

CHAPTER 22

Upon occasion of the message sent in the foregoing chapter to the house of the king, we have here recorded some sermons which Jeremiah preached at court, in some preceding reigns, that it might appear they had had fair warning long before that fatal sentence was pronounced upon them, and were put in a way to prevent it. Here is,

I. A message sent to the royal family, as it should seem in the reign of Jehoiakim, relating partly to Jehoahaz, who was carried away captive into Egypt, and partly to Jehoiakim, who succeeded him and was now upon the throne. The king and princes are exhorted to execute judgment, and are assured that, if they did so, the royal family should flourish, but otherwise it should be ruined (v. 1-9). Jehoahaz, called here Shallum, is lamented (v. 10-12). Jehoiakim is reproved and threatened (v. 13-19).

II. Another message sent them in the reign of Jehoiachin (alias, Jeconiah) the son of Jehoiakim. He is charged with an obstinate refusal to hear, and is threatened with destruction, and it is foretold that in him Solomon's house should fail (v. 20-30).

~~221~~ JEREMIAH 22:1-9

JEREMIAH PREACHES BEFORE JEHOIAKIM

Here we have,

I. Orders given to Jeremiah to go and preach before the king. In the foregoing chapter we are told that Zedekiah sent messengers to the prophet, but here the prophet is bidden to go, in his own proper person, *to the house of the king*, and demand his attention to the word of the King of kings (v. 2): *Hear the word of the Lord, O king of Judah!* Subjects must own that where the word of the king is there is power over them, but kings must own that where the word of the Lord is there is power over them. The *king of Judah* is here spoken to *as sitting upon the throne of David*, who was a man after God's own heart, as holding his dignity and power by

the covenant made with David; let him therefore conform to his example, that he may have the benefit of the promises made to him. With the king his *servants* are spoken to, because a good government depends upon a good ministry as well as a good king.

II. Instructions given him what to preach.

1. He must tell them what was their duty, what was the good which the Lord their God required of them, v. 3. They must take care,

(1.) That they do all the good they can with the power they have. They must do justice in defence of those that were injured, and must *deliver the spoiled out of the hand of their oppressors*. This was the duty of their place, ^{<1803>}Psalm 82:3. Herein they must be ministers of God for good.

(2.) That they do no hurt with it, *no wrong, no violence*. That is the greatest wrong and violence which is done under colour of law and justice, and by those whose business it is to punish and protect from wrong and violence. They must *do no wrong to the stranger, fatherless, and widow*; for these God does in a particular matter patronise and take under his tuition, ^{<1022>}Exodus 22:21, 22.

2. He must assure them that the faithful discharge of their duty would advance and secure their prosperity, v. 4. There shall then be a succession of kings, an uninterrupted succession, *upon the throne of David* and of his line, these enjoying a perfect tranquillity, and living in great state and dignity, *riding in chariots and on horses*, as before, ^{<2475>}Jeremiah 17:25. Note, the most effectual way to preserve the dignity of the government is to do the duty of it.

3. He must likewise assure them that the iniquity of their family, if they persisted in it, would be the ruin of their family, though it was a royal family (v. 5): *If you will not hear, will not obey, this house shall become a desolation*, the palace of the kings of Judah shall fare no better than other habitations in Jerusalem. Sin has often been the ruin of royal palaces, though ever so stately, ever so strong. This sentence is ratified by an oath: *I swear by myself* (and God can swear by no greater, ^{<3113>}Hebrews 6:13) that this house shall be laid in ruins. Note, Sin will be the ruin of the houses of princes as well as of mean men.

4. He must show how fatal their wickedness would be to their kingdom as well as to themselves, to Jerusalem especially, the royal city, v. 6-9.

(1.) It is confessed that Judah and Jerusalem had been valuable in God's eyes and considerable in their own: *thou art Gilead unto me and the head of Lebanon*. Their lot was cast in a place that was rich and pleasant as Gilead; Zion was a stronghold, as stately as Lebanon: this they trusted to as their security. But,

(2.) This shall not protect them; the country that is now fruitful as Gilead shall be made *a wilderness*. The cities that are now strong as Lebanon shall be cities *not inhabited*; and, when the country is laid waste, the cities must be dispeopled. See how easily God's judgments can ruin a nation, and how certainly sin will do it. When this desolating work is to be done,

[1.] There shall be those that shall do it effectually (v. 7): *"I will prepare destroyers against thee; I will sanctify them"* (so the word is); "I will appoint them to this service and use them in it." Note, When destruction is designed destroyers are prepared, and perhaps are in the preparing, and things are working towards the designed destruction, and are getting ready for it, long before. And who can contend with destroyers of God's preparing? They shall destroy cities as easily as men fell trees in a forest: *They shall cut down thy choice cedars*; and yet, when they are down, shall value them no more than thorns and briars; they shall *cast them into the fire*, for their choicest cedars have become rotten ones and good for nothing else.

[2.] There shall be those who shall be ready to justify God in the doing of it (v. 8, 9); persons of *many nations*, when they *pass by* the ruins of *this city* in their travels, will ask, *"Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this city?"* How came so strong a city to be overpowered? so rich a city to be impoverished? so populous a city to be depopulated? so holy a city to be profaned? and a city that had been so dear to God to be abandoned by him?" The reason is so obvious that it shall be ready in every man's mouth. Ask those *that go by the way*, ^{<827>}Job 21:29. Ask the next man you meet, and he will tell you it was because they changed their gods, which other nations never used to do. They forsook *the covenant* of Jehovah their own God, revolted from their allegiance to him and from the duty which their covenant with him bound them to, and they *worshipped other gods and served them*, in contempt of him; and therefore he gave them up to this destruction. Note, God never casts any off until they first cast him off. "Go," says God to the prophet, "and preach this to the royal family."

~~221~~ JEREMIAH 22:10-19

THE DOOM OF SHALLUM AND JEHOIAKIM

Kings, though they are gods to us, are men to God, and shall *die like men*; so it appears in these verses, where we have a sentence of death passed upon two kings who reigned successively in Jerusalem, two brothers, and both the ungracious sons of a very pious father.

I. Here is the doom of Shallum, who doubtless is the same with Jehoahaz, for he is that son of Josiah king of Judah who reigned *in the stead of Josiah his father* (v. 11), which Jehoahaz did by the act of the people, who made him king though he was not the eldest son, ~~1231~~ 2 Kings 23:30; ~~1301~~ 2 Chronicles 36:1. Among the sons of Josiah (~~1385~~ 1 Chronicles 3:15) there is one Shallum mentioned, and not Jehoahaz. Perhaps the people preferred him before his elder brother because they thought him a more active daring young man, and fitter to rule; but God soon showed them the folly of their injustice, and that it could not prosper, for within three months the king of Egypt came upon him, deposed him, and carried him away prisoner into Egypt, as God had threatened, ~~1538~~ Deuteronomy 28:68. It does not appear that any of the people were taken into captivity with him. We have the story ~~1234~~ 2 Kings 23:34; ~~1404~~ 2 Chronicles 36:4. Now here,

1. The people are directed to lament him rather than his father Josiah: “*Weep not for the dead, weep not any more for Josiah.*” Jeremiah had been himself a true mourner for hm, and had stirred up the people to mourn for him (~~1485~~ 2 Chronicles 35:25): yet now he will have them go out of mourning for him, though it was but three months after his death, and to turn their tears into another channel. They must weep sorely for Jehoahaz, who had gone into Egypt; not that there was any great loss of him to the public, as there was of his father, but that his case was much more deplorable. Josiah went to the grave in peace and honour, was prevented from seeing the evil to come in this world and removed to see the good to come in the other world; and therefore, *Weep not for him*, but for his unhappy son, who is likely to live and die in disgrace and misery, a wretched captive. Note, Dying saints may be justly envied, while living sinners are justly pitied. And so dismal perhaps the prospect of the times may be that tears even for a Josiah, even for a Jesus, must be restrained,

that they may be reserved for *ourselves and for our children*, ^{<238>}Luke 23:28.

2. The reason given is because he shall never return out of captivity, as he and his people expected, but shall die there. They were loth to believe this, therefore it is repeated here again and again, He shall *return no more*, v. 10. He shall never have the pleasure of seeing *his native country*, but shall have the continual grief of hearing of the desolations of it. He has gone *forth out of this place*, and shall *never return*, v. 11. *He shall die in the place whither they have led him captive*, v. 12. This came of his forsaking the good example of his father, and usurping the right of his elder brother. In Ezekiel's lamentation for the princes of Israel this Jehoahaz is represented as a young lion, that soon learned to *catch the prey*, but was taken, and brought in chains to Egypt, and was long expected to return, but in vain. See ^{<318>}Ezekiel 19:3-5.

II. Here is the doom of Jehoiakim, who succeeded him. Whether he had any better right to the crown than Shallum we know not; for, though he was older than his predecessor, there seems to be another son of Josiah, older than he, called *Johanan*, ^{<185>}1 Chronicles 3:15. But this we know he ruled no better, and fared no better at last. Here we have,

1. His sins faithfully reproved. It is not fit for a private person to say to a king, *Thou art wicked*; but a prophet, who has a message from God, betrays his trust if he does not deliver it, be it ever so unpleasing, even to kings themselves. Jehoiakim is not here charged with idolatry, and probably he had not yet put Urijah the prophet to death (as we find afterwards he did, ^{<272>}Jeremiah 26:22, 23), for then he would have been told of it here; but the crimes for which he is here reproved are,

(1.) Pride and affection of pomp and splendour; as if all the business of a king were to look great, and to do good were to be the least of his care. He must build himself a stately palace, a *wide house*, and *large chambers*, v. 14. He must have *windows cut out* after the newest fashion, perhaps like sash-windows with us. The rooms must be *ceiled with cedar*, the richest sort of wood. His house must be as well-roofed and wainscoted as the temple itself, or else it will not please him, ^{<185>}1 Kings 6:15, 16. Nay, it must exceed that, for it must be painted with *minium*, or *vermilion*, which dyes red, or, as some read it, with *indigo*, which dyes blue. No doubt it is lawful for princes and great men to build, and beautify, and furnish their

houses so as is agreeable to their dignity; but he that knows what is in man knew that Jehoiakim did this in the pride of his heart, which makes that to be sinful, exceedingly sinful, which is in itself lawful. Those therefore that are enlarging their houses, and making them more sumptuous, have need to look well to the frame of their own spirits in the doing of it, and carefully to watch against all the workings of vain-glory. But that which was particularly amiss in Jehoiakim's case was that he did this when he could not but perceive, both by the word of God and by his providence, that divine judgments were breaking in upon him. He reigned his first three years by the permission and allowance of the king of Egypt, and all the rest by the permission and allowance of the king of Babylon; and yet he that was no better than a viceroy will covet to vie with the greatest monarchs in building and furniture. Observe how peremptory he is in this resolution: "*I will build myself a wide house; I am resolved I will, whoever advises me to the contrary.*" Note, It is the common folly of those that are sinking in their estates to covet to make a fair show. Many have unhumbled hearts under humbling providences, and look most haughty when God is bringing them down. This is striving with our Maker.

(2.) Carnal security and confidence in his wealth, depending upon the continuance of his prosperity, as if his mountain now stood so strong that it could never be moved. He thought he must reign without any disturbance or interruption because he had *enclosed himself in cedar* (v. 15), as if that were too fine to be assaulted and too strong to be broken through, and as if God himself could not, for pity, give up such a stately house as that to be burned. Thus when Christ spoke of the destruction of the temple his disciples came to him, to show him what a magnificent structure it was, ⁴²⁸⁸Matthew 23:38; 24:1. Note, Those wretchedly deceive themselves who think their present prosperity is a lasting security, and dream of reigning because they are *enclosed in cedar*. It is but in his own conceit that *the rich man's wealth is his strong city*.

(3.) Some think he is here charged with sacrilege, and robbing the house of God to beautify and adorn his own house. He *cuts him out my windows* (so it is in the margin), which some understand as if he had taken windows out of the temple to put into his own palace and then *painted them* (as it follows) *with vermilion*, that it might not be discovered, but might look of a piece with his own buildings. Note, Those cheat themselves, and ruin themselves at last, who think to enrich themselves by robbing God and his house; and, however they may disguise it, God discovers it.

(4.) He is here charged with extortion and oppression, violence and injustice. He *built his house by unrighteousness*, with money unjustly got and materials which were not honestly come by, and perhaps upon ground obtained as Ahab obtained Naboth's vineyard. And, because he went beyond what he could afford, he defrauded his workmen of their wages, which is one of the sins that *cries in the ears of the Lord of hosts*, ^{<500>}James 5:4. God takes notice of the wrong done by the greatest of men to their poor servants and labourers, and will repay those, in justice, that will not in justice pay those whom they employ, but *use their neighbour's service without wages*. Observe, The greatest of men must look upon the meanest as their neighbours, and be just to them accordingly, and love them as themselves. Jehoiakim was oppressive, not only in his buildings, but in the administration of his government. He did not do justice, made no conscience of shedding innocent blood, when it was to serve the purposes of his ambition, avarice, and revenge. He was all for *oppression and violence*, not to threaten it only, but to do it; and, when he was set upon any act of injustice, nothing should stop him, but he would go through with it. And that which was at the bottom of all was covetousness, that love of *money which is the root of all evil*. *Thy eyes and thy heart are not but for covetousness*; they were for that, and nothing else. Observe, In covetousness the heart walks after the eyes: it is therefore called *the lust of the eye*, ^{<626>}1 John 2:16; ^{<880>}Job 31:7. It is *setting the eyes upon that which is not*, ^{<335>}Proverbs 23:5. The eyes and the heart are then for covetousness when the aims and affections are wholly set upon the wealth of this world; and, where they are so, the temptation is strong to murder, oppression, and all manner of violence and villany.

(5.) That which aggravated all his sins was that he was the son of a good father, who had left him a good example, if he would but have followed it (v. 15, 16): *Did not thy father eat and drink?* When Jehoiakim enlarged and enlightened his house it is probable that he spoke scornfully of his father for contenting himself with such a mean and inconvenient dwelling, below the grandeur of a sovereign prince, and ridiculed him as one that had a dull fancy, a low spirit, and could not find in his heart to lay out his money, nor cared for what was fashionable; that should not serve him which served his father: but God, by the prophet, tells him that his father, though he had not the spirit of building, was a man of an excellent spirit, a better man than he, and did better for himself and his family. Those

children that despise their parents' old fashions commonly come short of their real excellences. Jeremiah tells him,

[1.] That he was directed to do his duty by his father's practice: He *did judgment and justice*; he never did wrong to any of his subjects, never oppressed them, nor put any hardship upon them, but was careful to preserve all their just rights and properties. Nay, he not only did not abuse his power for the support of wrong, but he used it for the maintaining of right. He *judged the cause of the poor and needy*, was ready to hear the cause of the meanest of his subjects and do them justice. Note, The care of magistrates must be, not to support their grandeur and take their ease, but to do good, not only not to oppress the poor themselves, but to defend those that are oppressed.

[2.] That he was encouraged to do his duty by his father's prosperity. *First*, God accepted him: "*Was not this to know me, saith the Lord? Did he not hereby make it to appear that he rightly knew his God, and worshipped him, and consequently was known and owned of him?*" Note, The right knowledge of God consists in doing our duty, particularly that which is the duty of our place and station in the world. *Secondly*, He himself had the comfort of it: *Did he not eat and drink soberly and cheerfully, so as to fit himself for his business, for strength and not for drunkenness?*

²¹¹⁷Ecclesiastes 10:17. He did *eat, and drink, and do judgment*; he did not (as perhaps Jehoiakim and his princes did) *drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of the afflicted*, ²¹¹⁸Proverbs 31:5. He did *eat and drink*; that is, God blessed him with great plenty, and he had the comfortable enjoyment of it himself and gave handsome entertainments to his friends, was very hospitable and very charitable. It was Jehoiakim's pride that he had built a fine house, but Josiah's true praise that he kept a good house. Many times those have least in them of true generosity that have the greatest affection for pomp and grandeur; for, to support the extravagant expense of that, hospitality, bounty to the poor, yea, and justice itself, will be pinched. It is better to live with Josiah in an old-fashioned house, and do good, than live with Jehoiakim in a stately house, and leave debts unpaid. Josiah did *justice and judgment*, and then *it was well with him*, v. 15, and it is repeated again, v. 16. He lived very comfortably; his own subjects, and all his neighbours, respected him; and whatever he put his hand to prospered. Note, While we do well we may expect it will be well with us. This Jehoiakim knew, that his father found the way of duty to be the way of comfort, and yet he would not tread in his

steps. Note, It should engage us to keep up religion in our day that our godly parents kept it up in theirs and recommended it to us from their own experience of the benefit of it. They told us that they had found the promises which godliness has of the *life that now* is made good to them, and that religion and piety are friendly to outward prosperity. So that we are inexcusable if we turn aside from that good way.

2. Here we have Jehoiakim's doom faithfully read, v. 18, 19. We may suppose that it was in the utmost peril of his own life that Jeremiah here foretold the shameful death of Jehoiakim; but *thus saith the Lord concerning him*, and therefore thus saith he.

(1.) He shall die unlamented; he shall make himself so odious by his oppression and cruelty that all about him shall be glad to part with him, and none shall do him the honour of dropping one tear for him, whereas his father, who *did judgment and justice*, was universally lamented; and it is promised to Zedekiah that he should be lamented at his death, for he conducted himself better than Jehoiakim had done, ^(28:5)Jeremiah 34:5. His relations shall not *lament him*, no, not with the common expressions of grief used at the funeral of the meanest, where they cried, *Ah, my brother!* or, *Ah, sister!* His subjects shall not lament him, nor cry out, as they used to do at the graves of their princes, *Ah, lord!* or *Ah his glory!* It is sad for any to live so that, when they die, none will be sorry to part with them. Nay,

(2.) He shall lie unburied. This is worse than the former. Even those that have no tears to grace the funerals of the dead with would willingly have them buried out of their sight; but Jehoiakim shall be *buried with the burial of an ass*, that is, he shall have no burial at all, but his dead body shall be cast into a ditch or upon a dunghill; it shall be *drawn*, or dragged, ignominiously, and *cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem*. It is said, in the story of Jehoiakim (^(18:6)2 Chronicles 36:6), that Nebuchadnezzar *bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon*, and (^(19:9)Ezekiel 19:9) that he was *brought in chains to the king of Babylon*. But it is probable that he died a prisoner, before he was carried away to Babylon as was intended; perhaps he died for grief, or, in the pride of his heart, hastened his own end, and, for that reason, was denied a decent burial, as self-murderers usually are with us. Josephus says that Nebuchadnezzar slew him at Jerusalem, and left his body thus exposed, somewhere at a great distance from the *gates of Jerusalem*. And it is said (^(24:6)2 Kings 24:6) *he slept with his fathers*. When

he built himself a stately house, no doubt he designed himself a stately sepulchre; but see how he was disappointed. Note, Those that are lifted up with great pride are commonly reserved for some great disgrace in life or death.

JEREMIAH 22:20-30

THE DESOLATION OF JUDAH

This prophecy seems to have been calculated for the ungracious inglorious reign of Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, who succeeded him in the government, reigned but three months, and was then carried captive to Babylon, where he lived many years, ²⁵²³Jeremiah 52:31. We have, in these verses, a prophecy,

1. Of the desolations of the kingdom, which were now hastening on apace, v. 20-23. Jerusalem and Judah are here spoken to, or the Jewish state as a single person, and we have it here under a threefold character: — 1. Very haughty in a day of peace and safety (v. 21): “*I spoke unto thee in thy prosperity, spoke by my servants the prophets, reproofs, admonitions, counsels, but thou saidst, I will not hear, I will not heed, thou obeyedst not my voice, and wast resolved that thou wouldst not, and hadst the front to tell me so.*” It is common for those that live at ease to live in contempt of the word of God. *Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked.* This is so much the worse that they had it by kind: *This has been thy manner from thy youth.* They were called *transgressors from the womb,* ²³⁸⁸Isaiah 48:8.

2. Very timorous upon the alarms of trouble (v. 20): “When thou seest *all thy lovers destroyed,* when thou findest thy idols unable to help thee and thy foreign alliances failing thee, thou wilt then go up to Lebanon, and cry, as one undone and giving up all for lost, cry with a bitter cry; thou wilt cry, *Help, help, or we are lost;* thou wilt *lift up thy voice* in fearful shrieks upon *Lebanon and Bashan,* two high hills, in hope to be heard thence by the advantage of the rising ground. Thou wilt *cry from the passages,* from the roads, where thou wilt ever and anon be in distress.” Thou wilt cry from *Abarim* (so some read it, as a proper name), a famous mountain in the border of Moab. “Thou wilt cry, as those that are in great consternation use to do, to all about thee; but in vain, for (v. 22) *the wind shall eat up all thy pastors, or rulers,* that should protect and lead thee, and provide for

thy safety; they shall be blasted, and withered, and brought to nothing, as buds and blossoms are by a bleak or freezing wind; they shall be devoured suddenly, insensibly, and irresistibly, as fruits by the wind. *Thy lovers*, that thou dependest upon and hast an affection for, shall *go into captivity*, and shall be so far from saving thee that they shall not be able to save themselves.”

3. Very tame under the heavy and lasting pressures of trouble: “When there appears no relief from any of thy confederates, and thy own priests are at a loss, *then shalt thou be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness*,” v. 22. Note, Many will never be ashamed of their sins till they are brought by them to the last extremity; and it is well if we get this good by our straits to be brought by them to confusion for our sins. The Jewish state is here called *an inhabitant of Lebanon*, because that famous forest was within their border (v. 23), and all their country was wealthy, and well-guarded as with Lebanon's natural fastnesses; but so proud and haughty were they that they are said to *make their nest in the cedars*, where they thought themselves out of the reach of all danger, and whence they looked with contempt upon all about them. “But, *how gracious wilt thou be when pangs come upon thee!* Then thou wilt humble thyself before God and promise amendment. When thou art overthrown in stony places thou wilt be glad to *hear those words* which in thy prosperity *thou wouldst not hear*, ^{Psalm 141:6} Psalm 141:6. Then thou wilt endeavour to make thyself acceptable with that God whom, before, thou madest light of.” Note, Many have their pangs of piety who, when the pangs are over, show that they have no true piety. Some give another sense of it: “What will all thy pomp, and state, and wealth avail thee? What will become of it all, or what comfort shalt thou have of it, when thou shalt be in these distresses? No more than *a woman in travail*, full of pains and fears, can take comfort in her ornaments while she is in that condition.” So Mr. Gataker. Note, Those that are proud of their worldly advantages would do well to consider how they will look when pangs come upon them, and how they will then have lost all their beauty.

II. Here is a prophecy of the disgrace of the king; his name was *Jeconiah*, but he is here once and again called *Coniah*, in contempt. The prophet shortens or nicks his name, and gives him, as we say, a nickname, perhaps to denote that he should be despoiled of his dignity, that his reign should be shortened, and the number of his months cut off in the midst. Two instances of dishonour are here put upon him: —

1. He shall be carried away *into captivity* and shall spend and end his days in bondage. He was born to a crown, but it should quickly fall from his head, and he should exchange it for fetters. Observe the steps of this judgment.

(1.) God will abandon him, v. 24. The God of truth says it, and confirms it with an oath: "*Though he were the signet upon my right hand* (his predecessors have been so, and he might have been so if he had conducted himself well, but he being degenerated) *I will pluck him thence.*" The godly kings of Judah had been as signets on God's right hand, near and dear to him; he had gloried in them, and made use of them as instruments of his government, as the prince does of his signet-ring, or sign manual; but Coniah has made himself utterly unworthy of the honour, and therefore the privilege of his birth shall be no security to him; notwithstanding that, he shall be thrown off. Answerable to this threatening against Jeconiah is God's promise to Zerubbabel, when he made him his people's guide in their return out of captivity (³⁰²³Haggai 2:23): *I will take thee, O Zerubbabel! my servant, and make thee as a signet.* Those that think themselves as signets on God's right hand must not be secure, but fear lest they be plucked thence.

(2.) The king of Babylon shall seize him. *Those* know not what enemies and mischiefs they lie exposed to who have thrown themselves out of God's protection, v. 25. The Chaldeans are here said to be such as had a spite to *Coniah*; they *sought his life*; no less than that, they thought, would satisfy their rage; they were such as he had a dread of (they are those *whose face thou fearest*) which would make it the more terrible to him to fall into their hands, especially when it was God himself that gave *him into their hands*. And, if God deliver him to them, who can deliver him from them?

(3.) He and his family shall be carried to Babylon, where they shall wear out many tedious years of their lives in a miserable captivity — *he and his mother* (v. 26), *he and his seed* (v. 28), that is, he and all the royal family (for he had no children of his own when he went into captivity), or he and the children in his loins; they shall all be cast out to another country, to a strange country, *a country where they were not born*, nor such a country as that where they were born, *a land which they know not*, in which they have no acquaintance with whom to converse or from whom to expect any kindness. Thither they shall be carried, from a land where they were

entitled to dominion, into a land where they shall be compelled to servitude. But have they no hopes of seeing their own country again? No: *To the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return*, v. 27. They conducted themselves ill in it when they were in it, and therefore they shall never see it more. Jehoahaz was carried to Egypt, the land of the south, Jeconiah to Babylon, the land of the north, both far remote, the quite contrary way, and must never expect to meet again, nor either of them to breathe their native air again. Those that had abused the dominion they had over others were justly brought thus under the dominion of others. Those that had indulged and gratified their sinful desires, by their oppression, luxury, and cruelty, were justly denied the gratification of their innocent desire to see their own native country again. We may observe something very emphatic in that part of this threatening (v. 26), *In the country where you were not born, there shall you die*. As there is a *time to be born* and a *time to die*, so there is a place to be born in and a place to die in. We know where we were born, but where we shall die we know not; it is enough that our God knows. Let it be our care that we die in Christ, and then it will be well with us, wherever we die, though it should be in a far country.

(4.) This shall render him very mean and despicable in the eyes of all his neighbours. They shall be ready to say (v. 28), *“This is Coniah a despised broken idol? Yes, certainly he is, and much debased from what he was.”*

[1.] Time was when he was dignified, nay, when he was almost deified. The people who had seen his father lately deposed were ready to adore him when they saw him upon the throne, but now *he is a despised broken idol*, which, when it was whole, was worshipped, but, when it is rotten and broken, is thrown by and despised, and nobody regards it, or remembers what it has been. Note, What is idolized will, first or last, be despised and broken; what is unjustly honoured will be justly contemned, and rivals with God will be the scorn of man. Whatever we idolize we shall be disappointed in and then shall despise.

[2.] Time was when he was delighted in; but now he is *a vessel in which is not pleasure*, or to which there is no desire, either because grown out of fashion or because cracked or dirtied, and so rendered unserviceable. Those whom God has no pleasure in will, some time or other, be so mortified that men will have no pleasure in them.

2. He shall leave no posterity to inherit his honour. The prediction of this is ushered in with a solemn preface (v. 29): *O earth, earth, earth! hear the word of the Lord*. Let all the inhabitants of the world take notice of these judgments of God upon a nation and a family that had been near and dear to him, and thence infer that God is impartial in the administration of justice. Or it is an appeal to the earth itself on which we tread, since those that dwell on earth are so deaf and careless, like that (²⁰⁰²Isaiah 1:2), *Hear, O heavens! and give ear, O earth!* God's word, however slighted, will be heard; the earth itself will be made to hear it, and yield to it, when it, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Or it is a call to men that *mind earthly things*, that are swallowed up in those things and are inordinate in the pursuit of them; such have need to be called upon again and again, and a third time, to *hear the word of the Lord*. Or it is a call to men considered as mortal, of the earth, and hastening to the earth again. We all are so; earth we are, *dust we are*, and, in consideration of that, are concerned to hear and regard *the word of the Lord*, that, though we are earth, we may be found among those whose names are written in heaven. Now that which is here to be taken notice of is that Jeconiah is *written childless* (v. 30), that is, as it follows, *No man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David*. In him the line of David was extinct as a royal line. Some think that he had children born in Babylon because mention is made of his seed being cast out there (v. 28) and that they died before him. We read in the genealogy (³³⁷1 Chronicles 3:17) of seven sons of Jeconiah Assir (that is, Jeconiah the captive) of whom Salathiel is the first. Some think that they were only his adopted sons, and that when it is said (⁴⁰¹²Matthew 1:12), *Jeconiah begat Salathiel*, no more is meant than that he bequeathed to him what claims and pretensions he had to the government, the rather because Salathiel is called the *son of Neri of the house of Nathan*, (⁴³⁷Luke 3:27, 31). Whether he had children begotten, or only adopted, thus far he was childless that none of his seed ruled as kings in Judah. He was the *Augustulus* of that empire, in whom it determined. Whoever are childless, it is God that writes them so; and those who take no care to do good in their days cannot expect to prosper in their days.