

# CHAPTER 1

We have here the first alphabet of this lamentation, twenty-two stanzas, in which the miseries of Jerusalem are bitterly bewailed and her present deplorable condition is aggravated by comparing it with her former prosperous state; all along, sin is acknowledged and complained of as the procuring cause of all these miseries; and God is appealed to for justice against their enemies and applied to for compassion towards them. The chapter is all of a piece, and the several remonstrances are interwoven; but here is,

**I.** A complaint made to God of their calamities, and his compassionate consideration desired (v. 1-11).

**II.** The same complaint made to their friends, and their compassionate consideration desired (v. 12-17).

**III.** An appeal to God and his righteousness concerning it (v. 18-22), in which he is justified in their affliction and is humbly solicited to justify himself in their deliverance.

## ~~200~~ LAMENTATIONS 1:1-11

### THE MISERIES OF JERUSALEM

Those that have any disposition to *weep with those that weep*, one would think, should scarcely be able to refrain from tears at the reading of these verses, so very pathetic are the lamentations here.

**I.** The miseries of Jerusalem are here complained of as very pressing and by many circumstances very much aggravated. Let us take a view of these miseries.

**1.** As to their civil state.

**(1.)** A city that was populous is now depopulated, v. 1. It is spoken of by way of wonder — Who would have thought that ever it should come to this! Or by way of enquiry — What is it that has brought it to this? Or by way of lamentation — Alas! alas! (as ~~680~~ Revelation 18:10, 16, 19) *how*

*doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!* She was full of her own people that replenished her, and full of the people of other nations that resorted to her, with whom she had both profitable commerce and pleasant converse; but now her own people are carried into captivity, and strangers make no court to her: she *sits solitary*. The *chief places of the city* are not now, as they used to be, *place of concourse*, where *wisdom cried* (~~201~~ Proverbs 1:20, 21); and justly are they left unfrequented, because wisdom's cry there was not heard. Note, Those that are ever so much increased God can soon diminish. *How has she become as a widow!* Her king that was, or should have been, as a husband to her, is cut off, and gone; her God has departed from her, and has given her a bill of divorce; she is emptied of her children, is solitary and sorrowful as a widow. Let no family, no state, not Jerusalem, no, nor Babylon herself, be secure, and say, *I sit as a queen*, and shall never *sit as a widow*, (~~247~~ Isaiah 47:8; ~~687~~ Revelation 18:7).

(2.) A city that had dominion is now in subjection. She had been *great among the nations*, greatly loved by some and greatly feared by others, and greatly observed and obeyed by both; some made her presents, and others paid her taxes; so that she was really *princess among the provinces*, and every sheaf bowed to hers; even the princes of the people entreated her favour. But now the tables are turned; she has not only lost her friends and *sits solitary*, but has lost her freedom too and sits *tributary*; she paid tribute to Egypt first and then to Babylon. Note, Sin brings a people not only into solitude, but into slavery.

(3.) A city that used to be full of mirth has now become melancholy and upon all accounts full of grief. Jerusalem had been a joyous city, whither the tribes went up on purpose to rejoice before the Lord; she was *the joy of the whole earth*, but now *she weeps sorely*, her laughter if turned into mourning, her solemn feasts are all gone; she weeps *in the night*, as true mourners do who weep in secret, in silence and solitude; *in the night*, when others compose themselves to rest, her thoughts are most intent upon her troubles, and grief then plays the tyrant. What the prophet's head was for her, when she regarded it not, now her head is — *as waters*, and her *eyes fountains of tears*, so that she *weeps day and night* (~~291~~ Jeremiah 9:1); *her tears are continually on her cheeks*. Though nothing dries away sooner than a tear, yet fresh griefs extort fresh tears, so that her cheeks are never free from them. Note, There is nothing more commonly seen *under*

*the sun than the tears of the oppressed, with whom the clouds return after the rain,* <sup>201</sup> Ecclesiastes 4:1.

(4.) Those that were separated from the heathen now *dwell among the heathen*; those that were a peculiar people are now a mingled people (v. 3): *Judah has gone into captivity*, out of her own land into the land of her enemies, and there she abides, and is likely to abide, among those that are aliens to God and the covenants of promise, with whom *she finds no rest*, no satisfaction of mind, nor any settlement of abode, but is continually hurried from place to place at the will of the victorious imperious tyrants. And again (v. 5): “*Her children have gone into captivity before the enemy*; those that were to have been the seed of the next generation are carried off; so that the land that is now desolate is likely to be still desolate and lost for want of heirs.” Those that dwell among their own people, and that a free people, and in their own land, would be more thankful for the mercies they thereby enjoy if they would but consider the miseries of those that are forced into strange countries.

(5.) Those that used in their wars to conquer are now conquered and triumphed over: *All her persecutors overlook her between the straits* (v. 3); they gained all possible advantages against her, so that her people unavoidably *fell into the hand of the enemy*, for there was no way to escape (v. 7); they were hemmed in on every side, and, which way soever they attempted to flee, they found themselves embarrassed. When they made the best of their way they could make nothing of it, but were overtaken and overcome; so that every where *her adversaries are the chief and her enemies prosper* (v. 5); which way soever their sword turns they get the better. Such straits do men bring themselves into by sin. If we allow that which is our greatest adversary and enemy to have dominion over us, and to be chief in us, justly will our other enemies be suffered to have dominion over us.

(6.) Those that had been not only distinguished by a dignified people, on whom God had put honour, and to whom all their neighbours had paid respect, are now brought into contempt (v. 8): *All that honoured her before despise her*; those that courted an alliance with her now value it not; those that caressed her when she was in pomp and prosperity slight her now that she is in distress, *because they have seen her nakedness*. By the prevalency of the enemies against her they perceive her weakness, and that she is not so strong a people as they thought she had been; and by the

prevalency of God's judgments against her they perceive her wickedness, which now comes to light and is every where talked of. Now it appears how they have vilified themselves by their sins: *The enemies magnify themselves* against them (v. 9); they trample upon them, and insult over them, and in their eyes they have *become vile*, the tail of the nations, though once they were the head. Note, *Sin is the reproach of any people*.

(7.) Those that lived in a fruitful land were ready to perish, and many of them did perish, for want of necessary food (v. 11): *All her people sigh* in despondency and despair; they are ready to faint away; their spirits fail, and therefore they sigh, *for they seek bread* and seek it in vain. They were brought at last to that extremity that there was *no bread for the people of the land* (<sup>2516</sup>Jeremiah 52:6), and in their captivity they had much ado to get break, <sup>2416</sup>Jeremiah 5:6. *They have given their pleasant things*, their jewels and pictures, and all the furniture of their closets and cabinets, which they used to please themselves with looking upon, they have sold these to buy bread for themselves and their families, have parted with them *for meat to relieve the soul*, or (as the margin is) *to make the soul come again*, when they were ready to faint away. They desired no other cordial than meat. *All that a man has will he give for life*, and for break, which is the staff of life. Let those that abound in pleasant things not be proud of them, nor fond of them; for the time may come when they may be glad to let them go for necessary things. And let those that have competent food to relieve their soul be content with it, and thankful for it, though they have not pleasant things.

2. We have here an account of their miseries in their ecclesiastical state, the ruin of their sacred interest, which was much more to be lamented than that of their secular concerns.

(1.) Their religious feasts were no more observed, no more frequented (v. 4): *The ways of Zion do mourn*; they look melancholy, overgrown with grass and weeds. It used to be a pleasant diversion to see people continually passing and repassing in the highway that led to the temple, but now you may stand there long enough, and see nobody stir; for *none come to the solemn feasts*; a full end is put to them by the destruction of that which was the *city of our solemnities*, <sup>2310</sup>Isaiah 33:20. *The solemn feasts* had been neglected and profaned (<sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 1:11, 12), and therefore justly is an end now put to them. But, when thus *the ways of Zion* are made to *mourn*, all the sons of Zion cannot but mourn with them. It is very

grievous to good men to see religious assemblies broken up and scattered, and those restrained from them that would gladly attend them. And, as *the ways of Zion mourned*, so *the gates of Zion*, in which the faithful worshippers used to meet, *are desolate*; for there is none to meet in them. Time was when *the Lord loved the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob*, but now he has forsaken them, and is provoked to withdraw from them, and therefore it cannot but fare with them as it did with the temple when Christ quitted it. *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate*, <sup><423></sup>Matthew 23:38.

(2.) Their religious persons were quite disabled from performing their wonted services, were quite dispirited: *Her priests sigh* for the desolations of the temple; their songs are turned into sighs; they sigh, for they have nothing to do, and therefore there is nothing to be had; they sigh, as the people (v. 11), *for want of bread*, because the offerings of the Lord, which were their livelihood, failed. It is time to sigh when the priests, the Lord's ministers, sigh. *Her virgins* also, that used, with their music and dancing, to grace the solemnities of their feasts, *are afflicted and in heaviness*. Notice is taken of their service in the day of Zion's prosperity (<sup><485></sup>Psalm 68:25, *Among them were the damsels playing with timbrels*), and therefore notice is taken of the failing of it now. *Her virgins are afflicted*, and therefore *she is in bitterness*; that is, all the inhabitants of Zion are so, whose character it is that they are *sorrowful for the solemn assembly*, and that to them *the reproach of it is a burden*, <sup><318></sup>Zephaniah 3:18.

(3.) Their religious places were profaned (v. 10): *The heathen entered into her sanctuary*, into the temple itself, into which no Israelite was permitted to enter, though ever so reverently and devoutly, but the priests only. *The stranger that comes nigh*, even to worship there, *shall be put to death*. Thither the heathen now crows rudely in, not to worship, but to plunder. God had commanded that *the heathen should not* so much as *enter into the congregation*, nor be incorporated with the people of the Jews (<sup><423></sup>Deuteronomy 23:3); yet now they *enter into the sanctuary* without control. Note, Nothing is more grievous to those who have a true concern for the glory of God, nor is more lamented, than the violation of God's laws, and the contempt they see put upon sacred things. What *the enemy did wickedly in the sanctuary* was complained of, <sup><474></sup>Psalm 74:3, 4.

(4.) Their religious utensils, and all the rich things with which the temple was adorned and beautified, and which were made use of in the worship of

God, were made a prey to the enemy (v. 10): *The adversary has spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things*, has grasped them all, seized them all, for himself. What these pleasant things are we may learn from <sup>2311</sup>Isaiah 64:11, where, to the complaint of the burning of the temple, it is added, *All our pleasant things are laid waste*; the ark and the altar, and all the other tokens of God's presence with them, these were their pleasant things above any other things, and these were now broken to pieces and carried away. Thus from *the daughter of Zion all her beauty has departed*, v. 6. *The beauty of holiness was the beauty of the daughter of Zion*; when the temple, that holy and beautiful house, was destroyed, her beauty was gone; that was the breaking of *the staff of beauty*, the taking away of the pledges and seals of the covenant, <sup>2310</sup>Zechariah 11:10.

(5.) Their religious days were made a jest of (v. 7): *The adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths*. They laughed at them for observing one day in seven as a day of rest from worldly business. Juvenal, a heathen poet, ridicules the Jews in his time for losing a seventh part of their time:

— *cui septima quaeque fuit lux*  
*Ignava et vitae partem non attigit ullam* —  
*They keep their sabbaths to their cost,*  
*For thus one day in sev'n is lost;*

whereas sabbaths, if they be sanctified as they ought to be, will turn to a better account than all the days of the week besides. And whereas the Jews professed that they did it in obedience to their God, and to his honour, their adversaries asked them, “What do you get by it now? What profit have you in keeping the ordinances of your God, who now deserts you in your distress?” Note, it is a very great trouble to all that love God to hear his ordinances mocked at, and particularly his sabbaths. Zion calls them *her sabbaths*, for the sabbath was made for men; they are his institutions, but they are her privileges; and the contempt put upon sabbaths all the sons of Zion take to themselves and lay to heart accordingly; nor will they look upon sabbaths, or any other divine ordinances, as less honourable, nor value them less, for their being mocked at.

(6.) That which greatly aggravated all these grievances was that her state at present was just the revers of what it had been formerly, v. 7. Now, *in the days of affliction and misery*, when every thing was black and dismal, *she*

*remembers all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old*, and now knows how to value them better than formerly, when she had the full enjoyment of them. God often makes us know the worth of mercies by the want of them; and adversity is borne with the greatest difficulty by those that have fallen into it from the height of prosperity. This cut David to the heart, when he was banished from God's ordinances, that he could remember when he *went with the multitude to the house of God*, <sup><1904></sup>Psalm 42:4.

**II.** The sins of Jerusalem are here complained of as the procuring provoking cause of all these calamities. Whoever are the instruments, God is the author of all these troubles; it is *the Lord that has afflicted her* (v. 5) and he has done it as a righteous Judge, for *she has sinned*.

**1.** Her sins are for number numberless. Are her troubles many? Her sins are many more. it is *for the multitude of her transgressions that the Lord has afflicted her*. See <sup><2814></sup>Jeremiah 30:14. When the transgressions of a people are multiplied we cannot say, as Job does in his own case, that *wounds are multiplied without cause*, <sup><897></sup>Job 9:17.

**2.** They are for nature exceedingly heinous (v. 8): *Jerusalem has grievously sinned*, has *sinned sin* (so the word is), sinned wilfully, deliberately, has sinned that sin which of all others is the abominable things that the Lord hates, the sin of idolatry. The sins of Jerusalem, that makes such a profession and enjoys such privileges, are of all others the most grievous sins. She has *sinned grievously* (v. 8), and therefore (v. 9) she *came down wonderfully*. note, Grievous sins bring wondrous ruin; there are some workers of iniquity to whom there is a strange punishment, <sup><897></sup>Job 31:3. They are such sins as may plainly be read in the punishment.

**(1.)** They have been very oppressive and therefore are justly oppressed (v. 3): *Judah has gone into captivity*, and it is *because of affliction and great servitude*, because the rich among them afflicted the poor and made them serve with rigour, and particularly (as the Chaldee paraphrases it) because they had oppressed their Hebrew servants, which is charged upon them, <sup><2841></sup>Jeremiah 34:11. Oppression was one of their crying sins (<sup><2106></sup>Jeremiah 6:6, 7) and it is a sin that cries aloud.

**(2.)** They have made themselves vile, and therefore are justly vilified. They all *despise her* (v. 8), for *her filthiness is in her skirts*; it appears

upon her garments that she has rolled them in the mire of sin. None could stain our glory if we did not stain it ourselves.

**(3.)** They have been very secure and therefore are justly surprised with this ruin (v. 9): *She remembers not her last end*; she did not take the warning that was given her to *consider her latter end*, to consider what would be the end of such wicked courses as she took, and therefore she *came down wonderfully*, in an astonishing manner, that she might be made to feel what she would not fear; therefore God shall *make their plagues wonderful*.

**III.** Jerusalem's friends are here complained of as false and faint-hearted, and very unkind: They *have all dealt treacherously with her* (v. 2), so that, in effect, *they have become here enemies*. Her deceivers have created her as much vexation as her destroyers. The staff that breaks under us may do us as great a mischief as the *staff that beats us*, <sup>3206</sup>Ezekiel 29:6, 7. *Her princes*, that should have protected her, have not courage enough to make head against the enemy for their own preservation; they *are like harts*, that, upon the first alarm, betake themselves to flight and make no resistance; nay, they *are like harts* that are famished for want of *pasture*, and therefore *are gone without strength before the pursuer*, and, having no strength for flight, are soon run down and made a prey of. her neighbours are unneighbourly, for,

**1.** There is none *to help her* (v. 7); either they could not or they would not; nay,

**2.** *She has not comforter*, none to sympathize with her, or suggest any thing to alleviate her griefs, v. 7, 9. Like Job's friends, they saw it was to no purpose, her *grief was so great*; and *miserable comforters were they all* in such a case.

**IV.** Jerusalem's God is here complained to concerning all these things, and all is referred to his compassionate consideration (v. 9): "*O Lord! behold my affliction*, and take cognizance of it;" and (v. 11), "*See, O Lord! and consider*, take order about it." Note, The only way to make ourselves easy under our burdens is to cast them upon God first, and leave it to him to do with us as seemeth him good.



## ~~2112~~ LAMENTATIONS 1:12-22

### JERUSALEM'S COMPLAINT

The complaints here are, for substance, the same with those in the foregoing part of the chapter; but in these verses the prophet, in the name of the lamenting church, does more particularly acknowledge the hand of god in these calamities, and the righteousness of his hand.

**I.** The church in distress here magnifies her affliction, and yet no more than there was cause for; her groaning was not heavier than her strokes. She appeals to all spectators: *See if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow*, v. 12. This might perhaps be truly said of Jerusalem's griefs; but we are apt to apply it too sensibly to ourselves when we are in trouble and more than there is cause for. Because we feel most from our own burden, and cannot be persuaded to reconcile ourselves to it, we are ready to cry out, Surely never was *sorrow like unto our sorrow*; whereas, if our troubles were to be thrown into a common stock with those of others, and then an equal dividend made, share and share alike, rather than stand to that we should each of us say, "Pray, give me my own again."

**II.** She here looks beyond the instruments to the author of her troubles, and owns them all to be directed, determined, and disposed of by him: "It is *the Lord that has afflicted me*, and he has *afflicted me* because he is angry with me; the greatness of his displeasure may be measured by the greatness of my distress; it is *in the day of his fierce anger*," v. 12. Afflictions cannot but be very much our griefs when we see them arising from God's wrath; so the church does here.

**1.** She is as one in a fever, and the fever is of God's sending: "*He has sent fire into my bones* (v. 13), a preternatural heat, which *prevails against them*, so that they are *burnt like a hearth* (~~1412~~ Psalm 102:3), pained and wasted, and dried away."

**2.** She is as one in a net, which the more he struggles to get out of the more he is entangled in, and this net is of God's spreading. "The enemies could not have succeeded in their stratagems had not God *spread a net for my feet*."

3. She is as one in a wilderness, whose way is embarrassed, solitary, and tiresome: “*He has turned me back, that I cannot go on, has made me desolate, that I have nothing to support me with, but am faint all the day.*”

4. She is as one in a yoke, not yoked for service, but for penance, tied neck and heels together (v. 14): *The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand.* Observe, We never are entangled in any yoke but what is framed out of our own transgressions. The sinner is *holden with the cords of his own sins*, <sup>(4052)</sup>Proverbs 5:22. The yoke of Christ's commands is an *easy yoke* (<sup>(4113)</sup>Matthew 11:30), but that of our own transgressions is a heavy one. God is said to bind this yoke when he charges guilt upon us, and brings us into those inward and outward troubles which our sins have deserved; when conscience, as his deputy, binds us over to his judgment, then *the yoke is bound and wreathed by the hand of his justice*, and nothing but the hand of his pardoning mercy will unbind it.

5. She is as one in the dirt, and he it is that has *trodden under foot all her mighty men*, that has disabled them to stand, and overthrown them by one judgment after another, and so left them to be trampled upon by their proud conquerors, v. 15. Nay, she is as one in a wine-press, not only trodden down, but trodden to pieces, crushed as grapes in the wine-press of God's wrath, and her blood pressed out as wine, and it is God that has thus *trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah.*

6. She is in the hand of her enemies, and it is the Lord that has delivered her *into their hands* (v. 14): *He has made my strength to fall*, so that *I am not able to make head against them*; nay, not only not able to rise up against them, but *not able to rise up from them*, and then *he has delivered me into their hands*; nay (v. 15), *he has called an assembly against me, to crush my young men*, and such an assembly as it is in vain to think of opposing; and again (v. 17), *The Lord has commanded concerning Jacob that his adversaries should be round about him.* He that has many a time *commanded deliverances for Jacob* (<sup>(4344)</sup>Psalms 44:4) now commands an invasion against Jacob, because Jacob has disobeyed the commands of his law.

III. She justly demands a share in the pity and compassion of those that were the spectators of her misery (v. 12): “*Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by? Can you look upon me without concern? What! are your hearts as adamant and your eyes as marbles, that you cannot bestow upon me one*

compassionate thought, or look, or tear? Are not you also in the body? Is it nothing to you that your neighbor's house is on fire?" There are those to whom Zion's sorrows and ruins are nothing; they are not *grieved for the affliction of Joseph*. How pathetically does she beg their compassion! (v. 18): "*Hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: hear my complaints, and see what cause I have for them.*" This is a request like that of Job (~~18:21~~ Job 19:21), *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O you my friends!* It helps to make a burden sit lighter if our friends sympathize with us, and mingle their tears with ours, for this is an evidence that, though we are in affliction, we are not in contempt, which is commonly as much dreaded in an affliction as any thing.

**IV.** She justifies her own grief, though it was very extreme, for these calamities (v. 16): "*For these things I weep, I weep in the night (v. 2), when none sees; my eye, my eye, runs down with water.*" Note, This world is a vale of tears to the people of God. Zion's sons are often Zion's mourners. *Zion spreads forth her hands* (v. 17), which is here an expression rather of despair than of desire; she flings out her hands as giving up all for gone. Let us see how she accounts for this passionate grief.

**1.** Her God has withdrawn from her; and Micah, that had but gods of gold, when they were stolen from him cried out, *What have I more? And what is it that you say unto me? What aileth thee?* The church here grieves excessively; for, says she, *the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me*. God is the comforter; he used to be so to her; he only can administer effectual comforts; it is his word that speaks them; it is his Spirit that speaks them to us. His are strong consolations, able to *relieve the soul, to bring it back* when it is gone, and we cannot of ourselves *fetch it again*; but now he has departed in displeasure, he is *far from me*, and beholds me *afar off*. Note, It is no marvel that the souls of the saints faint away, when God, who is the only Comforter that can relieve them, keeps at a distance.

**2.** Her children are removed from her, and are in no capacity to help her: it is for them that she weeps, as Rachel for hers, *because they were not*, and therefore she *refuses to be comforted*. *Her children were desolate, because the enemy prevailed against them*; there is *none of all her sons to take her by the hand* (~~28:18~~ Isaiah 51:18); they cannot help themselves, and how should they help her? Both the damsels and the youths, that were her joy

and hope, *have gone into captivity*, v. 18. It is said of the Chaldeans that they had *no compassion upon young men nor maidens*, not on the fair sex, not on the blooming age, <sup><4817></sup>2 Chronicles 36:17.

**3.** Her friends failed her; some would not and others could not give her any relief. She *spread forth her hands*, as begging relief, but *there is none to comfort her* (v. 17), none that can do it, none that cares to do it; she *called* for her *lovers*, and, to engage them to help her, *called* them her *lovers*, but they *deceived* her (v. 19), they proved like the brooks in summer to the thirsty traveller, <sup><4815></sup>Job 6:15. Note, Those creatures that we set our hearts upon and raise our expectations from we are commonly deceived and disappointed in. Her idols were her lovers. Egypt and Assyria were her confidants. But they deceived her. Those that made court to her in her prosperity were shy of her, and strange to her, in her adversity. Happy are those that have made God their friend and keep themselves in his love, for he will not deceive them!

**4.** Those whose office it was to guide her were disabled from doing her any service. The *priests* and the *elders*, that should have appeared at the head of affairs, died for hunger (v. 19); they *gave up the ghost*, or were ready to expire, *while they sought their meat*; they went a begging for bread to keep them alive. *The famine is sore indeed in the land* when there is no bread to the wise, when priests and elders are starved. The priests and elders should have been her comforters; but how should they comfort others when they themselves were comfortless? *“They have heard that I sigh*, which should have summoned them to my assistance; but *there is none to comfort me. Lover and friend hast thou put far from me.”*

**5.** Her enemies were too hard for her, and they insulted over her; they have *prevailed*, v. 16. *Abroad the sword bereaves* and slays all that comes in its way, and *at home* all provisions are cut off by the besiegers, so that *there is as death*, that is, famine, which is as bad as the pestilence, or worse — *the sword without and terror within*, <sup><4825></sup>Deuteronomy 32:25. And as the enemies, that were the instruments of the calamity, were very barbarous, so were those that were the standers by, the Edomites and Ammonites, that bore ill will to Israel: They have *heard of my trouble, and are glad that thou hast done it* (v. 21); they rejoice in the trouble itself; they rejoice that it is God's doing; it pleases them to find that God and his Israel have fallen out, and they act accordingly with a great deal of strangeness towards them. *Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them*, that they are

afraid of touching and are shy of, v. 17. Upon all these accounts it cannot be wondered at, nor can she be blamed, that *her sighs are many*, in grieving for what is, and that *her heart is faint* (v. 22) in fear of what is yet further likely to be.

**V.** She justifies God in all that is brought upon her, acknowledging that her sins had deserved these severe chastenings. The yoke that lies so heavily, and binds so hard, is *the yoke of her transgressions*, v. 14. The fetters we are held in are of our own making, and it is with our own rod that we are beaten. When the church had spoken here as if she thought the Lord severe she does well to correct herself, at least to explain herself, but acknowledging (v. 18), *The Lord is righteous*. He does us no wrong in dealing thus with us, nor can we charge him with any injustice in it; how unrighteous soever men are, we are sure that the *Lord is righteous*, and manifests his justice, though they contradict all the laws of theirs. Note, Whatever our troubles are, which God is pleased to inflict upon us, we must own that therein he *is righteous*; we understand neither him nor ourselves if we do not own it, <sup><4176</sup>2 Chronicles 12:6. she owns the equity of God's actions, but owning the iniquity of her own: *I have rebelled against his commandments* (v. 18); and again (v. 20), *I have grievously rebelled*. We cannot speak ill enough of sin, and we must always speak worst of our own sin, must call it *rebellion, grievous rebellion*; and very grievous sins is to all true penitents. It is this that lies more heavily upon her than the afflictions she was under: "*My bowels are troubled; they work within me as the troubled sea; my heart is turned within me, is restless, is turned upside down; for I have grievously rebelled.*" Note, Sorrow for our sin must be great sorrow and must affect the soul.

**VI.** She appeals both to the mercy and to the justice of God in her present case.

**1.** She appeals to the mercy of God concerning her own sorrows, which had made her the proper object of his compassion (v. 20): "*Behold, O Lord! for I am in distress; take cognizance of my case, and take such order for my relief as thou pleasest.*" Note, It is matter of comfort to us that the troubles which oppress our spirits are open before God's eye.

**2.** She appeals to the justice of God concerning the injuries that her enemies did her (v. 21, 22): "*Thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, the day that is fixed in the counsels of God and published in the*

prophecies, when my enemies, that now prosecute me, *shall be made like unto me*, when the cup of trembling, now put into my hands, shall be put into theirs.” It may be read as a prayer, “Let the day appointed come,” and so it goes on, “*Let their wickedness come before thee*, let it come to be remembered, let it come to be reckoned for; take vengeance on them for all the wrongs they have done to me (~~1904~~ Psalm 109:14, 15); hasten the time when thou wilt *do to them* for their transgressions *as thou hast done to me* for mine.” This prayer amounts to a protestation against all thoughts of a coalition with them, and to a prediction of their ruin, subscribing to that which God had in his word spoken of it. Note, Our prayers may and must agree with God's word; and what day God has here called we are to call for, and no other. And though we are bound in charity to forgive our enemies, and to pray for them, yet we may in faith pray for the accomplishment of that which God has spoken against his and his church's enemies, that will not repent to give him glory.