

leave God out of consideration: "the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." God Himself will rise up in supernatural power. As in the days of old when He performed His great works on Mt. Perazim and in the Valley of Gibeon, so will He again bring to pass His strange acts. In verse 22 we have a word of appeal to the people. Let them turn to God and cease from mocking and criticizing Him for talking to them like little children who must receive "precept upon precept" and "line upon line." Let them turn away from this scornful attitude and turn back to God. Unless they do so, God has decreed a great destruction.

The last seven verses of the chapter form a section by themselves. At first sight they do not seem to fit into the rest of the chapter, but on closer examination their meaning becomes abundantly clear. God is not a workman who does things in a haphazard way. His plans are perfect, and He works them out in consideration of the material with which He is dealing. The prophet reminds the people that the plowman does not plow forever. After he has plowed the ground he scatters his seed. When God has finished His present stage of dealing with the people He will begin the next stage. He will not plow forever; He will also plant. He will not plant forever; He will harvest in His own season. God has protected Judah all these years, but they must not think that He will do it forever if they continue in unbelief and refuse to obey His laws.

There is also another thought in these agricultural verses. The prophet points out in verses 27 and 28 that the farmer deals differently with different types of products. Some products are handled with sharp and strong instruments, while others are handled lightly and with care. God also will handle those who are outside His covenant with strong and overwhelming destruction, but His own people will be given chastisement rather than destruction. They can expect difficulty and trouble, but they can know that it is all part of God's plan to prepare them for their place in His kingdom. He does not thresh the bread corn nor break it with the wheel of His cart; He handles it carefully. The same is true of the remnant of His people -- that great number in the land of Judah who are true to Him. He will handle them with