

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 5

In this chapter the prophet exhorts Israel to hear his lamentation over them for their impending ruin, (^{<318E>}Amos 5:1-3); nevertheless to seek the Lord, and all that is good; to forsake their idols, and repent of their sins, in hopes of finding mercy, and living comfortably; or otherwise they must expect the wrath of God for their iniquities, especially their oppression of the poor, (^{<318H>}Amos 5:4-15); otherwise it would be a time of weeping and wailing, of darkness and distress, however they might harden or flatter themselves, or make a jest of it, (^{<318I>}Amos 5:16-20); for all their sacrifices and ceremonial worship would signify nothing, so long as they continued their idolatry with them (^{<318J>}Amos 5:21-26); and therefore should surely go into captivity, (^{<318K>}Amos 5:27).

Ver. 1. *Hear ye the word which I take up against you*, etc.] And which was not his own word, but the word of the Lord; and which he took up, by his direction as a heavy burden as some prophecies are called, and this was; and which, though against them, a reproof for their sins, and denunciation of punishment for them, yet was to be heard; for every word of God is pure, and to be hearkened to, whether for us or against us; since the whole is profitable, either for doctrine and instruction in righteousness, or for reproof and correction. It may be rendered, “which I take up concerning you”, or “over you”^{f120}:

[even] a lamentation, O house of Israel; a mournful ditty, an elegiac song over the house of Israel, now expiring, and as it were dead. This word was like Ezekiel’s roll, in which were written “lamentation, and mourning, and woe”, (^{<319>}Ezekiel 2:10); full of mournful matter, misery, and distress, as follows:

Ver. 2. *The virgin of Israel is fallen*, etc.] The kingdom of Israel, so called, because it had never been subdued, or become subject to a foreign power, since it was a kingdom; or because, considered in its ecclesiastic state, it had been espoused to the Lord as a chaste virgin; and perhaps this may be ironically spoken, and refers to its present adulterate and

degenerated state worshipping the calves at Daniel and Bethel; or else because of its wealth and riches and the splendour and gaiety in which it appeared; but now, as it had fallen into sin and iniquity, it should quickly fall by it, and on account of it, into ruin and misery; and because of the certainty of it it is represented as if it was already fallen:

she shall no more rise; and become a kingdom again, as it never has as yet, since the ten tribes were carried away captive by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, to which calamity this prophecy refers, The Targum is,

“shall not rise again this year;”

very impertinently; better Kimchi and Ben Melech, for a long time; since as they think, and many others, that the ten tribes shall return again, as may seem when all Israel shall be converted and saved, and repossess their own land; (see ^{<3010>}Hosea 1:10,11 ^{<3015>}3:5 ^{<5125>}Romans 11:25,26). Abendana produces a passage out of Zohar, in which these words are interpreted, that the virgin of Israel should not rise again of herself, she not having power to prevail over her enemies; but God will raise her up out of the dust, when he shall raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, who shall reign in future time over all the tribes together, as it is said in (^{<3091>}Amos 9:11);

she is forsaken upon her land; by her people, her princes, and her God; or prostrate on the ground, as the Targum; she was cast upon the ground, and dashed to pieces by the enemy as an earthen vessel, and there left, her ruin being irrecoverable; so whatever is cast and scattered, or dashed to pieces on the ground, and left, is expressed by the word here used, as Jarchi observes:

[there is] none to raise her up: her princes and people are either slain by the sword, famine, and pestilence, or carried captive, and so can yield her no assistance; her idols whom she worshipped cannot, and her God she forsook will not.

Ver. 3. *For thus saith the Lord God*, etc.] This is a reason why there were none to raise her up: since

the city that went out [by] a thousand shall leave an hundred; that is, the city in which there were a thousand constantly going in and out; or which sent, caused to go out, or furnished, a thousand men upon occasion for war, had only a hundred persons left in it; or there remained but a hundred

of the thousand they sent out, the rest being destroyed by one means or another:

and that which went forth [by] an hundred shall leave ten, to the house of Israel; where there were a hundred persons going out and coming in continually; or which sent out a hundred men to the army to fight their battles had now only ten remaining; to such a small number were they reduced all over the land, so that there were none, or not a number sufficient to raise up Israel to its former state and glory.

Ver. 4. *For thus saith the Lord unto the house of Israel,* etc.] Or “yet”^{f121}, notwithstanding all this, though such judgments were threatened and denounced, and such desolations should certainly come, in case of impenitence, and an obstinate continuance in a course of sin; yet hopes are given of finding mercy and kindness upon repentance and reformation, at least to the remnant of them; (see ^{<3165>}Amos 5:15);

seek ye me; seek my fear, as the Targum; fear and reverence, serve and worship, the Lord God; return unto him by repentance; seek to him by prayer and supplication; acknowledge your sins, and humble yourselves before him, and implore his pardoning grace and mercy:

and ye shall live; in your own land, and not be carried out of it; live comfortably, in great plenty of good things; and live spiritually, enjoying the favour of God, and his presence in his ordinances, and live eternally in the world to come.

Ver. 5. *But seek not Bethel,* etc.] Do not go to Bethel, the place where one of Jeroboam’s calves was set up and worshipped, to consult the oracle, idols, and priests there; or to perform religious worship, which will be your ruin, if not prevented by another course of living:

nor enter into Gilgal; another place of idolatry, where idols were set up and worshipped (see Gill on “^{<3100>}Amos 4:4”);

and pass not to Beersheba; a place in the further part of the land of Israel; it formerly belonged to Judah, but was now in the hands of the ten tribes, and where idolatrous worship was practised; (see ^{<3184>}Amos 8:14); it having been a place where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had dwelt, and worshipped the true God:

for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity; that is, the inhabitants of it; they will not be able with their idols and idol worship to save themselves, and therefore go not thither. There is an elegant play on words here^{f122}, as there is also in the next words:

and Bethel shall come to nought; which also was called Bethaven, the house of vanity, or of an idol which is nothing in the world; and therefore, because of the idolatry in it, should come to nothing, be utterly destroyed, and the inhabitants of it. So the Targum,

“they, that are in Gilgal, and worship calves in Bethel.”

Ver. 6. *Seek the Lord, and ye shall live*, etc.] This is, repeated to stir up unto it, because of their backwardness and slothfulness, and to show the importance and necessity of it. By the “Lord” may be meant the Messiah, Israel’s God that was to come, and they were to prepare to meet, (^{<3042>}Amos 4:12); and the rather, since life spiritual and eternal is only to be had from him, and he is to be sought unto for it, and all the blessings of it, peace, pardon, righteousness, rest, and salvation as well as temporal deliverance, and all outward mercies:

lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour [it]; that is, lest his wrath and fury break out like fire as the Targum, by sending an enemy to invade the land, destroy it, and carry the inhabitants of it captive; even all the ten tribes, who frequently go by the name of Ephraim the son of Joseph, that being the principal tribe, and the first king of them being of it:

and [there be] none to quench [it] in Bethel; the calf worshipped there, and the priests that officiated, would not be able to avert the stroke of divine vengeance, or turn back the enemy, and save the land from ruin. The Targum is,

“and there be none to quench it, because of your sins, who have been serving idols in Bethel.”

Ver. 7. *Ye who turn judgment to wormwood*, etc.] This seems to be spoken to kings and judges, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe; in whose hands is the administration of justice, and who often pervert it, as these did here addressed and complained of; that which was the most useful and salubrious, and so the most desirable to the commonwealth, namely, just judgment, was changed into the reverse, what was as bitter and as

disagreeable as wormwood; or “hemlock”, as it might be rendered, and as it is in (^{<3162>}Amos 6:12); even injustice:

and leave off righteousness in the earth; leave off doing it among men: or rather, “leave [it] on the earth”^{f123}; who cast it down to the ground, trampled upon it, and there left it; which is expressive not only of their neglect, but of their contempt of it; (see ^{<2182>}Daniel 8:12).

Ver. 8. [*Seek him*] *that maketh the seven stars*, etc.] Which some connect with the preceding words, without a supplement, “they leave righteousness on the ground, who maketh the seven stars”; understanding it of Christ, the Lord our righteousness, who is made unto us righteousness, whom the Jews rejected and despised, though the Maker of the heavens and the constellations in them. Some continue, and supply the words thus, and remember not him “that maketh the seven stars”, as Kimchi; or forget him, as Japhet in Aben Ezra. The Targum is,

“they cease to fear him that maketh, etc.”

they have no regard unto him, no awe and reverence of him, or they would not act so unjustly as they do. There is but one word for the “seven stars” in the original text, which signifies that constellation called the Pleiades, and so the same word is rendered, (^{<800>}Job 9:9 ^{<8331>}38:31); and the Vergiliae, because they appear in the spring of the year, when they yield their sweet influences, which the Scripture ascribes to them, and are desirable; hence they have their name in Hebrew from a word which signifies desire:

and Orion; another constellation; for Aben Ezra says, it is not one star, but many; and as he, with the ancients he mentions, takes the former to be the tail of Aries, and the head of Taurus; so this to be the heart of Scorpio. This constellation appears in winter, and is a sign of bad weather. Virgil calls it Nimbosus Orion; and it has its name in Hebrew from unsettledness and inconstancy, the weather being then very variable. Amos, being a herdsman, had observed the appearances and effects of these constellations, and adored the Maker of them, whom others neglected:

and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: maketh the constant revolution of day and night, and the days longer in the summer, and shorter in winter, as Kimchi interprets it; and also the various changes of prosperity and adversity, turning the one into the other when he pleases:

that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; as in the time of the universal deluge, to which some Jewish writers apply this, as Jarchi observes; or rather draws up by the heat of the sun the waters of the sea into the air, and forms them into clouds, where they lose their saltness, and become sweet; and then lets them down in plentiful and gentle showers, to water, refresh, and fructify the earth; which is an instance of divine power, wisdom, and goodness. The Targum is,

“who commands many armies to be gathered like the waters of the sea, and scatters them upon the face of the earth.”

Some, who understand these words of Christ our righteousness, interpret the whole mystically of his raising up the twelve apostles, comparable to stars; and of his turning the Gentiles, who were darkness itself, to the light of the Gospel; and of his giving up the Jews, who were formerly light, to judicial blindness and darkness; and of his watering the earth with large showers of the divine word;

the Lord [is] his name; he is the true Jehovah, that can and does do all this.

Ver. 9. *That strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong*, etc.] Such as have been taken by an enemy, who have been stripped of their armour, and spoiled of all their goods and substance, and have no friends nor allies, nor anything to help themselves with; the Lord can supply them with strength, furnish them with weapons, and send them helpers, so that they shall rise up against their conquerors and spoilers, and in their turn subdue them. The Targum is,

“that strengthens the weak against the strong;”

or causes the weak to prevail over the strong. A learned man, from the use of the word in the Arabic language, chooses to render it, “who intends”, or “designs, destruction to the strong”^{f124}; that is, in his secret purposes, and which he brings about in providence; though he is doubtful whether it may not have the signification of recreation and refreshment, and whether the construction and circumstances will admit of it; and some do so translate it, “who refreshes himself with destruction against the strong”^{f125}; takes delight and pleasure in it; it is a recreation to him:

so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress: lay siege to it and take it, in which the spoiler thought himself secure with the spoil and substance he had taken from the spoiled; such sudden changes and vicissitudes can

God bring upon men when he pleases. Some apply this to the Romans strengthened against the Jews, and besieging their fortified city Jerusalem; but not very aptly.

Ver. 10. *They hate him that rebuketh in the gate*, etc.] Openly and publicly in the courts of judicature: wicked judges hated the prophets of the Lord, such as Amos, who faithfully reprov'd them for the perversion of justice, even when they were upon the bench: or the people were so corrupt and degenerate, that they hated those faithful judges who reprov'd them for their vices in the open courts of justice, when they came before them, The former sense seems best, and more agreeable to the context:

and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly; not only hate him, but abhor him, cannot bear the sight of him, or to hear his name mentioned that speaks out his mind freely and honestly, and tells them of their sins, and advises them to repent of them, and leave them.

Ver. 11. *Forasmuch therefore as your treading [is] upon the poor*, etc.] This seems to be spoken to the princes, judges, and civil magistrates, as Kimchi observes; who oppress'd the poor and needy, and crush'd them to the ground, trampled upon them, stripp'd them of the little substance they had, and left them destitute; exercising a cruel and tyrannical power over them, they having none to stand by them, and deliver them:

and ye take from him burdens of wheat; which perhaps he had been gleaning in the field, and was carrying home for the support of his family; or which he had gotten with great labour, and was all he had in the world: this they took away from him, for the payment of pretended debts, or lawsuits; or as not in right belonging to him, but taken out of fields where he should not have entered:

ye have built houses of hewn stones; in a very grand and pompous manner for themselves and their children, with money they had extorted from the poor, and got by oppression and injustice:

but ye shall not dwell in them; at least but a very short time; for quickly and suddenly the enemy will come and turn you out of them, and destroy them, which would be a just retaliation for their spoiling the houses of the poor:

ye have planted pleasant vineyards: well situated, and filled with the choicest vines, which promise a large produce of the best wine:

but ye shall not drink wine of them; for before the grapes are fully ripe they should be either taken away by death, or be carried captive, and others should dwell in their houses, and drink the wine of their vineyards.

Ver. 12. *For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins*, etc.] Their sins were numerous, and of the first magnitude, attended with very heavy aggravations; and these with all their circumstances were well known to the omniscient God, and therefore he determined to punish them as he had threatened. Some of their transgressions are pointed out, as follow:

they afflict the just; who are so both in a moral and evangelic sense; not comparatively only, but really; and particularly whose cause was just, and yet were vexed and distressed by unjust judges, who gave the cause against them, made them pay all costs and charges, and severely mulcted them: they take a bribe; of those that were against the just, and gave the cause for them. The word signifies “a ransom”^{f126}. The Targum it false mammon. Corrupt and unjust judges are here taxed:

and they turn aside the poor in the gate [from their right]; in the court of judicature, where they should have done them justice, such courts being usually held in the gates of cities; but instead of that they perverted their judgment, and did them wrong.

Ver. 13. *Therefore the prudent shall keep silence at that time*, etc.] Not the prophets of the Lord, whose business it was at all times to reprove, and not hold their peace, let the consequence be what it would; though the Targum calls them teachers; but private persons, whose wisdom it would be to say nothing; since reproof would do no good to these persons, and they would bring a great deal of hatred ill will, and trouble upon themselves as well as would hear the name of God blasphemed, which would be very afflictive to them: or the sense is, they would not speak to God on the behalf of these wicked men, knowing the decree was gone forth; nor say one murmuring word at it, believing it was in righteousness; and being struck also with the awfulness of God’s righteous judgments:

for it [is] an evil time; in which sin abounded, and miseries and calamities on account of it.

Ver. 14. *Seek good, and not evil*, etc.] Seek not unto, or after, evil persons and evil things; not the company and conversation of evil men, which is infectious and dangerous; nor anything that is evil, or has the appearance of

it, especially the evil of evils, sin; which is hateful to God, contrary to his nature and will; is evil in its own nature, and bad in its consequences, and therefore not to be sought, but shunned and avoided; but seek that which is good, persons and things: seek the “summum bonnum”, “the chief good”, God, who is essentially, perfectly, immutably, and communicatively good, the fountain of all goodness, and the portion of his people; seek Christ the good Saviour and sacrifice, the good Shepherd, and the good Samaritan, who is good in all his relations, as a father, husband, and friend, and in whom all good things are laid up; seek the good Spirit of God, who works good things in his people, and shows good things to them, and is the Comforter of them; seek to him for assistance in prayer, and to help in the exercise of every grace, and in the discharge of every duty, and as the guide into all truth, and to eternal glory; seek the good ways of God, the way of truth, the path of faith and holiness, and especially the good way to the Father, the way of life and salvation by Christ; seek the good word of God, the Scriptures of truth, the promises contained in them, and the Gospel of them; seek the company of good men, and that good part that shall not be taken away, the true grace of God, the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; seek the glories of another world, the goodness of God laid up, the best things which are reserved to last:

that ye may live; comfortably, spiritually, and eternally, which is the consequence of all this; (see Gill on “~~Amos~~ Amos 5:4, 6”);

and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken; as they used to say, and boasted of; though they had not the temple, the ark of the testimony, the symbols of the divine Presence, as Judah had; but this they would have in reality, both his gracious presence here, and his glorious presence hereafter, did they truly and rightly seek those things; than which nothing is more desirable to good men, or can make them more comfortable, or more happy. The Targum is,

“seek to do well, and not to do ill, that ye may live; and then the word of the Lord God of hosts shall be your help, as ye have said.”

Ver. 15. *Hate the evil, and love the good*, etc.] Evil is not only not to be sought, but to be hated, especially the evil of sin, because of its evil nature, and pernicious effects and consequences; and, if it was for no other reason but because it is hateful and abominable unto God, therefore they that love him should hate evil, even with a perfect hatred; as all good men do, though it is present with them, and cleaves unto them, and they do it,

(^{<1970>}Psalm 97:10 ^{<1715>}Romans 7:15 ^{<1219>}12:9); and “good” is to be loved for its goodness’ sake; and the good effects of it; a good God is to be loved, and all good men, and all good things; the good word of God, and his commands and ordinances; and highly to be esteemed, and affectionately regarded:

and establish judgment in the gate; openly, publicly, in every court of judicature, which used to be kept in the gates of cities; not only execute judgment and justice in all, cases brought into court, but let it have its constant course, and be always practised according to the settled laws of it:

it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph: who should escape the fire that should break out of his house, and devour it, even the ten tribes, (^{<1186>}Amos 5:6); such of them as should seek the Lord, and that which is good; for in the worst of times God reserves a remnant for himself, as in the times of Elijah, Isaiah, Christ, and his apostles; a remnant according to the election of grace, to whom he has been gracious in the choice and reserve he has made of them; in the stores of grace he has hid up for them; in the provision and mission of his Son as a Saviour; and in waiting the time of their conversion, when he is gracious to them, in regenerating, quickening, pardoning, and justifying of them; and still will be in the visits of his love; in the supplies of his grace, in supporting them under afflictions, temptations, desertions, etc. and in giving them his word and ordinances for their comfort and relief: nor is this “may be” to be understood in a way of doubt or hesitation, but of good hope, yea, of a holy confidence; and so some render it, “without doubt the Lord God of hosts will be gracious”^{f127}, etc. (see ^{<1186>}Zephaniah 2:3).

Ver. 16. *Therefore the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord, saith thus*, etc.] The connection of these words is not with those that immediately precede, but with the whole context; seeing neither promises nor threats, exhortations, good advice, and intimations of grace and mercy, had no effect, at least upon the generality of the people, therefore the Lord declared as follows:

wailing [shall be] in all streets; in all the streets of the towns and cities of Israel, because of the slain and wounded in them:

and they shall say in all the highways, alas! alas! in the several roads throughout the country, as travellers pass on, and persons flee from the

enemy; they shall lament the state of the kingdom, and cry Woe, woe, unto it; in what a miserable condition and circumstances it is in:

and they shall call the husbandmen to mourning: who used to be better employed in tilling their land, ploughing, sowing, reaping, and gathering in the fruits of the earth; but now should have no work to do, all being destroyed, either by the hand of God, by blasting, and mildew, and vermin, or by the trampling and forage of the enemy; and so there would be just occasion for mourning:

and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing; that have got the art of mourning, and were expert in making moans, and using plaintive tones, and who assisted at funerals, and other doleful occasions; and who are made use of to this day in some countries, particularly in Ireland; and were the old Romans, by whom they were called “siticines”, “praefici”, and “praeficae” and these mourning men and women were also employed among the Jews at such times; (see ^{<4023>}Matthew 9:23); in (^{<2497>}Jeremiah 9:17), the mourning women are called “cunning women”; and so Lucian ^{f128} calls: them *σοφιστας των ψρηνων*, “sophists at lamentations”, artists: at them, well skilled therein, such as those are here directed to be called for. Mr. Lively, our countryman, puts both clauses together, and renders them thus, “the husbandmen shall call to mourning and wailing such as are skilful of lamentation”; to assist them therein, because of the loss of the fruits of the earth; and such a version is confirmed by Jarchi, though he paraphrases it to a different sense;

“companies of husbandmen shall meet those that plough in the fields with the voice of mourners that cry in the streets.”

Ver. 17. *And in all vineyards [shall be] wailing*, etc.] The vines being destroyed, and no grapes to be gathered, and put into the press; when there used to be great shoutings, and large expressions of joy, at the gathering in of the vintage, and pressing the grapes; but now there shall be a different tone; (see ^{<2482>}Jeremiah 48:32,33);

for I will pass through thee, saith the Lord; through their cities, towns, and country, fields and vineyards, and destroy all in his way, as he passed through Egypt when he destroyed their firstborn.

Ver. 18. *Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord*, etc.] Either the day of Christ’s coming in the flesh, as Cocceius interprets it; and which was desired by the people of Israel, not on account of spiritual and eternal

salvation, but that they might be delivered by him from outward troubles and enemies, and enjoy temporal felicity; they had a notion of him as a temporal Saviour and Redeemer, in whose days they should possess much outward happiness, and therefore desired his coming; (see ^{<301>}Malachi 3:1,2); or else the day of the Lord's judgments upon them, spoken of by the prophet, and which they were threatened with, but did not believe it would ever come; and therefore in a scoffing jeering manner, expressed their desire of it, to show their disbelief of it, and that they were in no pain or fear about it, like those in (^{<2159>}Isaiah 5:19);

to what end [is] it for you? why do you desire it? what benefit do you expect to get by it?

the day of the Lord [is] darkness, and not light; it will bring on affliction, calamities, miseries, and distress, which are often in Scripture expressed by "darkness", and not prosperity and happiness, which are sometimes signified by "light"; (see ^{<2151>}Isaiah 5:30 ^{<2182>}8:22 ^{<1786>}Esther 8:16); and even the day of the coming of Christ were to the unbelieving Jews darkness, and not light; they were blinded in it, and given up to judicial blindness and darkness; they hating and rejecting the light of Christ, and his Gospel, and which issued in great calamities, in the utter ruin and destruction of that people, (^{<889>}John 3:19,20 ^{<899>}9:39).

Ver. 19. *As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him,* etc.] That is, should the day of the Lord come as they desired, they would not be the better for it; it would be only going from one trouble to another, like escaping Scylla, and falling into Charybdis: or as if a man, upon the sight of a lion, and at his yell, should take to his heels, and flee "from the face" of him, as the phrase is ^{f129}, and a bear, a less generous, and more cruel and voracious creature, especially when: bereaved of its whelps, should meet him, and seize him: or should: he get clear of them both,

or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him; should he get into a house, and so escape the lion and the bear, and lean upon the wall of the house to support and ease him, being out of breath in running from these creatures; yet a serpent lurking in the wall of an old house bites him, and the venom and poison of it issues in his death; so he gains nothing by fleeing from the lion, or escaping the bear. These proverbial expressions signify that the Israelites would be no gainers by the day of the Lord, but rather fall into greater evils, and more distressing calamities. Some Jewish writers interpret the lion and the bear of Laban

and Esau; the lion (they say^{f130}) is Laban, who pursued after Jacob to take away his life; the bear is Esau, who stood in the way to kill all that came, the mother with the children; but are much better interpreted of the Chaldeans, Persians, and Grecians, by Jerom; whose words are,

“fleeing from the face of Nebuchadnezzar the lion, ye will be met by Ahasuerus, under whom, was the history of Esther; or the empire of the Assyrians and Chaldeans being destroyed, the Medes and Persians shall arise; and when upon the reign of Cyrus ye shall have returned, and at the command of, Darius shall have begun to build the house of the Lord, and have confidence in the temple, so as to rest in it, lean your weary hands on its walls; then shall come Alexander king of the Macedonians, or Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, who shall abide in the temple, and bite likes serpent, not without in Babylon, and in Susa, but within the borders of the holy land; by which it appears that the day ye desire is not a day of light and joy, but of darkness and sorrow.”

The interpretation is pretty and ingenious enough, since the characters of the lion, bear, and serpent, agree with the respective persons and people mentioned; Nebuchadnezzar is often compared to a lion, (~~2007~~Jeremiah 4:7 ~~2807~~50:17); and the Babylonian and Chaldean monarchy is represented by one in (~~2004~~Daniel 7:4); and the Persian monarchy by a bear, (~~2005~~Daniel 7:5); to which the Persians are compared, the Jews say^{f131}, because they eat and drink like a bear, are as fat as bears, and hairy like them, and as restless as they; and so the Persians were noted for their luxury and lust, as well as their cruelty; and, wearing long hair, are called hairy persons in the Delphic oracle, which Herodotus^{f132} interprets of them; (see Gill on “~~2005~~Daniel 7:5”); and Antiochus may not unfitly be compared to a serpent; see (see Gill on “~~2023~~Daniel 8:23-25”); (see Gill on “~~2123~~Daniel 11:23”); but what is to be objected to this sense is, that the words are spoken to the ten tribes, or Israel, who were carried captive by the Assyrians; and not the two tribes, or the Jews, who fell into the hands, first of the Chaldeans, then the Persians, and then the Grecians, particularly into the hands of Antiochus; (see ~~2004~~Daniel 7:4,5 ~~1000~~Ezra 1:1).

Ver. 20. [*Shall*] *not the day of the Lord [be] darkness, and not light?* etc.] The design of such a question is strongly to affirm, that, in this day of the Lord spoken of, there should be nothing but misery and distress, and no

prosperity and happiness, at least to the wicked Israelites, or the unbelieving Jews:

even very dark, and no brightness in it? signifying that there should be no deliverance, nor the least glimmering view or hope of it; that the calamity should be so very great, and the destruction so entire, that there should be no mixture of mercy, nor the least appearance of relief.

Ver. 21. *I hate, I despise your feast days*, etc.] Kimchi thinks this is said, and what follows, with respect to the kingdom of the house of Judah, which kept the feast the Lord commanded; but it is not necessary so to understand it; for doubtless the ten tribes imitated the worship at Jerusalem, and kept the feasts as the Jews did there, in the observance of which they trusted; but the Lord rejects their vain confidence, and lets them know that these were no ways acceptable to him; and were so far from atoning for their sins, that they were hated, abhorred, and despised by him, being observed in such a manner and with such a view as they were;

and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies; a sweet savour of rest, as in (^{<0002>}Genesis 8:21); take no pleasure in their duties and services performed, in their solemn assemblies convened together for religious purposes, nor accept of them; but, on the contrary, dislike and abhor them; (see ^{<2011>}Isaiah 1:11-14).

Ver. 22. *Though ye offer me burnt offerings, and your meat offerings, I will not accept [them]*, etc.] The daily burnt offerings, morning and night, and others which were wholly the Lord's; and the "minchah", or bread offering, which went along with them; in which they thought to do God service, and to merit his favour; but instead of that they were unacceptable to him, being neither offered up in a proper place, if in a right manner according to the law of Moses; however, not in the faith of the great sacrifice, Christ; nor attended with repentance towards God:

neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts; even though their peace offerings were of the best of the herd. Aben Ezra says the creature here meant is the same which in the Ishmaelitic or Arabic language is called <Arabic> "giamus", a creature bigger than an ox, and like one, which is called a buffle or buffalo. And so Ben Melech says it means one of the kinds of the larger cattle; for not a lamb, a ram, or a sheep, is meant, as the word is sometimes rendered by the Septuagint, but a creature like an ox; not larger, or the wild ox, as the above Hebrew

writers, but smaller; with which agrees the description Bellonius^{f133} gives of the Syrian “bubalus” or “buffalo”, which he calls a small ox, full bodied, little, smooth, sleek, fat, and well made; and is no doubt the same the Arabs call “almari”, from its smoothness.

Ver. 23. *Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs*, etc.] The ten tribes, very probably, imitated the, temple music at Jerusalem, both vocal and instrumental, and had their songs and hymns of praise, which they sung to certain tunes; but the music of these is called a noise, being very disagreeable to the Lord, as coming from such carnal and wicked persons; and therefore he desires it might cease, be took away, and he be no more troubled with it:

for I will not hear the melody of thy viols: which may be put for all instruments of music used by them, as violins, harps, psalteries, etc. the sound of which, how melodious soever, the, Lord would turn a deaf ear unto, and not regard.

Ver. 24. *But let judgments run down as waters*, etc.] Or “roll”^{f134}; in abundance, with great rapidity, bearing down all before them, which nothing can resist; signifying the plenty of justice done in the land, the full and free exercise of it, without any stoppage or intermission:

and righteousness as a mighty stream; the same thing expressed in different words; though some think that not the execution of judgment and justice by men is here exhorted to, but the vindictive justice of God is threatened; which like a mighty torrent of water should come down, overwhelm, bear away, and destroy all before it, even all the transgressors in Israel.

Ver. 25. *Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings*, etc.] No; they were not offered to God, but to devils, to the golden calf, and to the host of heaven: so their fathers did

in the wilderness forty years; where sacrifices were omitted during that time, a round number for a broken one, it being about thirty eight years; and these their children were imitators of them, and offered sacrifice to idols too, and therefore deserved punishment as they: even ye,

O house of Israel? the ten tribes, who are here particularly charged and threatened; (see Gill on “~~ACTS~~ Acts 7:42”).

Ver. 26. *But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch*, etc.] The god of the Ammonites; (see Gill on “^{<3013>}Amos 1:13”); and (see Gill on “^{<2475>}Jeremiah 7:31”); called theirs, because they also worshipped it, and caused their seed to pass through the fire to it; and which was carried by them in a shrine, or portable tent or chapel. Or it may be rendered, “but ye have borne Siccuth your king”^{f135}; and so Siccuth may be taken for the name of an idol, as it is by Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, to whom they gave the title of king, as another idol went by the name of the queen of heaven; perhaps by one was meant the sun, and by the other the moon;

and Chiun, your images; Moloch or Siccuth was one, and Chiun another image, or rather the same; and this the same with Chevan, which in the Arabic and Persic languages is the name of Saturn, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi say; and is so rendered by Montanus here; and who in the Egyptian tongue was called Revan, or Rephan, or Remphan; as by the Septuagint here, and in (^{<4475>}Acts 7:43);

the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves; or the star “your god”^{f136}; meaning the same with Chiun or Saturn; perhaps the same with the star that fell from the air or sky, mentioned by Sanchoniatho^{f137}; which Astarte, the wife of Chronus or Saturn, is said to take and consecrate in Tyre; this they made for themselves, and worshipped as a deity. The Targum is,

“ye have borne the tabernacle of your priests, Chiun your image, the star your God, which ye have made to yourselves.”

Various are the senses put upon the word Chiun. Some read it Cavan, and take it to signify a “cake”; in which sense the word is used in (^{<2475>}Jeremiah 7:18 ^{<2449>}44:19); and render it, “the cake of your images”^{f138}; and supposing that it had the image of their gods impressed upon it. Calmet interprets it “the pedestal of your images”^{f139}; and indeed the word has the signification of a basis, and is so rendered by some^{f140}; and is applicable to Moloch their king, a king being the basis and foundation of the kingdom and people; and to the sun, intended by that deity, which is the basis of the celestial bodies, and of all things on earth. Some take Moloch and Chiun to be distinct deities, the one to be the sun, the other the moon; but they seem rather to be the same, and both to be the Egyptian ox, and the calf of the Israelites in the wilderness, the image of which was carried in portable tents or tabernacles, in chests or shrines; such as the Succothbenoth, or tabernacles of Venus, (^{<2173>}2 Kings 17:30); and those of Diana’s, (^{<4492>}Acts 19:24); the

first of these portable temples we read of, is one drawn by oxen in Phoenicia, mentioned by Sanchoniatho^{f141}; not that the Israelites carried such a tent or tabernacle during their travels through the wilderness, whatever they might do the few days they worshipped the calf; but this is to be understood of their posterity in later times, in the times of Amos; and also when Shalmaneser carried them captive beyond Damascus, as follows. It may be further observed, for the confirmation and illustration of what has been said concerning Chiun, that the Egyptian Anubis, which Plutarch^{f142} says is the same with Saturn, is called by him Kyon, which seems to be no other than this word Chiun: and whereas Stephen calls it Rephan, this is not a corruption of the word, reading Rephan or Revan for Chevan; nor has he respect to Rimmon, the god of the Syrians, but it is the Egyptian name for Saturn; which the Septuagint interpreters might choose to make use of, they interpreting for the king of Egypt: and Diodorus Siculus^{f143} makes mention of an Egyptian king called Remphis, whom Braunius^{f144} takes to be this very Chiun; (see ~~407B~~ Acts 7:43); but Rephas, or Rephan, was the same with Chronus, or Saturn, from whence came the Rephaim^{f145}, who dwelt in Ashtaroth Karnaim, a town of Ham or Chronus; (see ~~0145~~ Genesis 14:5). Some^{f146}, who take Siccuth for an idol, render it in the future, “ye shall carry”, etc. and take it to be a prediction of Amos, that the Israelites should, with great reproach and ignominy, be obliged by the Assyrians, as they were led captive, to carry on their shoulders the idols they had worshipped, and in vain had trusted in, as used to be done in triumphs; (see Gill on ~~300E~~ Amos 1:15”).

Ver. 27. *Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus,* etc.] The chief city of Syria; and which, as Aben Ezra says, lay to the east of the land of Israel, and was a very strong and fortified place: and Syria being in alliance with Israel, the Israelites might think of fleeing thither for refuge, in the time of their distress; but they are here told that they should be taken captive, and be carried to places far more remote than that: Stephen says, “beyond Babylon”; as they were, for they were carried into Media, to Halah and Habor by the river of Gozan, to the cities of the Medes; their way to which lay through Syria and Babylon; (see Gill on ~~407B~~ Acts 7:43”);

saith the Lord, whose name [is] the God of hosts; and therefore is able to do what he threatens; and it might be depended upon it would be certainly done, as it is clear, beyond all contradiction, it has been done; (see ~~1276~~ 2 Kings 17:6).