

CHAPTER 12

In this chapter we have,

- I.** The prophet's humble complaint to God of the success that wicked people had in their wicked practices (v. 1, 2) and his appeal to God concerning his own integrity (v. 3), with a prayer that God would, for the sake of the public, bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end (v. 3, 4).
- II.** God's rebuke to the prophet for his uneasiness at his present troubles, bidding him prepare for greater (v. 5, 6).
- III.** A sad lamentation of the present deplorable state of the Israel of God (v. 7-13).
- IV.** An intimation of mercy to God's people, in a denunciation of wrath against their neighbours that helped forward their affliction, that they should be plucked out; but with a promise that if they would at last join themselves with the people of God they should come in sharers with them in their privileges (v. 14-17).

◀H1▶ JEREMIAH 12:1-6

THE PROPHET'S APPEAL TO GOD

The prophet doubts not but it would be of use to others to know what had passed between God and his soul, what temptations he had been assaulted with and how he had got over them; and therefore he here tells us,

- I.** What liberty he humbly took, and was graciously allowed him, to reason with God concerning his judgments, v. 1. He is about to *plead* with God, not to quarrel with him, or find fault with his proceedings, but to enquire into the meaning of them, that he might more and more see reason to be satisfied in them, and might have wherewith to answer both his own and others' objections against them. The works of the Lord, and the reasons of them, are *sought out even of those that have pleasure therein*.
◀H1▶ Psalm 111:2. We may not *strive with our Maker*, but we may reason with him. The prophet lays down a truth of unquestionable certainty,

which he resolves to abide by in managing this argument: *Righteous art thou, O Lord! when I plead with thee*. Thus he arms himself against the temptation wherewith he was assaulted, to envy the prosperity of the wicked, before he entered into a parley with it. Note, When we are most in the dark concerning the meaning of God's dispensations we must still resolve to keep up right thoughts of God, and must be confident of this, that he never did, nor ever will do, the least wrong to any of his creatures; even when his *judgments are unsearchable as a great deep*, and altogether unaccountable, yet *his righteousness is as conspicuous and immovable as the great mountains*, ^{PSALM} Psalm 36:6. Though sometimes *clouds and darkness are round about him*, yet *justice and judgment are always the habitation of his throne*, ^{PSALM} Psalm 97:2. When we find it hard to understand particular providences we must have recourse to general truths as our first principles, and abide by them; however dark the providence may be, *the Lord is righteous*; see ^{PSALM} Psalm 73:1. And we must acknowledge it to him, as the prophet here, even when we *plead with him*, as those that have no thoughts of contending but of learning, being fully assured that he will be *justified when he speaks*. Note, However we may see cause for our own information to plead with God, yet it becomes us to own that, whatever he says or does, he is in the right.

II. What it was in the dispensations of divine Providence that he stumbled at and that he thought would bear a debate. It was that which has been a temptation to many wise and good men, and such a one as they have with difficulty got over. They see the designs and projects of wicked people successful: *The way of the wicked prospers*; they compass their malicious designs and gain their point. They see their affairs and concerns in a good posture: *They are happy*, happy as the world can make them, though *they deal treacherously, very treacherously*, both with God and man. Hypocrites are chiefly meant (as appears, v. 2), who dissemble in their good professions, and depart from their good beginnings and good promises, and in both they deal treacherously, very treacherously. It has been said that men cannot expect to prosper who are unjust and dishonest in their dealings; but these deal treacherously, and yet *they are happy*. The prophet shows (v. 2) both their prosperity and their abuse of their prosperity.

1. God had been very indulgent to them and they were got beforehand in the world: “They are planted in a good land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and *thou hast planted them!* nay, thou didst cast out the heathen to

plant them,” ^{<BIB>}Psalm 44:2, 80:8. Many a tree is planted that yet never grows nor comes to any thing; but *they have taken root*; their prosperity seems to be confirmed and settled. They take root in the earth, for there they fix themselves, and thence they draw the sap of all their satisfaction. Many trees however take root which yet never come on; but these *grow, yea they bring forth fruit*; their families are built up, they live high, and spend at a great rate; and all this was owing to the benignity of the divine Providence, which smiled upon them, ^{<BIB>}Psalm 73:7.

2. Thus God had favoured them, though they had dealt treacherously with him: *Thou art near in their mouth and far from their reins*. This was no uncharitable censure, for he spoke by the Spirit of prophecy, without which it is not safe to charge men with hypocrisy whose appearances are plausible. Observe,

(1.) Thought they cared not for thinking of God, nor had any sincere affection to him, yet they could easily persuade themselves to speak of him frequently and with an air of seriousness. Piety from the teeth outward is no difficult thing. Many speak the language of Israel that are not Israelites indeed.

(2.) Though they had on all occasions the name of God ready in their mouth, and accustomed themselves to those forms of speech that savoured of piety, yet they could not persuade themselves to keep up the fear of God in their hearts. The form of godliness should engage us to keep up the power of it; but with them it did not do so.

III. What comfort he had in appealing to God concerning his own integrity (v. 3): *But thou, O Lord! knowest me*. Probably the wicked men he complains of were forward to reproach and censure him (^{<BIB>}Jeremiah 18:18), in reference to which this was his comfort, that God was a witness of his integrity. God knew he was not such a one as they were (who had God *near in their mouths, but far from their reins*), nor such a one as they took him to be, and represented him, a deceiver and a false prophet; those that thus abused him did not know him, ^{<BIB>}1 Corinthians 2:8. “*But thou, O Lord! knowest me, though they think me not worth their notice.*”

1. Observe what the matter is concerning which he appeals to God: *Thou knowest my heart towards thee*. Note, We are as our hearts are, and our hearts are good or bad according as they are, or are not, towards God; and

this is that therefore concerning which we should examine ourselves, that we may approve ourselves to God.

2. The cognizance to which he appeals: “*Thou knowest me* better than I know myself, not by hearsay or report, for *thou hast seen me*, not with a transient glance, but thou hast *tried my heart*.” God's knowledge of us is as clear and exact and certain as if he had made the most strict scrutiny. Note, The God with whom we have to do perfectly knows how our hearts are towards him. He knows both the guile of the hypocrite and the sincerity of the upright.

IV. He prays that God would turn his hand against these wicked people, and not suffer them to prosper always, though they had prospered long: “Let some judgment come to *pull them out* of this fat pasture *as sheep for the slaughter*, that it may appear their long prosperity was but like the feeding of lambs in a large place, to *prepare them for the day of slaughter*,” ^{<2016>}Hosea 4:16. God suffered them to prosper that by their pride and luxury they might fill up the measure of their iniquity and so be ripened for destruction; and therefore he thinks it a piece of necessary justice that they should fall into mischief themselves, because they had done so much mischief to others, that they should be pulled out of their land, because they had brought ruin upon the land, and the longer they continued in it the more hurt they did, as the plagues of their generation (v. 4): “*How long shall the land mourn*. (as it does under the judgments of God inflicted upon it) *for the wickedness of those that dwell therein?* Lord, shall those prosper themselves that ruin all about them?”

1. See here what the judgment was which the land was now groaning under: *The herbs of every field wither* (the grass is burnt up and all the products of the earth fail), and then it follows of course, the beasts are consumed, and the birds, ^{<1185>}1 Kings 18:5. This was the effect of a long drought, or want of rain, which happened, as it should seem, at the latter end of Josiah's reign and the beginning of Jehoiakim's; it is mentioned ^{<2185>}Jeremiah 3:3, 8:13, 9:10, 12, and more fully afterwards, Jeremiah 14. If they would have been brought to repentance by this less judgment, the greater would have been prevented. Now why was it that this *fruitful land* was *turned into barrenness*, but *for the wickedness of those that dwell therein?* ^{<578>}Psalms 17:34. Therefore the prophet prays that these wicked people might *die for their own sin*, and that the whole nation might not suffer for it.

2. See here what was the language of their wickedness: *They said, He shall not see our last end*, either,

(1.) God himself shall not. Atheism is the root of hypocrisy. God is *far from their reins*, though *near in their mouth*, because they say, *How doth God know?* ^{<271>}Psalm 73:11; ^{<823>}Job 22:13. He knows not what way we take nor what it will end in. Or,

(2.) Jeremiah *shall not see our last end*; whatever he pretends, when he asks us what shall be in the end hereof he cannot himself foresee it. They look upon him as a false prophet. Or, “whatever it is, he shall not live to see it, for we will be the death of him,” ^{<2412>}Jeremiah 11:21. Note,

[1.] Men's setting their latter end at a great distance, or looking upon it as uncertain, is at the bottom of all their wickedness, ^{<210>}Lamentations 1:9.

[2.] The whole creation groans under the burden of the sin of man, ^{<482>}Romans 8:22. It is for this that *the earth mourns* (so it may be read); *cursed is the ground for thy sake*.

V. He acquaints us with the answer God gave to those complaints of his, v. 5, 6. We often find the prophets admonished, whose business it was to admonish others, as ^{<2381>}Isaiah 8:11. Ministers have lessons to learn as well as lessons to teach, and must themselves hear God's voice and preach to themselves. Jeremiah complained much of the wickedness of the men of Anathoth, and that, notwithstanding that, they prospered. Now, this seems to be an answer to that complaint.

1. It is allowed that he had cause to complain (v. 6): “*Thy brethren, the priests of Anathoth, who are of the house of thy father, who ought to have protected thee and pretended to do so, even they have dealt treacherously with thee, have been false to thee, and, under colour of friendship, have designedly done thee all the mischief they could; they have called a multitude after thee, raised the mob upon thee, to whom they have endeavoured, by all arts possible, to render thee despicable or odious, while at the same time they pretended that they had no design to persecute thee nor to deprive thee of thy liberty. They are indeed such as thou canst not believe, though they speak fair words to thee. They seem to be thy friends, but are really thy enemies.*” Note, God's faithful servants must not think it at all strange if their foes be *those of their own house* (^{<4106>}Matthew

10:36), and if those they expect kindness from prove such as they can put no confidence in, ^{<305>}Micah 7:5.

2. Yet he is told that he carried the matter too far.

(1.) He laid the unkindness of his countrymen too much to heart. *They wearied* him, because it was *in a land of peace wherein he trusted*, v. 5. It was very grievous to him to be thus hated and abused by his own kindred. He was disturbed in his mind by it; his spirit was sunk and overwhelmed with it, so that he was in great agitation and distress about it. Nay, he was discouraged in his work by it, began to be weary of prophesying, and to think of giving it up.

(2.) He did not consider that this was but the beginning of his sorrow, and that he had sorer trials yet before him; and, whereas he should endeavour by a patient bearing of this trouble to prepare himself for greater, by his uneasiness under this he did but unfit himself for what further lay before him: *If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, and run thee quite out of breath, then how wilt thou contend with horses?* If the injuries done him by the men of Anathoth made such an impression upon him, what would he do when the princes and chief priests at Jerusalem should set upon him with their power, as they did afterwards? ^{<200>}Jeremiah 20:2; 32:2. If he was so soon tired *in a land of peace*, where there was little noise or peril, *what would he do in the swellings of Jordan*, when that overflows all its banks and frightens even lions out of their thickets? ^{<200>}Jeremiah 49:19. Note,

[1.] While we are in this world we must expect troubles, and difficulties. Our life is a race, a warfare; we are in danger of being run down.

[2.] God's usual method being to begin with smaller trials, it is our wisdom to expect greater than any we have yet met with. We may be called out to *contend with horsemen*, and the sons of Anak may perhaps be reserved for the last encounter.

[3.] It highly concerns us to prepare for such trials and to consider what we should do in them. How shall we preserve our integrity and peace when we come to *the swellings of Jordan*?

[4.] In order to our preparation for further and greater trials, we are concerned to approve ourselves well in present smaller trials, to keep up our spirits, keep hold of the promise, keep in our way, with our eye upon

the prize, so run that we may obtain it. Some good interpreters understand this as spoken to the people, who were very secure and fearless of the threatened judgments. If they have been so humbled and impoverished by smaller calamities, so wasted by the Assyrians, — if the Ammonites and Moabites, who were their brethren, and with whom they were in league, proved false to them (as undoubtedly they would), — then how would they be able to deal with such a powerful adversary as the Chaldeans would be? How would they bear up their head against that invasion which should come like *the swelling of Jordan*?

211 JEREMIAH 12:7-13

THE STATE OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL

The people of the Jews are here marked for ruin.

I. God is here brought in falling out with them and leaving them desolate; and they could never have been undone if they had not provoked God to desert them. It is a terrible word that God here says (v. 7): *I have forsaken my house* — the temple, which had been his palace; they had polluted it, and so forced him out of it: *I have left my heritage*, and will look after it no more. His people that he has taken such delight in, and care of, are now thrown out of his protection. They had been *the dearly beloved of his soul*, precious in his sight and honorable above any people, which is mentioned to aggravate their sin in returning him hatred for his love and their misery in throwing themselves out of the favour of one that had such a kindness for them, and to justify God in his dealings with them. He sought not occasion against them, but, if they would have conducted themselves with any tolerable propriety, he would have made the best of them, for they were *the beloved of his soul*; but they had conducted themselves so that they had provoked him to *give them into the hand of their enemies*, to leave them unguarded, an easy prey to those that bore them ill-will. But what was the quarrel God had with a people that had been so long dear to him? Why, truly, they had degenerated.

1. They had become like *beasts of prey*, which nobody loves, but every body avoids and gets as far off from as he can (v. 8): *My heritage is unto me as a lion in the forest*. Their sins cry to heaven for vengeance as loud as a lion roars. Nay, they *cry out against God* in the threatenings and

slaughter which they breathe against his prophets that speak to them in his name; and what is said and done against them God takes as said and done against himself. They blaspheme his name, oppose his authority, and bid defiance to his justice, and so *cry out against him as a lion in the forest*. Those that were the *sheep of God's pasture* had become barbarous and ravenous, and as ungovernable as lions in the forest; *therefore he hated them*; for what delight could the God of love take in a people that had now become as roaring lions and raging beasts, fit to be taken and shot at, as a vexation and torment to all about them?

2. They had become like *birds of prey*, and therefore also unworthy a place in God's house, where neither beasts nor birds of prey were admitted to be offered in sacrifice (v. 9): *My heritage is unto me as a bird with talons* (so some read it, and so the margin); they are continually pulling and pecking at one another; they have by their unnatural contentions made their country a cock-pit. Or *as a speckled bird*, dyed, or sprinkled, or bedewed with the blood of her prey. The shedding of innocent blood was Jerusalem's measure-filling sin, and hastened their ruin, not only as it provoked their neighbours likewise; for those that have *their hand against every man* shall have *every man's hand against them* (^{Gen}Genesis 16:12), and so it follows here: *The birds round about are against her*. Some make her a *speckled, pied, or motley bird*, upon the account of their mixing the superstitious customs and usages of the heathen with divine institutions in the worship of God; they were fond of a party-coloured religion, and thought it made them fine, when really it made them odious. God's turtle-dove is no speckled bird.

II. The enemies are here brought in falling upon them and laying them desolate. And some think it is upon this account that they are compared to a speckled bird, because fowls usually make a noise about a bird of an odd unusual colour. God's people are, among the children of this world, as *men wondered at, as a speckled bird*; but this people had by their own folly made themselves so; and the beasts and birds are called and commissioned to prey upon them. Let *all the birds round be against her*, for God has forsaken her, and with them let *all the beasts of the field come to devour*. Those that have made a prey of others shall themselves be preyed upon. It did not lessen the sin of the nations, but very much increased the misery of Judah and Jerusalem, that the desolation brought upon them was by order from heaven. The birds and beasts are perhaps called to feast upon the bodies of the slain, as in St. John's vision, (^{Rev}Revelation 19:17, 18. The

utter desolation of the land by the Chaldean army is here spoken of as a thing done, so sure, so near, was it. God speaks of it as a thing which he had appointed to be done, and yet which he had no pleasure in, any more than in the death of other sinners.

1. See with what a tender affection he speaks of this land, notwithstanding the sinfulness of it, in remembrance of his covenant, and the tribute of honour and glory he had formerly had from it: It is *my vineyard, my portion, my pleasant portion*, v. 10. Note, God has a kindness and concern for his church, though there be much amiss in it; and his correcting it will every way consist with his complacency in it.

2. See with what a tender compassion he speaks of the desolations of this land: *Many pastors* (the Chaldean generals that made themselves masters of the country and ate it up with their armies as easily as the Arabian shepherds with their flocks eat up the fruits of a piece of ground that lies common) *have destroyed my vineyard*, without any consideration had either of the value of it or of my interest in it; they have with the greatest insolence and indignation *trodden it under foot*, and that which was a pleasant land they have made *a desolate wilderness*. The destruction was universal: *The whole land is made desolate*, v. 11. It is made so by the sword of war: *The spoilers*, the Chaldean soldiers, *have come through the plain upon all high places*; they have made themselves masters of all the natural fastnesses and artificial fortresses, v. 12. *The sword devours from one end of the land to the other*; all places lie exposed, and the numerous army of the invaders disperse themselves into every corner of that fruitful country, so that *no flesh shall have peace*, none shall be exempt from the calamity nor be able to enjoy any tranquillity. When all flesh have corrupted their way, no flesh shall have peace; those only have peace that walk after the Spirit.

3. See whence all this misery comes.

(1.) It comes from the displeasure of God. It is *the sword of the Lord that devours*, v. 12. While God's people keep close to him the sword of their protectors and deliverers is the sword of the Lord, witness that of Gideon; but when they have forsaken him, so that he has become their enemy and fights against them, then the sword of their invaders and destroyers becomes the *sword of the Lord*; witness this of the Chaldeans. It is *because of the fierce anger of the Lord* (v. 13); it was this that kindled this

fire among them and made their enemies so furious. And *who may stand before him when he is angry?*

(2.) It is their sin that has made God their enemy, particularly their incorrigibility under former rebukes (v. 11): The land *mourns unto me*; the country that lies desolate does, as it were, pour out its complaint before God and humble itself under his hand; but the inhabitants are so senseless and stupid that *none of them lays it to heart*; they do not mourn to God, but are unaffected with his displeasure, while the very ground they go upon shames them. Note, When God's hand is lifted up, and men will not see, it shall be laid on, and they shall be made to feel, ^{231b} Isaiah 26:11.

4. See how unable they should be to guard against it (v. 13): “*They have sown wheat*, that is, they have taken a great deal of pains for their own security and promised themselves great matters from their endeavors, but it is all in vain; *they shall reap thorns*, that is, that which shall prove very grievous and vexatious to them. Instead of helping themselves, they shall but make themselves more uneasy. *They have put themselves to pain*, both with their labour and with their expectations, *but it shall not profit*; they shall not prevail to extricate themselves out of the difficulties into which they have plunged themselves. *They shall be ashamed of your revenues*, ashamed that they have depended so much upon their preparations for war and particularly upon their ability to bear the charges of it.” Money constitutes the sinews of war; they thought they had enough of that, but shall be ashamed of it; for their silver and gold shall not profit them in the day of the Lord's anger.

^{212b} JEREMIAH 12:14-17

PREDICTIONS OF MERCY

The prophets sometimes, in God's name, delivered messages both of judgment and mercy to the nations that bordered on the land of Israel: but here is a message to all those in general who had in their turns been one way or other injurious to God's people, had either oppressed them or triumphed in their being oppressed. Observe,

I. What the quarrel was that God had with them. They were *his evil neighbours* (v. 14), evil neighbours to his church, and what they did

against it he took as done against himself, and therefore called them *his evil neighbours*, that should have been neighbourly to Israel, but were quite otherwise. Note, It is often the lot of good people to live among bad neighbours, that are unkind and provoking to them; and it is bad indeed when they are all so. These evil neighbours were the Moabites, Ammonites Syrians, Edomites, Egyptians, that had been evil neighbours to Israel in helping to debauch them and draw them from God (therefore God calls them his evil neighbours), and now they helped to make them desolate, and joined with the Chaldeans against them. It is just with God to make those the instruments of trouble to us whom we have made instruments of sin. That which God lays to their charge is: They have *meddled with the inheritance which I have caused my people Israel to inherit*; they unjustly seized that which was none of their own: nay, they sacrilegiously turned that to their own use which was given to God's peculiar people. He that said, *Touch not my anointed*, said also, "*Touch not their inheritance*; it is at your peril if you do." Not only the persons but the estates of God's people are under his protection.

II. What course he would take with them.

1. He would break the power they had got over his people, and force them to make restitution: *I will pluck out the house of Judah from among them*. This would be a great favour to God's people, who had either been taken captive by them, or, when they fled to them for shelter, had been detained and made prisoners; but it would be a great mortification to their enemies, who would be like a lion disappointed of his prey. The house of Judah either cannot or will not make any bold struggles towards their own liberty; but God will with a gracious violence pluck them out, will by his Spirit compel them to come out and by his power compel their task-masters to let them go, as he plucked Israel out of Egypt.

2. He would bring upon them the same calamities that they had been instrumental to bring upon his people: *I will pluck them out of their land*. Judgment began at the house of God, but it did not end there. Nebuchadnezzar, when he had wasted the land of Israel, turned his hand against their evil neighbours and was a scourge to them.

III. What mercy God had in store for such of them as would join themselves to him and become his people, v. 15, 16. They had drawn in God's backsliding people to join with them in the service of idols. If now

they would be drawn by a returning people to join with them in the service of the true and living God, they should not only have their enmity to the people of God forgiven them, but the distance which they had been kept at before should be removed, and they should be received to stand upon the same level with the Israel of God. This had its accomplishment in part when, after the return out of captivity, many of the people of the lands that had been evil neighbours to Israel became Jews; and it was to have its accomplishment in the conversion of the Gentiles to the faith of Christ. Let not Israel, though injured by them, be implacable towards them, for God is not: *After that I have plucked them out, in justice for their sins and in jealousy for the honour of Israel, I will return, will change my way, and have compassion on them.* Though, being heathen, they can lay no claim to the mercies of the covenant, yet they shall have benefit by the compassions of the Creator, who will notwithstanding look upon them as the work of his hands. Note, God's controversies with his creatures, though they cannot be disputed, may be accommodated. Those who (as these) have been not only strangers, but *enemies in their minds by wicked works*, may be *reconciled*, ^{Col}Colossians 1:21. Observe here,

1. What were the terms on which God would show favour to them. It is always provided *that they will diligently learn the ways of my people*, that is, in general, the ways that they walk in when they conduct themselves as *my people* (not the crooked ways into which they have turned aside), the ways which my people are directed to take. Note,

(1.) There are good ways that are peculiarly *the ways of God's people*, which however they may differ in the choice of their paths, they are all agreed to walk in. The ways of holiness and heavenly-mindedness, of love and peaceableness, the ways of prayer and sabbath-sanctification, and diligent attendance on instituted ordinances — these, and the like, are *the ways of God's people*.

(2.) Those that would have their lot with God's people, and their last end like theirs, must learn their ways and walk in them, must observe the rule they walk by and conform to that rule they walk by and conform to that rule and go forth by those footsteps. By an intimate conversation with God's people they must learn to do as they do.

(3.) It is impossible to learn the ways of God's people as they should be learnt, without a great deal of care and pains. We must diligently observe these ways and diligently oblige ourselves to walk in them, must look

diligently (^{<8275>}Hebrews 12:15), and work diligently, (^{<2734>}Luke 13:24. In particular, they must learn to give honour to God's name by making all their solemn appeals to him. They must learn to say, *The Lord liveth* (to own him, to adore him, and to abide by his judgment), *as they taught my people to swear by Baal*. It was bad enough that they did themselves swear by Baal, worse that they taught God's own people, who had been better taught; and yet, if they will at length reform, they shall be accepted. observe,

[1.] We must not despair of the conversion of the worst; no, not of those who have been instrumental to pervert and debauch others; even they may be brought to repentance, and, if they be, shall find mercy.

[2.] Those whom we have been industrious to draw to that which is evil, when God opens their eyes and ours, we should be as industrious to follow in that which is good. It will be a holy revenge upon ourselves to become pupils to those in the way of duty to whom we have been tutors in the way of sin.

[3.] The conversion of the deceived may prove a happy occasion of the conversion even of the deceivers. Thus those who fall together into the ditch are sometimes plucked together out of it.

2. What should be the tokens and fruits of this favour when they return to God and God to them.

(1.) They shall be restored to and re-established in their own land (v. 15): *I will bring them again every man to his heritage*. The same hand that plucked them up shall plant them again.

(2.) They shall become entitled to the spiritual privileges of God's Israel: "If they will be towardly, and *learn the ways of my people*, will conform to the rules and confine themselves to the restraints of my family, *then shall they be built in the midst of my people*. They shall not only be brought among them, to have a name and a place in the house of the Lord, where there was a court for the Gentiles, but they shall be built among them; they shall unite with them; the former enmities shall be slain; they shall be both edified and settled among them." See (^{<2865>}Isaiah 56:5-7. Note, Those that diligently learn the ways of God's people shall enjoy the privileges and comforts of his people.

IV. What should become of those that were still wedded to their own evil ways, yea, though many of those about them turned to the Lord (v. 17): *If there will not obey, if any of them continue to stand it out, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, that family, that particular person, saith the Lord.* Those that will not be ruled by the grace of God shall be ruined by the justice of God. And, if disobedient nations shall be destroyed, much more disobedient churches from whom better things are expected.