

After this assurance God gives the wonderful promise which begins in verse 17. Its essential element is the prediction that the children of the Lord are not to come to an end but are, in fact, to be wonderfully increased in number. The destroyers and enemies of God's people are to be crushed and driven away, but the children of Zion will be her splendid ornament. Zion can look back on the glorious days of King David, when the kingdom was so prosperous and successful that it appeared as if nothing but glory was ahead for the people of God. As she looks back on the spaciousness and wonder of her situation at that time and thinks of the present condition of her former headquarters -- a heap of ruins, desolate, and filled with vast unpopulated areas, she is assured by the Lord that the good old days will not merely return -- they will be far surpassed. The land which appeared so expansive and all-sufficient for the people of God in those glorious days will even come to appear too small, so that the children that will replace the others who have been lost will say that they need more space (v. 20).

The future reaction of Zion to this situation is described in verse 21. She will seem unable to comprehend it. She will say, "Who has begotten me these, seeing that I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, one wandering to and fro? who has brought up these?" The fact that Zion is called "one wandering to and fro" (or "driven away") is clear proof that the word here does not represent a place, but that it is a personification of the people of God. Her former children have disappeared, but the time is coming when she will have great numbers of new children and will ask in amazement: "Whence have these come?"

At this point we are inevitably reminded of the wonderful promise of Isaiah 29:22-23 that Jacob will see children whom God Himself has created ("the work of mine hands") and will praise "the LORD who redeemed Abraham." John the Baptist declared "that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Mat. 3:9). Abraham was redeemed by the power of God. It was not mere natural generation which made Abraham a part of Zion, but God's wonderful grace. God is promising here that in the future He will bring many new ones from sources utterly unsuspected at present and that He Himself will cause them to be born into the family of