thought could be had nowhere but in the temple. They shall there *see God's power and his glory,* as they used to *see them in the sanctuary;* they shall have the tokens of God's presence with them, and his grace in their hearts shall sanctify their prayers and praises, as well as ever the altar sanctified the gift, so that they shall *please the Lord better than an ox or bullock.*

(2.) *He will be a little sanctuary,* not seen or observed by their enemies, who looked with an evil and an envious eye upon *that house* at Jerusalem which was high and great, ¹⁹⁸1 Kings 9:8. They were but few and mean, and a little sanctuary was fittest for them. God regards the low estate of his people, and suits his favours to their circumstances. Observe the condescensions of divine grace. The great God will be to his people a little sanctuary. Note, Those that are deprived of the benefit of public ordinances, if it be not their own fault, may have the want of them abundantly made up in the immediate communications of divine grace and comforts.

2. That God would in due time put an end to their afflictions, bring them out of the land of their captivity, and settle them again, them or their children, in their own land (v. 17): *"I will gather even you that are thus dispersed, thus despised, and given over for lost by your own countrymen; I will gather you from the people,* distinguish you from those with whom you are mingled, deliver you from those by whom you are held captives, *and assemble you in a body out of the countries where you have been scattered;* you shall not come back one by one, but all together, which will make your return more honourable, safe, and comfortable; and then *I will give you the land of Israel,* which now your brethren look upon you as for ever shut out from." Note, It is well for us that men's severe censures cannot cut us off from God's gracious promises. There are many that will be found to have a place in the holy land whom uncharitable men, by their monopolies of it to themselves, had secluded from it. *I will give you the land of Israel,* give it to you again by a new grant, *and they shall come thither.* If there be any thing in the change of the person from *you* to *them,*

it may signify the posterity of those to whom the promise is made. “*You shall have the title as the patriarchs had, and those that come after shall have the possession.*”

3. That God by his grace would part between them and their sins, v. 18. Their captivity shall effectually cure them of their idolatry: *When they come thither to their own land again they shall take away all the detestable things thereof.* Their idols, that had been their delectable things, should now be looked upon with detestation, not only the idols of Babylon, where they were captives, but the idols of Canaan, where they were natives; they should not only not worship them as they had done, but they should not suffer any monuments of them to remain: *They shall take all the abominations thereof thence.* Note, *Then* it is in mercy that we return to a prosperous estate, when we return not to the sins and follies of that state. *What have I to do any more with idols?*

4. That God would powerfully dispose them to their duty; they shall not only *cease to do evil*, but they shall *learn to do well*, because there shall be not only an end of their troubles, but a return to their peace.

(1.) God will plant good principles in them; he will make the tree good, v. 19. This is a gospel promise, and is made good to all those whom God designs for the heavenly Canaan; for God prepares all for heaven whom he has prepared heaven for. It is promised,

[1.] That God *will give them one heart*, a heart entire for the true God and not divided as it had been among many gods, a heart firmly fixed and resolved for God and not wavering, steady and uniform, and not inconstant with itself. *One heart* is a sincere and upright heart, its intentions of a piece with its professions.

[2.] That he *will put a new spirit within them*, a temper of mind agreeable to the new circumstances into which God in his providence would bring them. All that are sanctified have *a new spirit*, quite different from what it was; they act from new principles, walk by new rules, and aim at new ends. A new name, or a new face, will not serve without a new spirit. *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.*

[3.] That he *will take away the stony heart out of their flesh*, out of their corrupt nature. Their hearts shall no longer be, as they have been, dead and

dry, and hard and heavy, as a stone, no longer incapable of bearing good fruit, so that the good seed is lost upon it, as it was on the *stony ground*.

[4.] That he *will give them a heart of flesh*, not dead or proud flesh, but living flesh; he will make their hearts sensible of spiritual pains and spiritual pleasures, will make them tender, and apt to receive impressions. This is God's work, it is his gift, his gift by promise; and a wonderful and happy change it is that is wrought by it, from death to life. This is promised to those whom God would bring back to their own land; for *then* such a change of the condition is for the better indeed when it is accompanied with such a change of the heart; and such a change must be wrought in all those that shall be brought to the *better country*, that is, the heavenly.

(2.) Their practices shall be consonant to those principles: *I will give them a new spirit*, not that they may be able to discourse well of religion and to dispute for it, but *that they may walk in my statutes* in their whole conversation *and keep my ordinances* in all acts of religious worship, v. 20. These two must go together; and those to whom God has given *a new heart and a new spirit* will make conscience of both; and then *they shall be my people and I will be their God*. The ancient covenant, which seemed to be broken and forgotten, shall be renewed. By their idolatry, it should seem, they had cast God off; by their captivity, it should seem, God had cast them off. But when they were cured of their idolatry, and delivered out of their captivity, God and his Israel own one another again. God, by his good work in them, will make them his *people*; and then, by the tokens of his good-will towards them, he will show that he is *their God*.

III. Here is a threatening of wrath against those who hated to be reformed. As, when judgments are threatened, the righteous are distinguished so as not to share in the evil of those judgments, so, when favours are promised, the wicked are distinguished so as not to share in the comfort of those favours; they have no part nor lot in the matter, v. 21. *But, as for those that have no grace, what have they to do with peace?* Observe,

1. Their description. Their *heart walks after the heart of their detestable things*; they have as great a minds to worship devils as devils have to be worshipped. Or, in opposition to the *new heart* which God gives his people, which is a heart after his own heart, they have a *heart after the*

heart of their idols; in their temper and practice they conformed to the characters and accounts given them of their idols, and the ideas they had of them, and of them they learned lewdness and cruelty. Here lies the root of all their wickedness, the corruption of the heart; as the root of their reformation is laid in the renovation of the heart. The heart has its walks, and according as those are the man is.

2. Their doom. It carries both justice and terror in it: *I will recompense their way upon their own heads*; I will deal with them as they deserve. There needs no more than this to speak God righteous, that he does but render to men according to their deserts: and yet such are the deserts of sin that there needs no more than this to speak the sinner miserable.

EZEKIEL 11:22-25

THE VISIONS OF THE DIVINE GLORY

Here is,

1. The departure of God's presence from the city and temple. When the message was committed to the prophet, and he was fully apprized of it, fully instructed how to separate between *the precious and the vile*, then *the cherubim lifted up their wings and the wheels beside them* (v. 22) as before, ^{<310>}Ezekiel 10:19. Angels, when they have done their errands in this lower world, are upon the wing to be gone, for they lose no time. We left *the glory of the Lord* last at *the east gate of the temple* (^{<310>}Ezekiel 10:19), which is here said to be in the *midst of the city*. Now here we are told that, finding and wondering that there was none to intercede, none to uphold, none to invite its return, it removed next to *the mountain which is on the east side of the city* (v. 23); that was the *mount of Olives*. On this mountain they had set up their idols, to confront God in his temple, when he dwelt there (^{<1110>}1 Kings 11:7), and thence it was called *the mount of corruption* (^{<1230>}2 Kings 23:13); therefore there God does as it were set up his standard, his tribunal, as it were to confront those who thought to keep possession of the temple for themselves now that God had left it. From that mountain there was a full prospect of the city; thither God removed, to make good what he had said (^{<1520>}Deuteronomy 32:20), *I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be*. It was from this mountain that Christ *beheld the city and wept over it*, in the foresight of its last

destruction by the Romans. *The glory of the Lord* removed thither, to be as it were yet within call, and ready to return if now at length, *in this their day*, they would have *understood the things that belonged to their peace*. Loth to depart bids oft farewell. God, by going away thus slowly, thus gradually, intimated that he left them with reluctance, and would not have gone if they had not perfectly forced him from them. He did now, in effect, say, *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel?* But, though he bear long, he will not bear always, but will at length forsake those, and cast them off for ever, who have forsaken him and cast him off.

2. The departure of this vision from the prophet. At length it *went up from him* (v. 24); he saw it mount upwards, till it went out of sight, which would be a confirmation to his faith that it was a heavenly vision, that it descended from above, for thitherward it returned. Note, The visions which the saints have of the glory of God will not be constant will they come to heaven. They have glimpses of that glory, which they soon lose again, visions which go up from them, tastes of divine pleasures, but not a continual feast. It was from the mount of Olives that the vision went up, typifying the ascension of Christ to heaven from that very mountain, when those that had seen him *manifested in the flesh* saw him no more. It was foretold (³⁸⁰⁴Zechariah 14:4) that *his feet should stand upon the mount of Olives*, stand last there.

3. The prophet's return to those of the captivity. The same spirit that had carried him in a trance or ecstasy to Jerusalem brought him back to Chaldea; for there the bounds of his habitation are at present appointed, and that is the place of his service. The Spirit came to him, not to deliver him out of captivity, but (which was equivalent) to support and comfort him in his captivity.

4. The account which he gave to his hearers of all he had seen and heard, v. 25. He received that he might give, and he was *faithful to him that appointed him*; he delivered his message very honestly: he *spoke all that*, and that only, which God *had shown* him. He told them of the great wickedness he had seen at Jerusalem, and the ruin that was hastening towards that city, that they might not repent of their surrendering themselves to the king of Babylon as Jeremiah advised them, and blame themselves for it, nor envy those that staid behind, and laughed at them for going when they did, nor wish themselves there again, but be content in

their captivity. Who would covet to be in a city so full of sin and so near to ruin? It is better to be in Babylon under the favour of God than in Jerusalem under his wrath and curse. But, though this was delivered immediately to those of the captivity, yet we may suppose that they sent the contents of it to those at Jerusalem, with whom they kept up a correspondence; and well would it have been for Jerusalem if she had taken the warning hereby given.