

## INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA

This book, in the Hebrew Bibles, at least in some copies, is called “Sopher Hosea”, the Book of Hoses; and, in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, “the Prophecy of Hoses”: and, in the Syriac version, “the Prophecy of Hoses the Prophet”. It is the first of the twelve lesser prophets, so called, not because they were of less value, credit, and authority, than the other prophets; but because of their smallness in bulk; and which, as Kimchi says, upon the authority of their Rabbins, were put together in one book, that no one of them might be lost, because of their smallness; and Josephus<sup>f1</sup> reckons them but as one book; and they are quoted in the New Testament under the name of the Book of the Prophets<sup>f2</sup>. This prophet was one of them, and therefore placed here; though, as Kimchi, in his preface to this book, and R. David Ganz<sup>f3</sup>, observe, his prophecy was before the prophecy of Isaiah; and yet he was not the first of these minor prophets, as to order of time; not only Jonah, but Joel and Amos, were before him; and so they are placed by some writers; according to Mr. Whiston<sup>f4</sup>, he began to prophesy about the year of the world 3196 A.M. and 808 B.C. Mr. Bedford<sup>f5</sup> places him in 804 B.C. His name is the same with Joshua and Jesus, and signifies a saviour; and he was not only, as all the true prophets of the Lord and faithful ministers of the word are, the means and instruments in the hand of God of saving people; but he was a type of Christ the Saviour, as well as prophesied concerning him, and salvation by him. Of his parentage, and the time of his prophesying, (see ~~2000~~Hosea 1:1), by which it appears that he lived in several reigns, and to a very great age. He chiefly prophesied against the ten tribes of Israel; reprov'd them for their sins; exhorted them to repentance; threatened them with destruction in case of impenitence; and comforted the truly godly with the promise of the Messiah, and of the happy state of the church in the latter day. His style, is short and concise; in some places sententious, and without connection, obscure and difficult of interpretation; and in others very pathetic and moving. Of the divine inspiration and authority of this book there is no room to doubt; since passages out of it are quoted and referred to by Christ and his apostles; by Christ himself, (~~4013~~Matthew 9:13 ~~4127~~12:7 ~~4086~~6:6 ~~4025~~2:15 ~~4100~~11:1 ~~4025~~Romans 9:25,26 ~~4010~~1:10 ~~4023~~2:23 ~~4155~~1 Corinthians 15:55 ~~4134~~13:14) (~~4020~~1 Peter 2:10 ~~4123~~2:23) There are some things said of the descent, death, and burial of this prophet, not to be

depended on. Pseudo Epiphanius<sup>f6</sup> and Isidorus<sup>f7</sup> say he was of the tribe of Issachar, and born in Belomoth or Bethle moth; and that he died in peace, and was buried in his own country; but, according to a tradition of the Jews<sup>f8</sup>, he died in Babylon, and was buried in Tzapheth, a city in upper Galilee; but all this is uncertain, and not very probable, and is of no importance to be known.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 1

After the general inscription of the book, in which the author, penman, and time of this prophecy, are expressed, (~~2001~~Hosea 1:1), the people of Israel are reproved for their idolatry, under the representation of a harlot the prophet is bid to marry, which he is said to do, (~~2002~~Hosea 1:2,3), and their ruin and destruction are foretold in the names of the children he had by her, and by what is said on the occasion of the birth of each, (~~2004~~Hosea 1:4-6,8,9), but mercy and salvation are promised to Judah, (~~2007~~Hosea 1:7) and the chapter is concluded with a glorious prophecy of the conversion of the Gentiles, and the calling of the Jews in the latter day; and of the union of Judah and Israel under one Head and Saviour, Christ; and of the greatness and glory of that day, (~~2010~~Hosea 1:10,11).

**Ver. 1.** *The word of the Lord that came unto Hosea*, etc.] Whose name is the same with Joshua and Jesus, and signifies a saviour; he was in some things a type of Christ the Saviour, and prophesied of him, and salvation by him; and was the instrument and means of saving men, as all true prophets were, and faithful ministers of the word are: to him the word of the Lord, revealing his mind and will, was brought by the Spirit of God, and impressed upon his mind; and it was committed to him to be delivered unto others. This is the general title of the whole book, showing the divine original and authority of it:

*the son of Beeri*; which is added to distinguish him from another of the same name; and perhaps his father's name was famous in Israel, and therefore mentioned. The Jews have a rule, that where a prophet's father's name is mentioned, it shows that he was the son of a prophet; but this is not to be depended upon; and some of them say that this is the same with Beerah, a prince of the Reubenites, who was carried captive by Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, (~~1386~~1 Chronicles 5:6), but the name is different; nor does the chronology seem so well to agree with him; and especially he cannot be the father of Hosea, if he was of the tribe of Issachar, as some have affirmed:

*in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel*; from whence it appears that Hosea prophesied long, and lived to a great age; for from the last year of Jeroboam, which was the fifteenth of Uzziah, to the first of Hezekiah, must be sixty nine years; for Jeroboam reigned forty one years, and in the twenty seventh of his reign began Uzziah or Azariah to reign over Judah, and he reigned fifty two years, (<sup><12423></sup>2 Kings 14:23) (<sup><12501></sup>2 Kings 15:1,2), so that Uzziah reigned thirty seven years after the death of Jeroboam, through which time Hosea prophesied; Jotham after him reigned sixteen years, and so many reigned Ahaz, (<sup><12523></sup>2 Kings 15:23 <sup><12612></sup>16:2), so that without reckoning any part, either of Jeroboam's reign, or Hezekiah's, he must prophesy sixty nine years, and, no doubt, did upwards of seventy, very probably eighty, the Jews say ninety; and allowing him to be twenty four or five years of age when he begun to prophesy, or only twenty (for it is certain he was at an age fit to marry, as appears by the prophecy), he: must live to be upwards of a hundred years; and in all probability he lived to see not only part of Israel carried captive by Tiglathpileser, which is certain; but the entire destruction of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser, which he prophesied of. Jeroboam king of Israel is mentioned last, though prior to these kings of Judah; because Hosea's prophecy is chiefly against Israel, and began in his reign, when they were in a flourishing condition. It appears from hence that Isaiah, Amos, and Micah, were contemporary with him; (see <sup><30101></sup>Isaiah 1:1 <sup><30101></sup>Amos 1:1 <sup><30101></sup>Micah 1:1), within this compass of time Hosea prophesied lived Lycurgus the famous lawgiver of the Lacedemonians, and Hesiod the Greek poet; and Rome began to be built.

**Ver. 2.** *The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea*, etc.] Or "in Hosea"<sup>19</sup>; which was internally revealed to him, and was inspired into him, by the Holy Ghost, who first spoke in him, and then by him; not that Hosea was the first of the prophets to whom the word of the Lord came; for there were Moses, Samuel, David, and others, before him; nor the first of the minor prophets, for Jonah, Joel, and Amos; are by some thought to be before him; nor the first of those contemporary with him, as the Jewish writers interpret it, which is not certain, at least not all of them; but the meaning is, that what follows is the first part of his prophecy, or what it began with; by which it appears he was put upon hard service at first, to prophesy against Israel, an idolatrous people, and to do it in such a manner as must be disagreeable to a young man:

*and the Lord said to Hosea, go, take thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms*; a woman given to whoredom, a notorious strumpet, one taken out of the stews, and children that were spurious and illegitimate, not born in lawful wedlock. Some think this was really done; that the prophet took a whore, and cohabited with her, or married her which, though forbidden a high priest, was not forbid to a prophet; and had it been against a law, yet the Lord commanding it made it lawful, as in the cases of Abraham's slaying his son, and the Israelites borrowing jewels of the Egyptians; but this seems not likely, since it would not only look like countenancing whoredom, which is contrary to the holy law of God; but must be very dishonourable to the prophet, and render him contemptible to the people; and, besides, would not answer the end proposed, to reprove the spiritual adultery or idolatry of Israel, but rather serve to confirm in it; for how should that appear criminal and abominable to them, which was commanded the prophet by the Lord? others think that the woman he is bid to marry, though before marriage a harlot, was afterwards reformed; but this is directly contrary to (~~2~~<sup>3</sup>~~HOSE~~ Hosea 3:1) and besides, the children born of her, whether reformed or not, yet in lawful wedlock could not be called children of whoredom; nor would the above end be answered by it, since such a person would be no fit representative of Israel committing spiritual adultery or idolatry, and continuing in it; and moreover, whether this or the former was the case, the prophecy must be many years delivering; it must be near a year before the first child was born, and the same space must be between the birth of each; so that here must be a long and frequent interruption of the prophecy, which does not seem likely: nor is it probable that he took his own wife, which is the opinion of others, and gave her the character of a whore, and his children with her, and called them children of whoredom, in order to represent and reprove the idolatry of Israel: what Maimonides<sup>f10</sup>, and the Jewish writers in general, give into, is more agreeable, that this was all done in the vision of prophecy; that it so seemed to the prophet in vision to be really done, and so he related it to the people; but this is liable to objection, that such an impure scene of things should be represented to the mind of the prophet by the Holy Spirit of God; nor can the relation of it be thought to have any good effect upon the people, who would be ready to mock at him, and reproach him for it. It seems best therefore to understand the whole as a parable, and that the prophet, in a parabolical way, is bid to represent the treachery, unfaithfulness, and spiritual adultery of the people of Israel, under the feigned name of an unchaste woman, and of children begotten in fornication; and to show unto

them that their case was as if he had taken a woman out of the stews, and her bastards with her; or as if a wife married by him had defiled his bed, and brought him a spurious brood of children. So the Targum interprets it,

“go, prophesy a prophecy against the inhabitants of the idolatrous city, who add to sin:”

*for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord;* or

“for the inhabitants of the land erring, erred from the worship of the Lord,”

as the Targum; that is, the inhabitants of the land of Israel have committed idolatry, which is often in Scripture signified by adultery and whoredom; as an adulterous woman deals treacherously with her husband, so these people had dealt with God, who stood in such a relation to them; (see <sup><3481></sup>Jeremiah 3:1,6,9 <sup><3567></sup>Ezekiel 16:17,26,28,29), this interprets the parable, and shows the reason of using the following symbols and emblems.

**Ver. 3.** *So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim,* etc.] In the course of prophesying he made mention of this person, who was a notorious common strumpet; and suggested hereby that they were just like her; or these were fictitious names he used to represent their case by Gomer signifies both “consummation” and “consumption”<sup>f11</sup>; and this harlot is so called, because of her consummate beauty, and her being completely mistress of all the tricks of one; or, being consummately wicked, a perfect whore, common to all; and because her ruin and destruction, persisting in such practices, were inevitable, and so a fit emblem of the present and future condition of Israel. Diblaim may be considered either as the name of a man, a word of the same form with Ephraim; or of a woman, the mother of Gomer; or else of a place, the wilderness of Diblath, (<sup><3564></sup>Ezekiel 6:14) and signifies “a cake of dried figs”<sup>f12</sup>; which, in that country, was reckoned delicious eating; and so denotes, either that both the sin and ruin of this people were owing to their luxury, or indulging themselves in carnal pleasures, through the great affluence they were possessed of; or that their original was from a wilderness, and for their sins should be reduced to a desolate state again:

*which conceived and bare him a son;* whose name, and what he was an emblem of, are declared in the following verse. The Targum is,

“and he went and prophesied over them, that if they returned, it should be forgiven them: but, if not, as fig tree leaves drop off, so should they; but they added, and did evil works.”

**Ver. 4.** *And the Lord said unto him call his name Jezreel*, etc.] Which some interpret the “seed of God”, as Jerom; or “arm of God”, as others; and Kimchi applies it to Jeroboam the son of Joash, who was strong, and prospered in his kingdom; but it rather signifies “God will sow”, or “scatter”<sup>f13</sup>; denoting either their dissension among themselves; or their dispersion among the nations, which afterwards came to pass; and so the Targum, “call their name scattered”; and alluding also to the city of Jezreel, where some of the idolatrous kings of Israel lived, and where much blood had been shed, which should be avenged, as follows:

*for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu*; not the blood of Naboth the Jezreelite, that was shed by Ahab; but the blood of Joram the son of Ahab, and seventy other sons of his, and all his great men, kinsfolks and priests, shed by Jehu in this place; and though this was done according to the will of God, and for which he received the kingdom, and it was continued in his family to the fourth generation; yet, inasmuch as this was not done by him from a pure and hearty zeal for the Lord and his worship, and with a sincere view to his glory, but in order to gain the kingdom, increase his power, and satiate his tyranny and lust; and because, though he destroyed one species of idolatry, the worship of Baal, yet he continued another, the worshipping of the calves at Daniel and Bethel, and regarded not the law of the Lord, and so his successors after him; and were the means of causing many to sin, and so consequently of the ruin of many souls, whose blood would be required of them, which some take to be the meaning here; this is threatened; (see <sup><1204></sup>2 Kings 9:24,25 <sup><1200></sup>10:1-7,11,16,28-31). It may be observed, that God sometimes punishes the instruments he makes use of in doing his work; they either over doing it, exercising too much cruelty; and not doing it upon right principles, and with right views, as the kings of Assyria and Babylon, (<sup><2105></sup>Isaiah 10:5,7 <sup><3015></sup>Zechariah 1:15). It is here said to be but a little while ere this vengeance would be taken, it being at the latter end of Jeroboam’s reign when this prophecy was delivered out; and his son Zachariah, in whom the kingdom as in his family ceased, reigned but six months, being conspired against and slain by Shallum, who reigned in his stead, (<sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 15:8-10). The Targum is,

“for yet a little while I will avenge the blood of those that worship idols which Jehu shed in Jezreel, whom he slew because they served Baal; but they turned to err after the calves which were in Bethel; therefore I will reckon that innocent blood upon the house of Jehu:”

*and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel*; that is, in the family of Jehu; Zachariah the son of the then reigning prince being the last, and his reign only the short reign of six months; unless this has reference to the utter cessation of this kingdom as such in the times of Hoshea by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, (<sup><1276></sup>2 Kings 17:6-23).

**Ver. 5.** *And it shall come to pass at that day*, etc.] When the Lord shall take vengeance on the family of Jehu, and deprive them of the kingdom of Israel, and shall punish the idolatrous kings that succeed:

*that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel*; of which valley (see <sup><1676></sup>Joshua 17:16 <sup><1063></sup>Judges 6:33). It is now called the plain of Esdraelon; as it is in the Apocrypha:

“And to those among the nations that were of Carmel, and Galaad, and the higher Galilee, and the great plain of Esdrelom,” (Judith 1:8)

the great plain of Esdraelon; according to Adrichomius,<sup>f14</sup> it is two miles broad, and ten miles long; its soil exceeding rich and fruitful, and abounding with grain, wine, and oil; all travellers agree they never saw the like: one says<sup>f151</sup> of this plain or valley, formerly the lot of the tribe of Issachar, this is the most fertile portion of the land of Canaan, where that tribe might well be supposed to have “rejoiced in their tents”, (<sup><1538></sup>Deuteronomy 33:18), at present, indeed, it is not manured, as another traveller<sup>f16</sup> observes, and yet very fruitful; who says, it is of a vast extent, and very fertile, but uncultivated, only serving the Arabs for pasturage; and, according to the same writer, the ancient river Kishon runs through the middle of it: from the largeness of it, it is frequently called by writers the great plain or valley; and sometimes, from the places near it, or on it, the great plain of Legio, the great plain of Samaria, the great plain or valley of Megiddo, (<sup><1452></sup>2 Chronicles 35:22), and the great plain of Esdraelon, and here the valley of Jezreel; Jezreel or Esdraela being situated in this great plain or valley between Scythopolis and Legio, a very large village, as Jerom says<sup>f17</sup> it was in his days; and also on this passage observes, that



Jezeel, from whence this valley had its name, is now near Maximianopolis, and was the metropolis of the kingdom of Samaria, near which were very large plains, and a valley of a very great length, extending more than ten miles: here Ahab had a palace in his days, near to which was Naboth's vineyard, and where God revenged his blood: this city is called by Josephus<sup>f18</sup> Azare and Azarus, or Iزارus; and in the times of Gulielmus Tyrius<sup>f19</sup> it went by the name of Little Gerinum. The "bow" is put for all instruments of war, and everything in which confidence was put, which was weakened or removed from them: this refers either to Menhchem's slaughter of Shallum, and wasting some parts of the land of Israel, (<sup><12514></sup>2 Kings 15:14,16), or rather it may be to a battle fought between Hoshea king of Israel and Shalmaneser king of Assyria in this valley, which was not far from Samaria; in which the former was defeated, and the latter, having the victory, proceeded to Samaria, besieged and took it, (<sup><12716></sup>2 Kings 17:6) though of the action the Scripture is silent; but it is not improbable. The Targum is,

"I will break the strength of the warriors of Israel in the valley of Jezeel;"

which seems to confirm the same conjecture. Some render it, "because of the valley of Jezeel"<sup>f20</sup>; that is, because of the idolatry, bloodshed, and other sins, committed there.

**Ver. 6.** *And she conceived again, and bare a daughter*, etc.] One of the weaker sex; denoting the weaker state of the kingdom of Israel after Jeroboam, as Kimchi thinks; Zachariah his son reigning but six months, and Shallum the son of Jabesh, his successor, reigned but one month, (<sup><1258></sup>2 Kings 15:8,13):

*and God said unto him, call her name Loruhamah*; which signifies, "she hath not obtained mercy": and what follows explains it to the same sense. The Targum is,

"and they added and did evil works; and he said unto him call their name, who obtained not mercy by their works:"

*for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel*; as he had heretofore, sparing them time after time, though they continued to sin against him; but now he would spare them no longer, but deliver them up into the hands of their enemies, as he did a part of them, first into the hands of Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and then to Shalmaneser, (<sup><1259></sup>2 Kings

15:29 <sup><2178></sup>17:3,6), otherwise, in the latter day, mercy will be shown them again, especially in a spiritual way, when they shall be converted, and believe in Christ, and all Israel shall be saved, as well as possess their own land again; (see <sup><2010></sup>Hosea 1:10,11 <sup><5125></sup>Romans 11:26):

*but I will utterly take them away*; out of their land, from being a kingdom and nation, which was done by Shalmaneser, another king of Assyria, (<sup><2176></sup>2 Kings 17:6), or, “bringing I will bring into them”, or “against them”<sup>f21</sup>; that is, an enemy, the same king of Assyria: or, “but forgetting I will forget them”<sup>f22</sup>, as some render it, and remember them no more, till the fulness of time comes: or, “through pardoning I have pardoned”, or “spared them”<sup>f23</sup>; that is, in times past. The Targum is,

“but if they return, pardoning I will pardon them;”

which will be done in the latter day.

**Ver. 7.** *But I will have mercy on the house of Judah*, etc.] The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which retained the true worship of God among them; (see <sup><2812></sup>Hosea 11:12) and though they often sinned against the Lord, he showed them mercy, and spared them longer than the ten tribes; and though he suffered them to be carried captive into Babylon, he returned them again after seventy years: this is mentioned as an aggravation of the punishment of Israel, that Judah was spared, when they were not; and to show that God will have a people to seek and serve him, and, when he rejects some, he will make a reserve of others:

*and will save them by the Lord their God*; by his own arm and power, and not theirs, or any creature’s; nor by any warlike means or instruments whatever, as follows:

*and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen*: which may respect either the deliverance of the Jews from the invasion and siege of Sennacherib’s army; which was done without shooting an arrow, or drawing the sword, or engaging in a pitched battle, or by a cavalry rushing into his camp, discomfiting his army, and pursuing them; but by an angel sent from heaven, which in one night destroyed a hundred and fourscore and five thousand, (<sup><2195></sup>2 Kings 19:35) or else refers to Cyrus being stirred up by the Lord to issue forth a proclamation, giving liberty to the Jewish captives to go free, without price or reward; and so was brought about, not by the might and power of man, but by the Spirit of the Lord; (see <sup><1500></sup>Ezra 1:1 <sup><2353></sup>Isaiah 45:13 <sup><3016></sup>Zechariah 4:6) though a

greater salvation is pointed at, or at least shadowed forth, by this, even the spiritual and eternal salvation of God's elect by Christ; which is the fruit of mercy, and not the effect of the merits of men; is obtained not by human power, or by man's righteousness; but by the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah our righteousness, the Lord God of his people; who stands in a relation to them prior to his being the Saviour of them; to which work and office he is equal, being the eternal Jehovah, and the true and living God. So the Targum,

“and I will save them by the Word of the Lord their God;”

the eternal Word, that was with God, is God, and became incarnate, God in our nature.

**Ver. 8.** *Now when she had weaned Loruhamah*, etc.] That is, when Gomer had weaned her daughter of this name, (<sup>2806</sup>Hosea 1:6). This some interpret of the people of Israel being deprived of the word and ordinances, compared to milk and breasts, having a famine of them; and so were like children weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts; though others think this is expressive of the patience of God in bearing with this people, after he had before threatened them with the subversion of their kingdom and state; and even after the prophecy had took place in part, in causing the kingdom to cease in the house of Jehu, he bore with them about forty years before they were entirely carried captive; suckling and weaning, before the conception and birth of another child, denoting some stop and stay; but rather this intends the taking away some part of the land of Israel, as a child when weaning is taken away from its mother; and may respect the carrying captive many of the Israelites in divers parts, particularly out of Gilead, Galilee, and Naphtali, by Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, (<sup>1253</sup>2 Kings 15:29). This cannot be understood of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, as Cocceius; for this is a resumption and continuation of the prophecy concerning the ten tribes, after inserting a promise of the salvation of Judah, in the preceding verse:

*she conceived and bare a son*: according to Kimchi, as the weaning of Loruhamah points at the times of weakness, from Zachariah the son of Jeroboam to the times of Pekahiah, when the reigns were short and troublesome; so this son conceived and born represents the state of the nation in the times of Pekah; who reigned twenty years, and was too powerful for the kingdom of Judah, slew multitudes of them, and carried others captive, and assisted Rezin king of Syria against Ahaz king of

Judah: but, according to the series of the prophecy, it seems best to agree with the times of Hoshea king of Israel, who was not so bad as some of his predecessors; was a man of spirit and courage; cast off the Assyrian yoke, and neglected to give presents to the king of Assyria; and Samaria in his time held out a three years' siege against that king, (<sup><270></sup>2 Kings 17:1-5). The Targum is,

“and the generation of them who are carried captive among the nations are found not to have obtained mercy by their works, but they added and did evil works.”

**Ver. 9.** *Then said God, call his name Loammi*, etc.] Which Aben Ezra interprets of the children of the ten tribes horn in captivity, who never returned; but it rather signifies the ten tribes themselves, who were carried captive and had this name given them for the reason following:

*for ye are not my people*; though he had chosen them to be his people above all people, and had distinguished them from others by various blessings and privileges; yet they did not behave as such to him; they did not serve, obey, and worship him, but the calves at Daniel and Bethel; and therefore did not deserve the name of his people: hence he says,

*and I will not be your* or “yours”<sup>f24</sup>; that is, as we supply it, and so Aben Ezra, “your God”; will not behave toward you as such; will not take you under my care and protection, or continue you in your land, and in the enjoyment of the blessings of it; will not be your King, patron, and defender, but give you up into the hands of your enemies. This respects the captivity of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser, (<sup><276></sup>2 Kings 17:6). The Targum is,

“for ye are not my people; because ye do not confirm the words of my law, my word shall not be your help.”

**Ver. 10.** *Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered*, etc.] Though called Loammi, and rejected from being the people of God; yet there is a time when their number, according to the promise made to Abraham, shall be as the sand of the sea, and the stars of heaven; which, as the one cannot be measured, the other cannot be numbered; which was to be not at the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, when some of the ten tribes of Israel returned with them, as Theodoret and others think; for they were but few that then returned: but rather at the first times of the Gospel, when

multitudes that came from various parts of the world were converted at the day of Pentecost, and greater numbers; who were met with in the ministry of the word, in the various parts of the world, where they were dispersed, and the Gospel came, to whom Peter and James wrote their epistles; and not these only are meant, but the vast numbers of Gentiles, who were effectually called by grace everywhere, and were true Israelites, the spiritual seed of Abraham; and to whom the Apostle Paul applies these words, producing them as a testimony of the election and calling, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, (~~4124~~ Romans 9:24-26), and which will have a further accomplishment in the latter day, when the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, the Jews will be converted, and all Israel saved, (~~4125~~ Romans 11:25), then the numbers of the Israel of God, both of Jews and Gentiles, will be as the sand of the sea indeed!

*and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God;* that is, in such places where it used to be said, here live Pagans, Turks, or Jews, who worship not the true God, or at least not aright, nor believe in Christ, and profess his name; “there it shall be said to them”, by the Lord himself, by his Spirit witnessing their relation to them, and by all good men, and even by the world in general; not only that they are “the people of God”, but have a superior privilege, a greater character, and a higher relation, the sons of the living God; the sons of God, not by nature, as Christ; nor by creation, as angels; nor by office, as civil magistrates; or by profession merely, as nominal Christians; but by adopting grace; which exceeds all other blessings, even of sanctification and justification; makes men honourable; is attended with various privileges, and always continues. The epithet “of the living God” is not without cause put; it stands in opposition to dead idols before worshipped by some who will now be the children of God; and who, as he has life in himself, gives it to others; to all natural life and breath, and to his children spiritual and eternal life; and, as he lives forever, so shall they his sons likewise. The Targum is,

“and it shall be in the place where they have been carried captive, when they transgressed the law; and it was said to them, ye are not my people; there they shall be converted and increased (or made great); and it shall be said to them, O ye people of the living God.”

**Ver. 11.** *Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together*, etc.] Not at the return from the Babylonish captivity; for, though some of the ten tribes might be mixed with the Jews when they went into captivity, and came out with them, and others might join them from the various nations where they had been dispersed; yet they did not gather together with them in a body, only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, those were the chief; of the children of Israel, but few, (~~15005~~ Ezra 1:5). Some refer this to the first times of the Gospel, when the Galileans were gathered to Christ by his ministry, who inhabited the countries where some of the tribes of Israel dwelt; and who might, at least some of them, descend from them: and when those in Jerusalem and in Judea, who also believed in Christ, united with them in their profession of him, and in affection to one another; or to the time of Christ's death, by which the whole Israel of God, who were scattered abroad, were gathered together in one; and even Jews and Gentiles were made one body, and one new man in Christ, the partition wall being broken down: or to the times of the apostles, who were successful in the conversion and gathering of many of the Jewish nation, and also of the Samaritans; and of forming churches in Judea and Samaria under one head, in whom they agreed; and likewise of many others, both Jews and Israelites, in the various parts of the world, where they carried the Gospel; and who coalesced with the believing Gentiles in one church state, under Christ their head: though it seems best to interpret this of the latter day, when the children of Israel and Judah shall join together in seeking the Lord their God, and the true Messiah, and shall be turned, and gathered to him; when they shall be no more two kingdoms or two nations, but be one under the Messiah, who shall be their King and Prince; when all their animosities shall be laid aside, and they shall no more envy or vex one another; but shall meet together in the same church state, and worship the Lord with one shoulder and consent, being of one mind and sentiment in religious things, and when all Israel shall be saved, (~~31004~~ Jeremiah 1:4,5 ~~3579~~ Ezekiel 37:19-22) (~~31113~~ Isaiah 11:13 ~~31109~~ Zephaniah 3:9)

*and appoint themselves one head*; not Sennacherib, as Aben Ezra, very absurdly; nor Hezekiah, nor Josiah, as others; nor Elijah the prophet, as some in Kimchi; nor Zerubbabel, to which the Targum seems to incline, paraphrasing it,

“one head of the house of David;”

but better, as Jarchi, David their King; that is, the Messiah, as Kimchi and Ben Melech expressly interpret it; and so Abarbinel<sup>f25</sup>, though he understands it of the Messiah the son of Joseph; and undoubtedly the same is meant by the one head, as David their King and Prince, (~~3185~~Hosea 3:5 ~~3574~~Ezekiel 37:24,25) even Christ, who is the Head of angels, yea, the Head of every man, but in a special and peculiar sense the head of the body, the church; he is the federal and representative Head of his people, both in eternity and in time; and in such sense a Head to them, as a king is head of his subjects, a husband of his wife, a father of his family, and a master of his servants; and also as a natural head is to its body, of the same nature with it; in union to it; lives the same life; is above it, and more excellent than it: a perfect Head Christ is, there being nothing wanting in him as such; he has his eyes set upon his people; his ears are open to their cries; he smells a sweet saviour of rest in their persons and services; he tastes and eats their pleasant fruits, and feels all their infirmities, troubles and afflictions; and has a tongue to speak a word in season for them: there are no vicious humours in this Head to affect the body; no deformity in it, and all fulness therein to supply its wants; he is an everliving and everlasting Head, and the one, and only one; there is no other, neither the pope of Rome, nor any other; nor will true Israelites acknowledge any other: and though this Head is of God the Father's appointing, who has given him to be the Head; set him as King over Sion; raised him up to be a Prince and a Saviour; yet he is also of the saints' choosing and appointing; they approve of him as such, embrace him, own him, and submit to him, as the Jews will at the last day, though their forefathers have rejected him:

*and they shall come up out of the land;* not of Israel, as Schmidt, who interprets this of the apostles going out from thence, and spreading the Gospel in the world; but out of each of the lands and countries where Israel and Judah have been dispersed, and return to their own land; (see ~~3488~~Jeremiah 3:18 ~~3543~~Ezekiel 34:13 ~~3571~~37:21). So the Targum,

“and they shall come up out of the land of their captivity:”

or it may be understood, figuratively and spiritually, of their coming up out of their captivity to sin, Satan, the law, and the world, as well as out of their present temporal captivity:

*and out of the earth*<sup>f26</sup>, as it were, as it may be rendered; out of their earthly state, from the graves of sin, leaving their earthly affections, and becoming spiritual and heavenly minded; willing to quit all that is dear unto

them, even the country in which they were born and long lived, to follow Christ their Head and King:

*for great shall be the day of Jezreel*; or, though great has been or is the day of Jezreel<sup>f27</sup>; though it has been a great and long day of trouble and affliction to them, signified by Jezreel; (see ~~3004~~Hosea 1:4,5), yet all these good things promised shall surely be accomplished: indeed the day of Jezreel may be taken in a good sense, not for a time of dispersion and distress, but of great comfort, joy, and happiness; the word signifying, according to some, the seed of God, or the arm of God: and Jerom applies it to Christ, the seed of God; and the whole Gospel dispensation may be called his day, the day of salvation, the joyful day the Lord has made: or rather by Jezreel, the seed of God, are meant his spiritual offspring, the children of Judah and Israel; who shall now be gathered, by the arm of God, his powerful and efficacious grace, and that in large numbers, so that great will be their day; so the Targum paraphrases it,

“for great will be the day of their gathering.”

It respects the latter day glory, when will be the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles; when there will be great peace and prosperity; great love and unity; great holiness and purity; great light and knowledge; great enjoyment of God, and of the presence of the Redeemer great glory upon the churches, and upon that a defence: in short, all the great and glorious things spoken of will now be completed; perfect deliverance from all afflictions and troubles; an entire destruction of all enemies; and a full enjoyment of the word and ordinances, in the purity of them, and large conversions everywhere.