Lamentations - Commentaries by William Kelly

Lamentations of Jeremiah, Lamentations of Jeremiah: Chapter 4:12-22

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Verse 12 introduces a new topic, which gives remarkable vividness to the prophet's picture of Jerusalem's desolation. It was not the king of Judah who was surprised at the taking of his capital, but the kings of the earth who treated it as incredible that they could force it; it was not the Jews merely who fondly dreamed that their city was impregnable, but all the inhabitants of the world gave up the hope as vain. “The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem.” (Ver. 12.)

This prepares the way for a fresh exposure of the real causes of Jerusalem's ruin. Their sins were so glaring, where they were most odious and offensive, that God must have denied Himself if He had not brought His people down to the dust and scattered them to the ends of the earth. “Because of the sins of her prophets, the iniquities of her priests that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her, they wandered blind in the streets, they were defiled with blood, so that men could not touch their garments.” (Ver. 13, 14.) The greater the privilege in having such servants of Jehovah, the more distressing that they should pollute His name and people.

There is no reason that I know for Calvin's version of the last clause of verse 14: “They were defiled with blood, because they could not but touch their garments.” It seems indeed an ungrounded departure from the common and correct translation, both in giving the reason where it should be rather a statement of consequence, and in needlessly supposing a particle which brings in a very different idea. Nor do I see any just meaning in what results; for where would be the force of saying that they were defiled with blood because they could not but touch their garments? One could understand pollution from such contact, but hardly with blood from it. As the clause stands in the common version, the import appears to be that wandering blindly in the streets they defiled themselves in the worst way possible, with blood, so that their very garments must pollute any who might touch them. So universal was the defilement of the holy city that the clothes of the inhabitants could not be touched without contamination to others. There was as it were a fretting leprosy in the whole body politic. “Depart, unclean, they called out to them; depart, depart, touch not. So they flee away and also wander. They say among the nations, they shall dwell no more [there].” Thus most graphically does the prophet show that the exile of the Jew from the land was inevitable and of another character from an ordinary deportation of a people through the cruelty of a conqueror or the jealousy of an ambitious rival nation. It was in vain for the Jews to flatter themselves that it was God employing them for a season as a missionary people: God will send them forth; a few preparatorily to the kingdom, and when it is set up yet more largely as a nation. But here it is a people once holy, now profane, not honored in a gracious service and a grave trust, but punished for their dishonor of His law and sanctuary, and hence outcasts so ignominious that they flee themselves like lepers, proclaiming their own defilement and misery. So complete is the ruin that among the nations it is said, They shall no more sojourn in their land and city.

But this is an error. Impossible that God should be defeated by Satan, good by evil, in the long run. Appearances in this world ever give such expectations; and unbelieving man is as ready to credit them as to doubt God. But in the midst of judgment God remembers mercy; and therefore the more unsparing He might be, the more assuredly He would turn again with deliverance for His own name's sake. “The face [i.e. anger] of Jehovah hath divided them, he will no more regard them: they respected not the faces of the priests, they spared not the elders.” (Ver. 16.) Undoubtedly their overthrow was complete, and the contempt of the enemy so much the better because their success was beyond their own hopes; for there had ever been a lurking fear that God would avenge their wrongs and once more espouse the cause of His people. But now that He gave them up to the will of His adversaries, their pleasure was to wound them to the quick in the persons of the most honored sons of Zion.

And what could the prophet say in extenuation? He could only add here another heavy fault: “As yet for us [i.e., while we yet remained], our eyes failed for our vain help; on our watchtowers we watched for a nation that could not save us.” (Ver. 17.) They turned with longing desires after Egypt against the Chaldeans, instead of turning to God in repentance of heart, spite of reiterated warning from His prophets not to trust in an arm of flesh, least of all in that broken reed.

But no: sentence was passed by God, incensed with the unwearied evils of His people; and the fiercest of the heathen were let loose as executors of His wrath upon them. “They hunted our steps, so that we could not walk in our streets; our end was near, our days were fulfilled, for our end had come. Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven: they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness.” (Ver. 18, 19.) No mountain was steep, no desert lonely, enough to protect the guilty fugitives. It was God who was punishing them by means most just, yet to them most painful, for their revolt from Himself.

Alas! the remnant returned from Babylon have only added another and incomparably worse sin in the rejection of the Messiah and the refusal of the gospel, so that wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

But even then how lamentable the desolation! “The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of Jehovah, was taken in their pits, of whom was said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.” (Ver. 20.) It is of course Zedekiah who is alluded to. They had hoped in his office, whatever his demerits personally, forgetting that all the honor God bestowed on it was in view of Christ, who alone shall bear the glory. But their hearts were in the present, not really for Messiah; and they had only to lie down disappointed in sorrow.

Did Edom then taunt their fallen brother in the day of his distress? Indeed they did it with murderous treacherous hatred too. Hence the apostrophe of the prophet: “Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz; the cup also shall pass through unto thee: thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make thyself naked. The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; he will no more carry thee away into captivity: he will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; he will discover thy sins.” (Ver. 21, 22.) Did they say in

the day of Jerusalem, Down with it, down with it to the very foundation? They too must be brought to shame. If the Chaldean swept the holy land, the daughter of Edom must await no less when her day came to be carried away captive for her sins.

Lamentations of Jeremiah, Lamentations of Jeremiah: Chapter 4:1-11

It is impossible to view this sorrowful plaint of the prophet as merely historical. Nothing which had ever occurred in the way of disaster or humiliation at all approached the picture of desolation here described. The Spirit of prophecy is therefore forecasting the horrible abyss that awaited the beloved but guilty people.

“How the gold is become dim! the most fine gold is changed! The sacred stones are thrown down at the top of every street! The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how they are esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter.” Who could say that God screened or spared the iniquity of Israel? The most exalted in rank, dignity, and office were those who made their affliction most conspicuous. Could the most obdurate conscience in Jerusalem doubt whose hand had inflicted such reverses, whatever the instrument employed?

Hence the prophet, as he is growingly solemn in his glances at the uttermost distress, so is he calm but the more complete in setting it forth. It is as it were the evil all out, the leper white from head to feet, whose very extremity assures of God's opportunity to interfere both for the Jew and against the adversaries more especially such as ought to pity Jerusalem in the day of her calamity.

That the Chaldean foe should be bitter in reproach and cruel in punishment was not wonderful; but alas! the chosen nation's cup was not full of the indignity they must drink till they were the bitterest, out of sheer want and woe, against their own kin. “Even the dragons [or jackals] draw out the breast, they suckle their young: the daughter of my people [is] cruel like the ostriches in the wilderness.” It is of the last bird we read in Job 39:14-17, “which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers; her labor is in vain without fear; because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.”

The sense seems to me certain, though one may not say indisputable, seeing that so sensible a commentator as Calvin contrives to extract a different meaning. He understands the clause to mean that the daughter of the people had come to a savage or cruel one; and hence that whelps of serpents were more kindly dealt with than the Jews. The people had to do with nothing but cruelty, there being no one to succor them in their miseries. Thus the force would be, not that the people are accused of cruelty in not nourishing their children, but that they were given up to the most relentless of enemies. But I see no force in his reasoning which appears to be founded on unacquaintance with the Hebrew idiom, the masculine gender being used for emphasis where formally we might have expected the feminine, as not infrequently happens. Hence there is no real ground for going on with the allusion to the ostrich, as if the prophet meant that the Jews were so destitute of every help that they were banished into solitary places beyond the sight of men.

The true meaning is far more expressive and sets forth the awful state of the Jews, when not enemies only but those who should have been their own tenderest protectors were destitute of feelings found in the fiercest brutes, and only comparable for heartlessness to creatures of the most exceptional hardness and folly. Such were the mothers of Salem in the outpouring of Jeremiah's grief.

Accordingly in verse 4 he pursues the case. “The tongue of the suckling cleaveth to its palate for thirst; infants ask bread—none breaketh [it] for them.” Such was the pitiable state of children from the tenderest days upward. Was it any better with their elders? “They that fed daintily perish in the streets; they who were brought up on scarlet embrace dunghills.” (Ver. 5.) Parents and other adults were famishing and dying of hunger, and this gladly as it were on the dunghill instead of the splendid couches on which they used to recline when weary of pleasure itself.

Next the prophet draws out the proof that the vengeance under which the people were worse than that of Sodom, especially in this, that the notorious city of the plain was overwhelmed in a sudden blow of destruction, whereas that of Jerusalem was prolonged and most varied agony. “For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her.” (Verse 6.) The “hands” of man added to the soreness of the Jewish chastening: Sodom was dealt with by God without any human intervention. Compare the feeling of David when he brought to the verge of ruin the people whom God had entrusted him to feed. (2 Sam. 24:13, 14.)

Nor does any consecration to God avail to shelter: so complete the ruin, so unsparing the vengeance let. loose on every class and every soul. “Her Nazarites were brighter than snow, they were whiter than milk; they were more ruddy in body than rubies (or coral), their cutting (shape) of sapphire. Their aspect is darker than dusk, they are not known in the streets; their skin cleaveth to their bones, it is dried up like a stick.” Nothing availed in presence of these searching desolating judgments. The blessing which was once so marked on those separated was now utterly and manifestly fled, yea, wretchedness as under His ban had taken its place. And so truly was it so, that he proceeds to show how but a choice of ills awaited the Jew, a violent death or a life yet more horrible. “Happier the slain with the sword than the slain with hunger; because these pine away pierced through for the fruits of the field,1 i.e., for the want of them. For it is very forced to take it as Calvin does, pierced through by the fruits of the earth, as if the productions of the earth became swords.

So obliterated were all traces of compassion or even natural feeling that, as we are next told, “the hands of pitiful women boiled their children; they became their food in the destruction of the daughter of my people.” (Ver. 10.) Nothing could account for such barbarity but that which he adds immediately after (ver. 11): “Jehovah hath spent his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion which hath devoured her foundations.” What can be more thorough than to devour foundations? So it was declared of God against Jerusalem for their heinous sins. Impossible to escape His hand stretched out against His own: how deep their sin and vain to deny it!

Lamentations of Jeremiah, Lamentations of Jeremiah: Chapter 3:43-66

NEXT the prophet sets forth without disguise or attenuation the ways of God's displeasure with His people. This was true; and it was right both to feel and to own it, though the owning it to such a God makes it far more painful. “Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us; thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied. Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud that our prayer should not pass through. Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people.” (Ver. 43-45.) There are times when it does not become the saint to seek a deprecation of a chastening—where, if prayer were ignorantly so made, it were a mercy that it should not be heard. And so it was for Jerusalem then. The divine sentence must take its course, however truly God would prove His care of the godly under such sorrowful circumstances.

Then in verses 46-48 he expresses his sense of the reproach heaped on them by their enemies; so that between inward fear and outward desolation the wretchedness was unparalleled. “All our enemies have opened their mouths against us. Fear and a snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction. Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people.” Only those could know it who had been favored of God as they had been; only one who knew Him as Jeremiah could feel and tell it out as he does. It is but to be expected that some should feel his lamentations to be excessive, as others do the glowing anticipations of the prophets; faith would receive and appreciate both, without criticizing either.

In the next stanza he repeats the words of the last in order to bring Jehovah in. Faith does not hinder but increases grief because of the deplorable state of that which is near to God, when its state is so evil as to be the object of His judgments; yet it is assured that such grief is not unavailing but that He will surely intervene. “Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission, till Jehovah look down, and behold from heaven. Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.” (Ver. 49-51.)

In verses 52-54 the prophet sets forth by various figures the calamities which fall on the Jews from their enemies. “Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird, without cause. They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me. Waters flowed over mine head; then I said, I am cut off.” They were no more than as a bird before skilful fowlers, as one shut up in dungeons secured by a stone overhead, as one actually overwhelmed in waters rolling over him.

But prayer may be and has been proved effectual even in their distresses; and so the following verses show as with Jeremiah. “I called upon Thy name, O Jehovah, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee; thou saidst, Fear not.” (Ver. 55-57.)

And here it may be as well to point out the danger of those who cite Psa. 22:1, as an ordinary saint's experience, despising or at least failing to use the lesson scripture gives us, that those words suited Jesus on the cross, and certainly no Christian since. He was thus forsaken then that we might never be. It is not then true that the believer under any circumstance is forsaken of God. Jesus only could say in the fullness of the truth, both “My God” and “Why hast thou forsaken me?” And even He never did nor could, I believe, have said these words save as atoning for sin. To suppose that, because David wrote the words, he must have said them as his own experience, is to make the Psalms of private interpretation, instead of recognizing the power of the Spirit who inspired them. Psa. 16 might as well or better be David's experience; yet it needs little discrimination to see that both in their full import belong to Christ exclusively, but in wholly different circumstances.

“O Jehovah, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life. O Jehovah, thou hast seen my wrong; judge thou my cause. Thou hast seen all their vengeance and all their imaginations against me.” (Ver. 58-60.) The prophet is confident that He will appear for vindication and deliverance. The deep and deserved humiliation put on His people does not weaken his assurance or stifle his cry. On the one hand, if He has seen the wrong of the righteous, He would judge his cause; on the other, He had seen all the foe's vengeance and imaginations against him.

This is repeated in the next verses, in connection with what Jehovah had heard. “Thou hast heard their reproach, O Jehovah, and all their imaginations against me: the lips of those that rose up against me, and their device against me all the day. Behold their sitting down, and their rising up; I am their music.” (Ver. 61-63.) At all times throughout their daily life his sorrow was their desired object and liveliest pleasure.

In the closing strain the prophet prays according to the righteous government of God for the earth. “Render unto them a recompense, O Jehovah, according to the work of their hands. Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them. Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of Jehovah.” (Ver. 64-66.) It is no light thing in God's eye that His enemies should find only a matter for mirth in the sufferings and sorrows of those who were under His mighty hand. If the righteous are thus saved with difficulty, what will it be when judgment falls on the ungodly? Even under the gospel we may love and should rejoice in the prospect of the Lord's appearing, though we know what fiery indignation must consume the adversaries. Here of course the prayer is according to a Jewish measure, though none the less just. We are called to higher and heavenly things.

Lamentations of Jeremiah, Lamentations of Jeremiah: Chapter 3:22-42

There is no doubt, I think, that the ground of hope which the prophet lays to heart, as he said in verse 21, is stated in the following verses: “It is of Jehovah's mercies that we are not consumed, because his mercies fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. Jehovah is my portion; therefore will I hope in him.” The last clause confirms the thought that verse 21 is anticipative, and that here the spring is touched.

For the turn given by the Targum, and the older versions, save the Vulgate, namely, “The mercies of Jehovah are not consumed, for his compassions fail not,” I see no sufficient reason, though Calvin considers this sense more suitable. The Latin and our own version seem to me preferable, not only as being clearer but as giving greater prominence to the persons of His people, and yet maintaining in the last clause what the others spread over both clauses. His mercies then have no end; “they are renewed every morning: great is thy faithfulness. Jehovah is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.” It is a goodly portion without doubt, though unbelief thinks it nothing and pines after some one to shew any good after a tangible sort, the corn and wine and oil of this creation. But to have Him who has all things and who is Himself infinitely more than all He has is beyond comparison a better portion, as he must own who by grace believes it.

“Jehovah is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that one should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of Jehovah. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.” Confident expectation is thus cherished, while an illusive

profession of waiting for Him is detected and judged. For though a careless spirit might pretend to wait for Him, could it be thought of such a one that he is a soul which seeks Him! Activity is implied in this. The next clause asserts the value of patient looking to Him. But it is not tolerable to infer that we err in looking for the continual light of God's favor. For to this redemption entitles us; and Christ is risen the spring and pattern of life in resurrection, on which the Father ever looks with complacency. The last good here contemplated is that one bear the yoke in his youth. Subjection to God's will and to the trials He sends is ever blessed, and this from tender years.

“He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.” Thus God's ways are accepted in silence; and humiliation is complete unto death in conscience, yet not without hope; and man's contemptuous persecution and reproach are submitted to.

“For Jehovah will not cast off forever: but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” Hope is thus confirmed, without which indeed there is no power of endurance any more than of comfort. His judicial chastenings of Israel are measured and will have an end, as is equally true of His righteous government of ourselves now.

The next triplet is peculiar in its structure, each verse beginning with the infinitive, as is fairly presented in the common Authorized Version. “To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most high, to subvert a man in his cause Jehovah, approveth not.” They are acts of oppression, cruelty, and wrong: should the Lord not see this? Certainly they have no sanction from Him.

The utter ignorance of the future on man's part is next set before us. “Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when Jehovah commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good? Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?” All is plainly declared by God. But complainers are never satisfied nor otherwise right. It were better to complain of ourselves, yea every man because of his sins.

Then in verses 40-42 self-judgment is the word of exhortation. “Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to Jehovah. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens. We have transgressed and have rebelled: thou hast not pardoned.” It was just but tremendous thus to find no sign of pardon in His ways.

Lamentations of Jeremiah, Lamentations of Jeremiah: Chapter 3:1-21

This strain differs, as in the triple alliteration of its structure, so also in its more distinctly personal plaintiveness. The prophet expresses his own sense of sorrow, no longer representing Zion but speaking for himself, while at the same time his grief is bound up with the people, and none the less because he was an object of derision and hatred to them for his love to them in faithfulness to Jehovah. Other prophets may have been exempted for special ends of God, but none tasted the bitterness of Israel's portion more keenly than Jeremiah. His desire is that others should bear the grief of the people's state as here expressed for the heart in order to final comfort and blessing from God. In the opening verses he tells out his experiences in trouble. “I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day.” (Ver. 1-3.) He owns it to be from Jehovah's hand and rod. Indignation was gone forth from God against Israel, and a true-hearted prophet was the last one to screen himself or wish it. There was affliction; this too in darkness, not light; and again with oft-recurring visitation of His hand.

Next (ver. 4-6) Jeremiah recounts his wearing away; the preparations of Jehovah against him; and his evidently doomed estate. “My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones. He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travel. He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old.” (Ver. 4-6.)

In verses 7-9, the prophet shows that his portion was not only an imprisonment with heavy chain, but with the awful aggravation that entreaty and prayer could not avail to effect deliverance, the way being fenced, not to protect but to exclude and baffle.

Then Jeremiah draws imagery from the animal kingdom to tell how God spared him in nothing. “He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places. He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me desolate. He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow.” (Ver. 10-12.)

Nor does he content himself with telling us how he had been the object of divine attack, as game to the hunter, but lets us see that the mockery of his brethren was not the least part of his trial and bitterness. “He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins. I was a derision to all my people; and their song all the day. He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood.” (Ver. 13-15.)

Inwardly and outwardly there was every sign of disappointment and humiliation; and expectation of improved circumstances cut off even from Him who is the believer's one resource. “He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes. And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgat prosperity. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from Jehovah. (Ver. 16-18.)

Yet there is the very point of change. From verse 19 he spreads out all before Jehovah, whom he asks to remember it; and from the utter prostration of his soul he begins to conceive confidence. “Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to any mind, therefore have I hope.” (Ver. 19-21.) It is not Christ, but assuredly the Spirit of Christ leading on an afflicted and broken heart. Weeping may endure for a night; but joy cometh in the morning.

In what sense then are we to account for language so strong uttered by a holy man, and this not about the persecutions of strangers or the enmity of the Jews, but mostly indeed about Jehovah's ways with him? Certainly not what Calvin and the mass of commentators before and since make of it, as if it were the pressure of the hand of God on the sufferers as Christians when their minds were in a state of confusion and their lips uttered much that is intemperate. Such an interpretation does little honor to God, not to speak of Jeremiah, and makes the Spirit to be a reporter, not merely of a few words or deeds which betray the earthen vessel in its weakness, but of outpourings considerable and

minute, which, according to such a view, would consist of scarce anything but complaints spoken according to the judgment of the flesh under feelings so little moderated as to let fall too often things worthy of blame. Can such a view with such results satisfy a thoughtful child of God, who understands the gospel?

I believe, on the contrary, that the language is not hyperbolical, but the genuine utterance of a sensitive heart in the midst of the crushing calamities of Israel, or rather now also of Judah and Jerusalem; that they are the sorrows of one who loved the people according to God, who suffered with them all the more because they did not feel and be did that it was Jehovah Himself who was behind and above their miseries and shame, inflicting all because of their sins, with the added and yet keener fact of his own personal and poignant grief because of what his prophetic office exposed him to, not so much from the Chaldeans as from the people of God, his brethren after the flesh. It was in no way the expression of his own relation to God as a saint or consequently of God's feelings towards himself individually; it was the result of being called of God to take part in Israel for Him at a time so corrupt and so calamitous. I am far from meaning that personally Jeremiah did not know what failure was in that awful crisis. It is plain from his own prophecy that his timidity did induce him to sanction or allow on one occasion the deceit of another, adopting if not inventing it. But he seems to have been, take him all in all, a rare man, even among the holy line of the prophets; and, though morbidly acute in his feelings by nature, singularly sustained of God with as little sympathy from others as ever fell to the lot of a servant of God among His people. Even Elijah's experience fell far short of his, both on the side of the people's wickedness among whom lay his ministry, and on the score of suffering inwardly and outwardly as a prophet who shared all the chastening which the righteous indignation heaped on his guilty people, with his own affliction to boot as a rejected prophet. He appears indeed in this to have the most nearly approached our blessed Lord, though certainly there was a climax in His case peculiar to Himself, hardly more in the intensely evil and degraded state of Jerusalem then than in the perfection with which He fathomed and felt all before God as one who had deigned to be of them and their chief, their Messiah, who must therefore have so much the deeper interest and the truer sense of what they deserved as a people from God through the instrumentality of their enemies. As a fact this came on them soon after under the last and most terrible siege by Titus; but Jesus went beforehand through all before the cross as well as on it, this apart from making atonement, with which nothing but the densest ignorance could confound it, and mere malice attack others for avoiding its own palpable error.

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