

# CHAPTER 2

## INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 2

This chapter is an explanation of the former, proceeding upon the same argument in more express words. The godly Israelites are here called upon to lay before the body of the people their idolatry, ingratitude, obstinacy, and ignorance of the God of their mercies; and to exhort them to repentance, lest they should be stripped of all their good things, and be brought into great distress and difficulties; all their joy and comfort cease, and be exposed to shame and contempt, (~~2011~~Hosea 2:1-13), yet, notwithstanding, many gracious promises are made unto them, of their having the alluring and comfortable word of the Gospel; of a door of hope; of salvation being opened to them; of faith in the Lord, and affection to him as their husband; of the removal of all idolatry from them; of safety from all enemies; of their open espousal to Christ; of his hearing of their prayers, and giving them plenty of all good things; and of their multiplication, conversion, and covenant relation to God, (~~2024~~Hosea 2:14-23).

**Ver. 1.** *Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.*] These words are to be considered either in connection with the latter part of the preceding chapter, and as directed to the sons of the living God, who had not been, but now were, “Ammi”, the Lord’s people; and who had not, but now have, “Ruhamah”, obtained mercy; which grace and mercy shown them, it became them to speak of one to another, to affect their hearts mutually with it, and to glorify God for it, (~~3016~~Malachi 3:16) as also to speak of it to their carnal relations, that so, if it was the will of God, it might be of use to them, to show them the state they were in, the danger of it, their need of the grace and mercy of God, and the hope there was by their own instance and example of obtaining it; (see ~~501~~Romans 9:1-3 ~~511~~10:1), or as directed to the converted Jews that appointed Christ their Head, and believed in him; exhorting them to own the believing Gentiles as their brethren and sisters, since they were the spiritual seed of Abraham their father, and walked in the steps of his faith; and to call them Ammi and Ruhamah, since they, who were not the people of God, now were, and

who had not obtained mercy, now have obtained mercy, (<sup><4020></sup>1 Peter 2:10), or else they may be considered as in connection with the following words,

*plead with your mother*; and that either as spoken to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who were the people of God, retained the pure worship of God, and obtained mercy of the Lord, (<sup><3000></sup>Hosea 1:7 <sup><3112></sup>11:12),

“O ye Ammi and Ruhamah, that are the Lord’s people, and he has had mercy on; stir up and exhort your brethren and sisters of the ten tribes, for so they were, notwithstanding their separation, (<sup><1120></sup>1 Kings 12:4), to contend with their mother, the body of the nation, about idolatry and departure from God;”

or as spoken to the godly among the ten tribes, who were the real people of God, and sharers in his grace and mercy; the remnant he reserved for himself, who had not bowed their knees to idols; or as the command of God by the prophet, to the people of Israel, to exhort one another to contend with their mother, who were, as yet, the Lord’s people, had mercy shown them, when this prophecy was delivered out; though, in case of obstinacy and impenitence, they were threatened with a “Loammi” and “Loruhamah”; so Schmidt, who thinks that “ammi” and “ruhamah” are put by way of “apposition [to] your brethren [and] sisters”, in which he seems to be right. Aben Ezra thinks the words are spoken ironically, like those in (<sup><2110></sup>Ecclesiastes 11:9), and others, but without reason. The Targum is,

“O ye prophets, say to your brethren, and my people, and I will have mercy on your congregation;”

but whether the words are spoken to the Jewish converts who first believed in Christ, were his people, received grace and mercy from him, and stood in the relation of brethren and sisters to one another, both in a natural and spiritual sense, to stir up one another to reprove their mother, the Jewish church, for rejecting Christ, saying, as follows:

**Ver. 2.** *Plead with your mother, plead*, etc.] The congregation of Israel, as the Targum; the body of the Jewish nation, which, with respect to individuals, was as a mother to her children; (see <sup><4237></sup>Matthew 21:37), that is, lay before her, her sin in rejecting the Messiah, the Head and Husband of his true church and people; endeavour to convince her of it; reprove her for it; expostulate with her about it; argue the case with her, and show her

the danger of persisting in such an evil, as the apostles did, (~~4023~~ Acts 2:23,36 ~~4184~~ 3:14 ~~4075~~ 7:52 ~~4137~~ 13:27,40)

*for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband*; for though there had been such a relation between them, yet it was now dissolved; she had broken the marriage covenant and contract, and God had given her a bill of divorce, (~~2812~~ Jeremiah 31:32 ~~2001~~ Isaiah 1:1) or, however, as she behaved not as a wife towards him, showing love and affection, honour and reverence, and performing duty, and yielding obedience; so he would not carry it as a husband towards her, nourishing and cherishing her, providing for her, and protecting and defending her; but leave her to shift for herself, and to the insults and abuses of others; having been guilty of idolatry, which is spiritual adultery, as the Israelites before the captivity were; and as the Jews in Christ's time were guilty of rejecting the word of God, and preferring their own traditions to it: hence it follows,

*let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight*, or "from her face"<sup>f28</sup>,

*and her adulteries from between her breasts*; alluding to the custom of harlots, who used to paint their faces, and to allure with their looks, words, and actions, and to make bare their breasts, or adorn them, or carry in them what were enticing and alluring. These adulteries and whoredoms, which are the same thing, may signify the many idolatries of the people of Israel before their captivity, and which were the cause of it; or the sins of the Jews before their dispersion; or their evil works, as the Targum, by which they departed from God and the true Messiah, and went a whoring after other lovers: thus they rejected, transgressed, and made of none effect the commandments of God by their traditions; paid tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, and neglected the weighty matters of the law; sought not the honour of God, but that which comes from men; and therefore confessed not the true Messiah, though under convictions of him, and went about to establish their own righteousness, and submitted not to his; these were the idols of their hearts, and the whoredoms and adulteries the Jewish converts, that truly believed in Christ, are ordered to exhort them to put away. The Septuagint and Arabic versions are, "I will take away her whoredoms etc."

**Ver. 3.** *Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born*, etc.] Alluding to the case of an infant when born, which comes naked into the world; and referring to the state and condition of the Israelites in

Egypt, which was the time of their nativity, as a people and church; (see <sup><5104></sup>Ezekiel 16:4), and when they were in a state of servitude and bondage, and had no wealth and substance, and without possessions and lands, and had no country of their own to inhabit; and signifying that this should be their case again, if they persisted in their idolatry, impenitence, and unbelief; as has been the case of the ten tribes upon their captivity, when they were stripped of all their wealth and riches, carried away out of their own land, and scattered among the nations, and have never returned since; and as was the case of the Jews in their last destruction, for the rejection of Christ, they were stripped of their civil and religious privileges, of their temporal and spiritual mercies as a nation and church; what they feared is come upon them, that the Romans would come and take away their place and nation, (<sup><6118></sup>John 11:48)

*and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land;* having some respect to her former condition in the wilderness, where they had no food nor drink but what they had from God, as Abarbinel thinks; or else to the destruction and consumption of them in the wilderness, their carcasses falling there, who sinned against the Lord, as the Targum and Jarchi; and denoting the utter destruction of their commonwealth and church, when their land was laid waste, their city destroyed, their house and temple left desolate and burnt, and they deprived of all the necessaries of life, which was their case at their last destruction by the Romans; and to this day they are as they are described, (<sup><3004></sup>Hosea 3:4):

*and slay her with thirst;* after their vainly expected Messiah, which has brought them to desperation; or with a thirst, not for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord, (<sup><3081></sup>Amos 8:11), the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, being taken away from them, and the clouds ordered to drop down no rain upon them; that is, the ministers of the word not to preach the Gospel to them; and so are left destitute of the means of grace, and of spiritual life, and of escaping eternal death, (<sup><4214></sup>Matthew 21:43 <sup><3066></sup>Isaiah 5:6). The Targum of the whole is,

“lest I remove my Shechinah from her, and take away her glory, and set her forsaken, as in the days of old, before she came to my worship; and my fury shall remain upon her, as it remained upon the people of that generation that transgressed my law in the wilderness; and I will set the land desolate, and kill her with thirst.”

**Ver. 4.** *And I will not have mercy upon her children*, etc.] The posterity of the Jews in succeeding ages, until the time of their conversion comes; they persisting in the sins of their forefathers, filling up the measure of their iniquities; remaining in their obstinate rejection of the Messiah, and in the same impenitence and unbelief, and having his blood imprecated upon them:

*for they be the children of whoredoms*; begotten and born in whoredom, spurious and illegitimate; or that commit whoredoms; imitate their parents; are guilty of the same vices; a generation of vipers. So the Targum,

“for they are children that commit idolatry;”

retain the traditions of the elders; go about to establish their own righteousness, and reject the Messiah.

**Ver. 5.** *For their mother hath played the harlot*, etc.] Or committed idolatry; which is the reason why she is to be pleaded with, and why the Lord will not own her as his wife, or be a husband to her; and why she is to be exhorted to put away her whoredoms from her; and was in danger of all the above evils coming upon her, continuing in the same practice; and why her children were children of whoredoms. Though the connection may be with the verse following, “for” or “because their mother hath played the harlot”, etc. “therefore I will hedge up her way”, etc.

*She that conceived them hath done shamefully*; all sin is shameful and scandalous, especially adultery; it brings a reproach and a blot upon a person, that will not be wiped off; and so idolatry, worshipping stocks and stones instead of the living God; and particularly the sin of the Jewish church, in rejecting the true Messiah and his righteousness, and setting up their own, and tenaciously adhering to the traditions of the elders; and so departing from the true God, and his word and worship, which is no other than spiritual adultery or idolatry. The Targum is,

“because their congregation hath erred after the false prophets, their teachers are confounded;”

and which Jarchi interprets of the wise men that teach doctrines, who are ashamed because of the people of the earth; to whom they say, ye shall not steal, and yet they steal themselves; (see <sup><f121></sup>Romans 2:21-24). Or, “she hath made ashamed”<sup><f29></sup>; her husband, and her children: or, “she is confounded”<sup><f30></sup>, and “ashamed” herself, for what she has done.

*For she said, I will go after my lovers*; her idols, as the ten tribes did after the calves at Daniel and Bethel. So Kimchi's father interprets it of the sun, moon, and stars, they worshipped: though he himself understands it of the Assyrians and Egyptians they were in alliance with, and trusted in. Some join together the Gentile nations and their gods. Or else it may be understood of the Jews seeking to the Romans, and courting their favour and friendship; desiring to be governed not by their own kings, but by the Romans<sup>f31</sup>; declaring they had no king but Caesar, and rejecting Christ as such, (<sup>4892</sup>John 19:12,15 <sup>4470</sup>Acts 17:7) or rather of their beloved tenets, concerning traditions, the rites and ceremonies of the law, self-righteousness, etc.: the words are expressive of impudence, obstinacy, and self-will; resolving to pursue their own fancies and have their own wills, be it as it would.

*That give me my bread and any water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink*; "or drinks"<sup>f32</sup>; wine and other liquors, as Kimchi; these take in everything belonging to food and raiment, and all the necessaries, and even delights and pleasures, of life: bread and water; all sorts of food: wool and flax; all sorts of clothing, both woollen and linen, for outward or inward covering: and oil, and drinks, or liquors; everything for pleasure and delight; all which she ascribed not to God, from whence all good things come; but, which was an aggravation of her sin, to her lovers, her allies, or her idols; as the Jews did their plenty of victuals to the queen of heaven, and their worship of her, (<sup>2447</sup>Jeremiah 44:17,18) and as, in the times of Christ, they ascribed not only their enjoyment of temporal good things, but their righteousness, life, and salvation, to their observance of traditions, rites, and ceremonies, and the externals of religion.

**Ver. 6.** *Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns*, etc.] As fields and vineyards are fenced with thorn hedges to keep out beasts; or rather as closes and fields are fenced to keep cattle in, from going out and straying elsewhere; which may be expressive of afflictions, and particularly wars among them, that they could not stir out and go from place to place: and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths: to go to Daniel and Bethel, and worship the calves there, as some; or to go to the Egyptians and Assyrians for help, as Jarchi and Kimchi; though it was by the latter that they were hedged in, and walled and cooped up, when the city of Samaria was besieged three years: rather this respects the straits and difficulties the Jews have been reduced to by the destruction of Jerusalem, and the continuance of them ever since; so that they are not able to offer

their daily sacrifice, kill and eat their passover lamb, and perform other rites and ceremonies they used in their own land; which they would fain perform, though abolished by Christ, but are restrained by this hedge and wall, the destruction of their temple and altar, and not being suffered to possess their land; hence they are said to be without a sacrifice and an ephod. (<sup><3906></sup>Hosea 3:4 <sup><2027></sup>Daniel 9:27).

**Ver. 7.** *And she shall follow after her lovers*, etc.] Before mentioned; that is, in her affections and desires, with great eagerness and earnestness, as men pursue what they are bent upon; otherwise, being hedged in and walled up, she could not go after them in a proper sense:

*but she shall not overtake them*; they fleeing from her, and she pent up:

*she shall seek them, but shall not find them*; shall not be able to enjoy them, or act according to her wishes and desires, with respect to the performance of sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies, as before observed:

*then shall she say*; in her heart, finding all endeavours fruitless, and that the things sought after were never to be had; the hedges and wall, the obstructions in the way, were never to be removed, while in such a pursuit; wherefore after a long time, many hundreds of years, even in the latter day, being convinced of her sin and folly in rejecting Christ, and pursuing after other objects, she will take up the following resolution:

*I will go and return to my first husband*; either the God of Israel, whom the ten tribes departed from by worshipping the calves Jeroboam set up; but in the latter day will seek the Lord their God again, who was a husband to them, and shall cleave to him again, and all Israel shall be saved: so the Targum,

“I will go and return to the service of my first master, for it was well with me when I served him; henceforth I will not serve idols:”

or Christ, who was promised and prophesied of as a husband to the Jewish church, (<sup><2515></sup>Isaiah 54:5) and whom they believed in, and expected as such, but when he came rejected him; but now being convinced of their error shall seek David their King, appoint themselves one head, and embrace Christ as their husband, and adhere to him; (see <sup><3905></sup>Hosea 3:5):

*for then was it better with me than now*; while in the faith, and hope, and expectation of the true Messiah; having a spiritual apprehension of him,

true faith in him, and comfort from him, as held forth in the promise; being then possessed of the good land, in the enjoyment of the word and ordinances, and of all religious and civil privileges, but now deprived of them. This may be applied to the case of true believers in Christ, having partially departed from him, and being restored. Christ is a husband to them, who has betrothed them to himself, and they have given themselves to him, and have been loved, nourished, cherished, and provided for by him, and for a while had much nearness, familiarity, and communion with him; but unbelief prevailing, first love waxing cold, and being got into a carnal and sleepy frame, neglect both private and public worship, fall into sin, and removed from church communion, and so may be said to have departed from Christ their husband; but being recovered by divine grace, and sensible of their sins, resolve to return to him again by repentance and acknowledgment, by doing their first works, and by attendance on his word and ordinances; instigated hereunto very much by remembering how it has been with them when they kept close to him, and observing the difference between those times and the present; how they had then the presence of God and Christ, and communion with them, and the secret discoveries of the love of God; in what lively exercise the graces of the Spirit were; what delight and profit they had in ordinances, and what peace, joy, and comfort, in their souls; all which now they want; (see <sup><1831D></sup>Job 29:2-5).

**Ver. 8.** *For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, etc.]*

This is a reason, not of her resolution to return to her first husband, but to go after lovers, and of her ascribing these things to them, (<sup><3016></sup>Hosea 2:5), and why the Lord would behave towards her as he determined to do, (<sup><3016></sup>Hosea 2:6,7), this ignorance was wilful and affected, and therefore blameable; she might have known, but she would not; she did not set her mind to know; she did not consider who gave her these things, nor behave as if she knew, as Jarchi: or she did not own and acknowledge God to be the author and giver of them, as she should have done; which was ingratitude rather than ignorance, and is a heinous sin, and to be resented; since all good things, temporal and spiritual, as daily bread, all the necessaries of life, signified by these things, so the word, and ordinances, and spiritual gifts, which they may be emblems of, come from God, and should be acknowledged; but the Jews, as in the times of Isaiah, did not know him, and acknowledge his benefits, (<sup><200D></sup>Isaiah 1:2,3), so, in the times of Christ, they did not know him to be the God of Israel, God over all, blessed for ever; from whom, and for whose sake, who was to be, and was



born of them, they enjoyed the privileges they did, (~~¶~~John 1:10,11  
~~¶~~Romans 9:4,5).

*And multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal*; the relative “which” may refer to all that goes before; and the sense be, that these gifts of God, and which should have been owned as such, and employed in his service, and to his glory; some were made use of in meat and drink offerings to Baal; and others in decking themselves to appear in his worship to his honour; or in ornamenting the idol therewith, or in making it thereof, so the Targum and Syriac version: and all this may be said to be done, when these things are spent in the service of other lords than the Lord himself; when they are abused to sinful purposes, and consumed on the lusts of men, to gratify their sensuality, pride, and vanity, which the Jews did.

**Ver. 9.** *Therefore will I return, and take away*, etc.] Or, “take away again”<sup>f33</sup>; an usual Hebraism:

*my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof*; for though these are the gifts of God to men for their use, and to dispose of for the good of others; yet he retains his property in them, and can and will call them to an account for their stewardship; and, when he pleases, take away both their office, and the good things they were intrusted with, not making a right use of them; and this he does in his own appointed time and season, or at such a time when these are at the best, and the greatest good is expected from them, and which therefore is the more afflictive; as in the time of harvest and vintage, so Kimchi, when corn and grapes are fully ripe; or, as the Targum, in the time of the corn being on the floor, and of the pressure of the wine:

*and will recover my wool, and my flax*, given “to cover her nakedness”; or, “I will take away”; by force and violence, as out of the hands of thieves, and robbers, and usurpers, who have no right to them, being forfeited; these were given to cover her nakedness, but not to deck herself with for the honour of her idols, or to cherish pride and superstition; (see ~~¶~~Matthew 23:5) these were all taken away when the Romans came and took away their place and nation, (~~¶~~John 11:48). The Septuagint and Arabic versions give the sense as if these were taken,

*that they might not cover her nakedness*, or “shame”; but that it might be exposed, as follows:

**Ver. 10.** *And now will I discover her lewdness in the lovers*, etc.] The people, her lovers, as the Targum; which is by many understood of the Egyptians and Assyrians; but rather means the Romans, whom the Jews courted as their friends: though it seems best to interpret it in a more general way, that the sin and folly of the Jews in rejecting Christ, and adhering to their beloved tenets, should be discovered and made manifest to all in the most public manner by their punishment; by being scattered among the nations, and becoming a taunt, reproach, and a curse everywhere: and none shall deliver her out of my hand; none of her lovers, as Kimchi, nor any other: it denotes the utter, total, and final destruction of the Jews, wrath being come upon them to the uttermost; and which is irrecoverable by human help, has continued for many hundred years, and will until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, or till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, (<sup><4224></sup>Luke 21:24 <sup><6125></sup>Romans 11:25).

**Ver. 11.** *I will also cause all her mirth to cease*, etc.] As it must in course, this being her case, as before described, whether considered in individuals, or as a body politic, or in their church state, as follows:

*her feast days*; which the Jews understand of the three feasts of tabernacles, passover, and pentecost; typical of Christ's tabernacling in human nature; of his being the passover sacrificed for us; and of the firstfruits of the Spirit; which being come, the shadows are gone and vanished, and these feasts are no more: her new moons, and her sabbaths; the first day of every month, and the seventh day of every week, observed for religious exercises; typical of the light the church receives from Christ, and the rest it has in him; and he, the body and substance of them, being come, these are no more, (<sup><5026></sup>Colossians 2:16,17):

*and all her solemn feasts*; all others, whether of God's appointment or their own; all are made to cease of right, if not in fact; the law of commandments, contained in ordinances, being abolished by Christ, and the Jews without a priest, sacrifice, and ephod, (<sup><4024></sup>Ephesians 2:14-16 <sup><2824></sup>Hosea 3:4).

**Ver. 12.** *And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees*, etc.] Which are mentioned for the rest, being the most fruitful and beneficial: this was done when Judea was invaded, overrun and wasted, by the Roman army; and when many were cut down, as Josephus observes, to build forts, and cast up mounts against Jerusalem; so that, he, says<sup>f34</sup>, the appearance of the

earth was miserable, for what before was adorned with trees and gardens, looked now like a wilderness:

*whereof she hath said, these are my rewards that my lovers have given me;* alluding to the hire of harlots, given them by their gallants; these she ascribed, as she did before her bread, water, wool, flax; and oil, (<sup>3015</sup>Hosea 2:5), not to God, the author and giver of them, but to the people her lovers, as the Targum; or to her idols, or to her beloved tenets, and doing according to them; and which is here mentioned as a reason of the divine resentment, and why he destroyed these fruitful trees:

*and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them;* make the vines and fig trees like forest trees, barren and unfruitful; the fruitful land of Judea should be turned into a forest, or become like a desert or wilderness, and all the fruits of it should be eaten up by wild beasts; by their enemies, compared to the beasts of the field, particularly the Romans, the fourth beast; (see <sup>2849</sup>Isaiah 56:9 <sup>2707</sup>Daniel 7:7).

**Ver. 13.** *And, I will visit upon her the days of Baalim,* etc.] That is, punish them for all the idolatries committed by their forefathers, in the days that the several Baals, as Baalpeor, and Baalberith, and others, were worshipped by them; they their children, though not worshipping these Baalim, yet other lords, lusts and idols, they set up of themselves, and in their own hearts; (see <sup>4132</sup>Matthew 23:32-36):

*wherein she burnt incense to them;* to the Baalim; this one species of idolatrous worship being put for the rest:

*and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels;* with her best and richest attire; the latter word signifying in the Arabic language, as Jarchi observes, the ornaments of women; this was done to grace the idolatrous worship, and for the honour of the idols:

*and she went after her lovers;* the traditions of the elders; the weak and beggarly elements of the ceremonial law now abolished, and their own legal righteousness:

*and forgot me, saith the Lord:* or, “left my worship”, as the Targum; forgot and rejected the true Messiah, his word and ordinances.

**Ver. 14.** *Therefore, behold, I will allure her,* etc.] Since these rough ways will not do, I will take another, a more mild and gentle way; instead of

threatening, terrifying, and punishing, I will allure, persuade, and entice, giving loving words and winning language: or “nevertheless”, or “notwithstanding”<sup>f35</sup>: so Noldius and others render the participle; though they have thus behaved themselves, and such methods have been taken with them to no purpose, yet I will do as follows: the words may be understood of the call and conversion of the people of God, the spiritual Israel of God, both Jews and Gentiles, in the first times of the Gospel, as (~~<4023>~~Hosea 2:23) is quoted and applied by the Apostle Paul, (~~<4024>~~Romans 9:24,25) and be understood also of the call of the believing Jews out of Jerusalem, before the destruction of it, (~~<4025>~~Luke 21:21), from whence they removed to Pella, as Eusebius<sup>f36</sup> relates: and of the apostles out of the land of Judea into the wilderness of the people, the Gentile world, to preach the Gospel there; where vineyards or churches were planted; the door of faith and hope, were opened to the Gentiles, that had been without hope; and the conversions now made, both among Jews and Gentiles, opened a door of hope, or were a pledge of the conversion of the Jew, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles in the latter day; to which times also these words may be applied, when the Jews shall be allured and persuaded to seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and join Gospel churches in the wilderness of the people, and shall have abundance of spiritual consolation and joy; and they may also be applied to the conversion of sinners in common, and set forth the methods of God’s grace in dealing with them: there is throughout an allusion to Israel’s coming out of Egypt, from whence the Lord allured and persuaded them by Moses and Aaron; and then brought them into the wilderness, where he fed and supplied them, and spoke comfort to them, and gave them the lively oracles; and whence, from the borders of it, they had and entered into the vineyards in the land of Canaan; and in the valley of Achor ate of the grain of the land, which was a door of hope to them they should enjoy the whole land; and when they rejoiced exceedingly, particularly at the Red sea, at their first coming out. The word rendered “allure” signifies to persuade<sup>f37</sup>, as in (~~<4027>~~Genesis 9:27) and in conversion the Lord persuades men, not merely by moral persuasion, or the outward ministry of the word, but by powerful and efficacious grace; opening the heart to attend to things spoken, and the eyes of the understanding to behold wondrous things in the word of God; working upon the heart, and removing the hardness and impenitence of it; quickening the soul, drawing it with the cords of love, and sweetly operating upon the will: and on a sudden and unawares making the soul like the chariots of Amminadib, or a willing people; persuading it to true

repentance for sin, to part with sins and sinful companions, and with its own righteousness, and to come to Christ, and to look to him, and lay hold on him as the Saviour, and to submit to his ordinances: moreover, the Lord persuades men at conversion of his love to them, and of their interest in Christ, and all the blessings of grace in him. Kimchi's note is,

“I will put into her heart to return by repentance;”

and compares with it (<sup>238b</sup>Ezekiel 36:26). The Targum is,

“I will subject her to the law.”

*And bring her into the wilderness:* so in conversion the Lord calls and separates his people from the world, as the Israelites were from the Egyptians, when brought into the wilderness; and when they are solitary and alone, as they were, and so in a fit circumstance to be spoken unto, and to hear comfortable words, as follows; and when the Lord feeds them with the grain of heaven, with hidden manna, the food of the wilderness; and when they come into trouble and affliction for the sake of Christ and his Gospel. Some understand this of the church into which they are brought, because separate from the world, and attended with trouble; but this is rather a garden than a wilderness. Some, as Noldius and others, render it, “when” or “after I have brought her into the wilderness”<sup>f38</sup>; so after the Lord has shown men their sin and danger, their wilderness, desolate, state and condition, and stripped them of all help elsewhere; or has brought them under afflictive dispensations of Providence; then he does what he said before, and follows after.

*And speak comfortably unto her;* or, “speak to her heart”<sup>f39</sup>, as in (<sup>239b</sup>Isaiah 40:2) as he does when he tells them their sins are forgiven; that he has loved them with an everlasting love; what exceeding great and precious promises he has made unto them; and when he speaks to them by the Spirit and Comforter, who takes his and the things of Christ, and shows them unto them; and in his word, written for their consolation; and by his ministers, who are “Barnabases”, sons of comfort; and in the ordinances, those breasts of consolation. The Targum is,

“and I will do for her wonders and great things, as I did for her in the wilderness; and by the hand of my servants the prophets I will speak comforts to her heart.”

The Jewish writers<sup>f40</sup> interpret this of the Messiah's leading people into a wilderness in a literal sense; they ask where will he (the Messiah) lead them? the answer of some is, to the wilderness of Judea, (<sup><400></sup>Matthew 3:1,13); and of others is, to the wilderness of Sihon and Og (the wilderness the Israelites passed through when they came out of Egypt): they, who are on the side of the first answer, urge in favour of it (<sup><200></sup>Hosea 12:9) and they who are for the latter produce this passage.

**Ver. 15.** *And I will give her vineyards from thence*, etc.] Either from the wilderness into which she is brought; or from the time of her being brought there, allured and spoke comfortably to; which are put for all temporal blessings, and as emblems of spiritual ones: and so from the time that the Lord deals thus graciously, as before expressed, he gives more grace, larger measures, and continual supplies of it, and withholds nothing good, comfortable, and useful to them: the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "her vinedressers"; and the Targum, her governors:

*and the valley of Achor for a door of hope*; this valley was so named from Achan, who was stoned in it in the days of Joshua; who is by Josephus<sup>f41</sup>, Theodoret<sup>f42</sup>, and others, called Achar, and so in (<sup><300></sup>1 Chronicles 2:7) and the signification of its name is the valley of trouble, because that he both troubled Israel by his evil actions, which brought them into distress; and because he was here troubled himself, being here punished for his sin, (<sup><100></sup>Joshua 7:24-26). Jerome<sup>f43</sup> says it lies to the north of Jericho, and is still called by its old name by the inhabitants of it. Some take it to be the same with the valley of Engedi, which it is certain was near Jericho. Now as the valley of Achor was at the entrance of the Israelites into the land of Canaan, and gave them hope of possessing the whole land; so what the people of God enjoy at first conversion lays a foundation for hope of eternal glory and happiness; as the Lord's being given them as their portion, Christ as their Saviour, and all things freely with him; the Spirit and his grace as the earnest and pledge of the eternal inheritance: grace and glory are so strictly connected, that the one is a door of hope to the other.

*And she shall sing there*; either in the wilderness, where the Lord speaks comfortably to her; or in the vineyards she has from thence; alluding to the songs of joy at the time of vintage, or pressing of the grapes: or in the valley of Achor, there rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, singing the songs of electing, redeeming, pardoning, and justifying grace:

*as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt:* as when the people of Israel were first brought into their civil and ecclesiastic state, which were the days of their youth as a people; and that was when they came out of Egypt, and had passed the Red sea, at the shore of which they sung; and to which is the allusion here; (see <sup><215></sup>Exodus 15:1 <sup><613></sup>Revelation 15:3) this passage is applied to the times of the Messiah in the Talmud<sup>f44</sup>.

**Ver. 16.** *And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord,* etc.] The Gospel day, the times of the Gospel dispensation, the latter part of them; at the time of the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles; at the time when God will allure and persuade them to seek the Messiah, and they shall turn to him; when he shall speak comfortably to them, and give them a door of hope, and all spiritual blessings, and cause them to sing as when they came out of Egypt:

*that thou shalt call me Ishi;* or, “my husband”<sup>f45</sup>; returning to Christ their first husband, and being received by him, shall have faith and interest in him, and full assurance of it; and shall not only be allowed to call him their husband, but in the strength of faith, and with great freedom of soul, shall call him so, and say as the church did, “my beloved is mine, and I am his”, (Song of Solomon 20:16): or, “my man”<sup>f46</sup>; the man the Lord, the man Jehovah’s fellow, Immanuel God with us, God in human nature; and so more manifestly points at Christ, who, most properly speaking, stands in the relation of a husband to his people: or, “my strength”, as some interpret it; the husband being the strength, protection, and defence of the wife, the weaker vessel; so Christ is the strength of his saints, in whom they have righteousness and strength, and through whose strength they can do all things:

*and shalt call me no more Baali;* which signifies my husband too, and is used of God and Christ; he is called Baal, and the church is called Beulah, because married together, (<sup><238></sup>Isaiah 45:5 <sup><239></sup>42:4,5 <sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 31:32) but it signifies a lordly and imperious husband; and the other word, “Ishi”, a loving one: so Jarchi observes that the sense is, that they should serve the Lord from love, and not fear; “Ishi” being a word expressive of marriage and love, and “Baali” of lordship and fear: hence some have thought this to be the reason why the one should be used, and the other not, under the Gospel dispensation; because saints now have not the spirit of bondage to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby they call God their Father, and

Christ their husband: though rather the reason is, because the word “Baal”, as R. Marinns observes, is of doubtful signification, an ambiguous word, used for the idol Baal, as well as signifies lord and husband; and therefore to be laid aside, lest, when they mentioned it, it should be thought they spoke of Baal, and not of the Lord; or should be led to think of that idol, and remember him.

**Ver. 17.** *For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth,* etc.] Out of the mouth of Israel, as Saadiah; out of the mouth of the converted Jews, and even out of the mouth of the Gentiles, as Kimchi owns; the several Baals, as Baalpeor, Baalberith, and Baalzebub, and others: the names of them should be no more used, should not be spoken of, unless with detestation and abhorrence; not with honour and respect, with love and affection, or so as to yield worship and homage to them; or otherwise their names may be lawfully mentioned, as in (<sup><6104></sup>Romans 11:4), there seems to be some reference to the law in (<sup><02313></sup>Exodus 23:13), the sense is, that idolatry shall be utterly abolished, even of every kind; not the worship of Baalim only, but of all other idols: and so the Targum is,

“and I will take away the name of the idols of the people out of their mouth;”

and may design the idolatry of the church of Rome; their worship of images of gold and silver, wood, brass, and stone in whose communion are many of the Jews at this time; but when the time of their conversion comes, all this will be abolished among them, and among the Gentiles also:

*and they shall no more be remembered by their name;* or made mention of by name; the same thing as before, in other words, repeated for the confirmation of it.

**Ver. 18.** *And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field,* etc.] That is, so as to be at peace with them, as the Targum is; (see <sup><R623></sup>Job 5:23), the sense is, the Lord here promises this unto them, and that it shall be as sure and firm, and to be as much depended upon, as if it was established and settled by covenant, and should be enjoyed as a covenant mercy and blessing; and the creatures should as strictly observe it, and answer to it, as if bound by covenant: and this should reach not only to the beasts of the field, the wild beasts of prey, “but the fowls of heaven”; as the locusts and others, as Kimchi observes, which should not eat up the fruits and increase of the earth: “and the creeping things of the ground”: as



serpents and scorpions, as the same writer suggests. Some think this was fulfilled in the first times of the Gospel, when the apostles took up serpents, and trod on scorpions, without any hurt; but then nothing was more common than for the Christians to be thrown to the lions, and devoured by beasts of prey. Others refer it to the last days, the times of the restitution of all things, when they suppose all creatures will be restored to their paradisiacal estate, and be in entire subjection to men. Rather the sense is, that whereas noisome beasts, and other things, were one of God's sore judgments, with which he threatened his people, when they sinned against him, now they should no more be hurt by them in a way of judgment; and, indeed, should cease from being among them, so that they should be in no fear of them any more; (see <sup><1852></sup>Leviticus 26:22 <sup><3421></sup>Ezekiel 14:21 <sup><3825></sup>34:25,28). Though the words may be understood figuratively and mystically, either of deliverance from all spiritual enemies by Christ, as sin, Satan, and the world, and all others; or of freedom from all wicked men, cruel and crafty ones, open and secret persecutors of the saints: persecution will cease at the time of the Jews' conversion; antichrist, and all the antichristian states, will be destroyed; the beast and false prophet will be taken and cast into the furnace of fire; the old serpent, the devil, will be bound, during the Millennium; and there will be none to hurt in God's holy mountain, neither in the spiritual nor personal reign of Christ.

*And I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth;* all the instruments of war shall be no more, these mentioned being put for all the rest; and there shall be no more battles fought after that at Armageddon; swords shall be beat into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks; there shall be no more wars, nor rumours of wars, but perfect external peace from all enemies on all sides, as well as spiritual and internal peace in the breast of the saints; and of both there shall be abundance, and without end, (<sup><1971></sup>Psalm 72:7 <sup><2104></sup>Isaiah 2:4 <sup><2107></sup>9:7):

*and will make them to lie down safely;* under the protection of the King Messiah, David their Prince, who shall be over them, and whom they shall own, acknowledge, and serve, and so dwell in the utmost safety and security, not fearing any enemy whatever; they may lie down on their couches at meals, or on their beds at night for rest, or as flocks of sheep in their folds and pastures, and none make them afraid; (see <sup><2415></sup>Jeremiah 23:5).

**Ver. 19.** *And I will betroth thee unto me for ever*, etc.] Which is taking them into a marriage relation with himself; and is to be understood not of the whole body of God's elect, who were secretly betrothed to in the everlasting covenant from eternity; for it respects what is yet to come; but of the people the Jews, when converted in the latter day, when will be the marriage of the Lamb with them, and with the fullness of the Gentiles then brought in; of which (see <sup><660U></sup>Revelation 19:7-9), who will then return to their first husband; and though the Jews have been divorced, they will be received again, and be afresh betrothed; a new covenant or contract will be made with them, and which shall last for ever, (<sup><243B></sup>Jeremiah 31:31,32) and this may be applied to every particular soul at conversion, which is the day of their open espousals to Christ; and they are visibly brought into a marriage relation with him, than which nothing is more near; they become flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, yea, one spirit with him, and are indulged with near communion with him; and hence is that sympathy he has with them in all their afflictions, temptations, and exercises, and takes that as done to him which is done to them, whether good or ill; hence all their debts or sins become his, and he satisfies for them, and his righteousness becomes theirs: this is a very endearing relation; there is a mutual delight and complacency they take in each other; and a most able one it is; hence they are called by his name, Christians, and partake of his honour; he is King, and they queen; and a very beneficial relation it is, for all that Christ is, and has, are theirs; and a most marvellous and wondrous thing it is that he should betroth them to himself, when he is the Son of the living God, himself the true God, God over all blessed for ever, the Maker and Governor of the world, and heir of all things; and though they in their secret betrothment were considered as sinless creatures, yet in their open espousals at conversion are fallen sinners, in a very low estate indeed; under sentence of condemnation and death; devoid of the image of God; depraved, polluted, and guilty creatures; in deep debt, and extreme poverty; it is as if a prince, heir apparent to the throne, should take a convict or condemned malefactor out of her cell, or a common strumpet out of the stews, or a bankrupt and beggar from the dunghill, and marry her: and this relation will continue "for ever": the marriage covenant or contract is an everlasting one; the bond of union, which is everlasting and unchangeable love, is indissoluble; death cannot take place in either party; both shall live forever; and this is a strong proof of the final perseverance of the saints.

*Yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness*; either in truth, in sincerity, heartily, and without any hypocrisy or dissimulation; or consistent with righteousness, with his love of righteousness and holiness, and hatred of sin: or rather in his own justifying righteousness; not in their own righteousness, which is as rags; for though he finds them in such rags, he strips them of them, and puts on the wedding garment, the robe of his own righteousness, and garment of salvation; when they become as a bride, adorned with ornaments, and so made ready for the nuptials, and in this he betroths them; (see <sup><2610></sup>Isaiah 61:10 <sup><4212></sup>Matthew 22:12 <sup><697></sup>Revelation 19:7,8):

*and in judgment*: in sanctification, according to some, the work being now begun by the Spirit of God, as a spirit of judgment; or in a judicious way, not rashly and precipitantly, but with mature deliberation, and of choice arising from judgment; or rather absolving them from the sentence of condemnation and death by his righteousness, and protecting and defending them from their enemies, for the sake of which, and other things, he takes them into this relation;

*and in lovingkindness, and in mercies*: denoting both the love, which is the spring and source of this relation, and not any merits of theirs; and the kind and tender manner in which he betroths them; as well as the numerous favours he bestows upon them; as pardon of sin; justification of life; spiritual peace; supplies of all grace, and eternal life; all the effects of free grace, unmerited love, and sovereign mercy.

**Ver. 20.** *I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness*, etc.] Which lies in keeping the marriage contract inviolable; Christ will never suffer his faithfulness to fail, nor break his covenant; as he is faithful to his Father that appointed him, so he is, and will be, to his church and people, and to every believer, to whom he is espoused; and it is he that makes them faithful unto him, and gives them faith to believe in him, receive, embrace, own, and acknowledge him as their husband: and in this sense some understand it, rendering it, “in faith”<sup>f47</sup>; so the Targum and others. This is the third time the word “betroth” is used, or this promise made; which, according to Jerome, refers to them espousing of the Jews in Abraham, at Mount Sinai, and in the times of Christ; and, according to Kimchi, to the three captivities of the Jews, in Egypt, in Babylon, and that in which they now are: and some Christian writers think the mystery of the Trinity is here pointed at; and the sense to be, that all the three divine Persons, Father,

Son, and Spirit, would espouse them: but rather it is so often repeated to confirm it, and express the certainty of it, which might, on many accounts, seem a thing incredible.

*And thou shalt know the Lord*; that the Messiah is Jehovah, and that he is their husband; they shall all know him, from the least to the greatest; they shall have a saving knowledge of him, which will issue in eternal life; they shall own him, and acknowledge him, serve and obey him, as their Lord, Head, and Husband, as well as love him, and believe in him. The Targum is,

“and ye shall know to fear before the Lord;”

(see <sup>2613</sup>Jeremiah 31:34). Let it be observed, here are no conditions throughout, it is only “I will”, and “thou shalt”.

**Ver. 21.** *And it shall come to pass in that day*, etc.] When these espousals shall be made, when the marriage of the Lamb will be come, and his bride will be betrothed to him; then the whole creation, the heavens and the earth, shall contribute of their riches and plenty to make a marriage feast for them; or then shall the spouse of Christ, in a very visible and plentiful manner, by virtue of the marriage union between them, partake of all his good things, both temporal and spiritual; and especially the latter, as signified by the former; but yet in the use of means, and as the effect of prayer, as follows:

*I will hear, saith the Lord*; the petitions of his new married bride, which he cannot deny her :or, “I will answer”<sup>f48</sup>; men oftentimes hear, and answer not; but when the Lord hears his people, he answers them, and grants them their requests; he is a God hearing and answering prayer. So the Targum,

“I will receive your prayer, saith the Lord.”

*I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth*; in these and the following words is an elegant personification, a figure by which inanimate creatures are represented as persons speaking, praying, asking, and being heard and answered; and a beautiful climax, or a chain of second causes linked together, and as depending upon the first cause, the Lord himself; the heavens are represented as desiring the Lord of nature, the Maker and Supporter of them, having been like brass, and shut up, that they might have leave to let down their refreshing dews, and gentle showers of rain, upon the earth; and the earth as being dry and thirsty, as gaping, opening

its mouth, and imploring these benign influences of the heavens; and both as answered: for so it may be rendered, “I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth”<sup>f49</sup>; the Lord promises to answer the desires of the heavens, and allow them to drop their dew, and distil their rain; and so they shall answer the cravings of the earth. The spiritual sense may be, according to Schmidt, Christ is he on whom all blessings depend; “heaven” may signify the Holy Spirit Christ gives, who intercedes with him for the saints; the “earth” the ministration of the word and ordinances, by which the Spirit is given, invoked by the ministers of them. Or, as Cocceius, the “heavens” may design the ministers of the church, who govern in it, and who pray and plead for help, assistance, and success; and the “earth” the audience, the common people, who also pray, and are heard and answered, when ministers let down the dew and rain of evangelical doctrine upon them, and water them, and refresh them with it; and such precious seasons as these, as the fruit of prayer, will the saints have in the latter day.

**Ver. 22.** *And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil,* etc.] Or “answer” here the corn, and vines, and olive trees, are represented as requesting the earth to be let into it, and receive moisture from it, that they may grow and increase, and bring forth fruit; by which may be meant the fruits and graces of the Spirit, and all spiritual gifts, communicated by means of the word and ordinances; or the fruits brought forth by the church, under the ministry of the word; which serves like “corn” to nourish and strengthen; like “wine” to comfort, cheer, and revive; and like “oil” to heal and soften, as well as make glad,

*And they shall hear Jezreel;* or “answer”; that is, these trees and fruits shall answer to the requests and desires of Jezreel, who shall be abundantly blessed with them. By “Jezreel” is not meant the name of a place, as Aben Ezra; but the people of Israel, who had before been signified by a son of the prophet of this name, (~~2004~~ Hosea 1:4), and which name is here continued, to show how unworthy they were of such favours in themselves, and the riches of God’s grace in bestowing them on them: or else the word here has a different signification; whereas before it signified their being scattered and dispersed, here their being the seed of God; and which is confirmed by the following words,

*I will sow her unto me,* etc.: the sum of the whole is, that at the prayers of the Lord’s people abundance of spiritual blessings shall be bestowed upon

them from Christ by the Spirit, under the ministration of the word and ordinances. The Targum of both verses is,

“I will command the heavens, and they shall let down rain upon the earth; and the earth shall produce corn, and wine, and oil, and they shall be sufficient for the captivity of the people.”

Kimchi says this belongs to the time of salvation; and Aben Ezra to time to come.

**Ver. 23.** *And I will sow her unto me in the earth*, etc.] That is, Jezreel, or the people of God, the church betrothed; this is another blessing following upon the marriage relation between Christ and his people, both Jews and Gentiles, in the latter day, a multiplication of a spiritual seed and offspring. So Kimchi and Aben Ezra observe, that the words signify that the people of Israel shall increase and be fruitful as the seed of the earth. These now are good seed which the Lord sows; such as are born not of corruptible but incorruptible seed; are quickened by the Spirit of God; have a good work of grace begun in them; and though they may lie for some time under the clods in darkness and obscurity, yet shall rise up in the green blade of a lively profession, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness. Seed for sowing is the choicest and most precious, and of greatest esteem and value, and is separated from the rest for that use, though but little and small in quantity in comparison of it; all which is applicable to the people of God. This is said to be sown “in the earth or land”; either in their own land, the land of Israel, into which they shall now be brought, (<sup><322></sup>Ezekiel 21:22 <sup><105></sup>Amos 9:15) or in the field of the world, the nations and people of the earth, according to (<sup><300></sup>Zechariah 10:9) or rather in the churches of Christ on earth, the churches in the Gentile world, into which the Jews, when converted, shall be brought, and increase and multiply; and this will be all the Lord’s doing.

*I will sow her*: he will quicken and convert them, and place and plant them in Gospel churches, though ministers may be instruments in his hands; and all their fruitfulness and increase will be “unto him”, for his service, the promotion of his interest, and for his honour and glory. The Targum is,

“I will establish you before me in the land of my Shechinah or majesty.”

*And I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy*; upon Loruhamah, or the people of Israel, signified by her, (<sup><306></sup>Hosea 1:6) and

also the Gentiles, for to both Jews and Gentiles the apostle applies the words in (~~6124~~Romans 9:24,25) and they were fulfilled in part in his time, by the conversion of some of the Jews, and by the calling of the Gentiles; but will have a larger accomplishment in the latter day, when all Israel shall obtain mercy, and be saved; (see ~~6126~~Romans 11:26,30-32) and are applicable to the people of God at all times, when called by grace; for though before conversion there is mercy for them in the heart of God, which is from everlasting; and in his purpose and resolution to bestow; and which is displayed in his choice of them, considered in the decree of the means as fallen creatures, and so vessels of mercy; and which is laid up in covenant for them, which is full of the sure mercies of David; and appears in the mission of Christ, and their redemption by him; and in sparing and saving them before calling; as well as in their regeneration, which is the fruit of abundant mercy; yet is not manifested to them till converted, when they openly obtain it: the Lord has mercy on them, and brings them out of the horrible pit of the state of nature; plucks them as brands out of the burning; opens the prison doors, knocks off their fetters, and sets them free; feeds their hungry and clothes their naked souls; heals their diseases, and pardons their iniquities, and saves them with an everlasting salvation.

*And I will say to them which were not my people, thou art my people;* or to “Loammi”, the people of Israel, signified by the prophet’s child of that name, (~~3009~~Hosea 1:9), who should no more be called so, but “Ammi”, my people, (~~3011~~Hosea 2:1), which, as before observed, was in part fulfilled in the first times of the Gospel; but will be more fully accomplished at the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles; who though chosen to be the people of God, and are so federally, and were given in covenant to Christ as such, and so redeemed and saved by him from their sins; yet are not till conversion laid hold on by the Lord, and formed as his people for himself, and are without knowledge of him, and communion with him: nor are they called his people by themselves or others; but, when converted, they have the characters, and enjoy the privileges, of God’s people; they have the witness of the relation to themselves by the Spirit of God, and are known and acknowledged by others; the Lord says this unto them, and avouches them for his people:

*and they shall say, thou art my God;* in the strength of faith, under the testimony of the Spirit of God, they shall claim their interest in God, as their covenant God in Christ; which is made known in effectual calling by

the work of grace on their hearts; by the blessings of grace bestowed on them; and by the Lord's dwelling among them, and his protection of them.