

# CHAPTER 6

## INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 6

This chapter gives an account of some who were truly penitent, and stirred up one another to return to the Lord, encouraged by his power, grace, and goodness, (~~301~~Hosea 6:1-3); and of others, who had only a form of religion, were very unstable in it; regarded more the ceremonial law, and the external sacrifices of it, than the moral law; either that part of it which respects the love of the neighbour, or that which concerns the knowledge of God; and dealt treacherously with the Lord, transgressing the covenant, (~~206~~Hosea 6:4-7); particularly the city of Gilead is represented as full of the workers of iniquity, and is charged with bloodshed, (~~208~~Hosea 6:8); yea, even the priests were guilty of murder and lewdness, (~~209~~Hosea 6:9); and Israel, or the ten tribes in general, are accused of whoredom, both corporeal and spiritual, with which they were defiled, (~~200~~Hosea 6:10); nor was Judah clear of these crimes, and therefore a reckoning day is set for them, (~~201~~Hosea 6:11).

**Ver. 1.** *Come, and let us return unto the Lord*, etc.] The Septuagint and Arabic versions connect these words with the last clause of the preceding chapter, adding the word, “saying”; and so the Targum and Syriac version, “they shall say”; and very rightly as to the sense; for they are the words of those persons under the afflicting hand of God; and, being brought thereby to a sense of their sins, acknowledge them, and seek to the Lord for pardon, and encourage one another so to do; as Israel and Judah will in the latter day, when the veil shall be taken off their minds, the hardness of their heart removed, and they shall be converted, and turn to the Lord, and seek him together, weeping as they go; having both faith in Christ, and repentance towards God, by which they will return unto him; (see ~~406~~2 Corinthians 3:16 ~~250~~Jeremiah 50:4,5); so all sinners sensible of their departure from God by sin, and of the evil and danger of it, repent of it, and loath it, confess and acknowledge it, depart from it, and forsake it; and return to the Lord, having some view and apprehension of him as a God, gracious and merciful in Christ; imploring the forgiveness of their sins, with some degree of faith and confidence in him; and not having only love to

their own souls, and the welfare of them, but also to the souls of others, exhort and encourage them to join with them in the same acts of faith, repentance, and obedience. The Targum is,

“let us return to the worship of the Lord;”

from which they have sadly departed. The arguments or reasons follow,

*for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up*; the same hand that has torn will heal and that has smitten will bind up, and none else can; and therefore there is a necessity of returning to him for healing and a cure, (<sup><6523></sup>Deuteronomy 32:39); and his tearing is in order to heal, and his smiting in order to bind up; and, as sure as he has done the one, he will do the other, and therefore there is great encouragement to apply to him; all which the Jews will be sensible of in the last day; and then the Lord, who is now tearing them in his wrath, and smiting them in his sore displeasure, both in their civil and church state, dispersing them among the nations, and has been so doing for many hundred years, will “bind up the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound”, (<sup><2315></sup>Isaiah 30:26); and so the Lord deals with all his people, who are truly and really converted by him; he rends their heart, tears the caul of it; pricks and cuts them to the heart; smites them with the hammer of his word; wounds their consciences with a sense of sin; lets in the law into them, which works wrath, whereby they become broken and contrite; and all this in order to their turning to him that smites them, and be healed, and in love to their souls, though for the present grievous to bear: and then the great Physician heals them by his stripes and wounds; by the application of his blood; by means of his word, the Gospel of peace and pardon; by a look to him, and a touch of him by faith; by discoveries of his love, and particularly his pardoning grace and mercy, which as oil and wine he pours into the wounds made by sin, and binds them up; and which he heals universally, both with respect to persons and diseases, for which he is applied unto, and infallibly, thoroughly, and perfectly, and all freely.

**Ver. 2.** *After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up*, etc.] The Jews, in their present state, are as dead men, both in a civil and spiritual sense, and their conversion and restoration will be as life from the dead; they are like persons buried, and, when they are restored, they will be raised out of their graves, both of sin and misery; (see <sup><6115></sup>Romans 11:15 <sup><3711></sup>Ezekiel 37:11-14); the time of which is here fixed, after two days, and on the third; which Jarchi interprets of the two temples that have been

destroyed, and of the third temple to be built, which the Jews expect, but in vain, and when they hope for good times: Kimchi explains it of their three captivities, in Egypt, Babylon, and the present one, and so Ben Melech, from which they hope to be raised, and live comfortably; which sense is much better than the former: and with it may be compared Vitringa's<sup>f113</sup> notion of the text, that the first day was between Israel's coming out of Egypt and the Babylonish captivity; the second day between that and the times of Antiochus, which was the third night; then the third day followed, which is the times of the Messiah: but the Targum comes nearer the truth, which paraphrases the words thus,

“he will quicken us in the days of consolation which are to come, and in the day of the resurrection of the dead he will raise us up;”

where by days of consolation are meant the days of the Messiah, with which the Jews generally connect the resurrection of the dead; and if we understand them of the last days of the Messiah, it is not much amiss; for the words respect the quickening and raising up of the Jews in the latter day, the times of Christ's spiritual coming and reign: and these two and three days may be expressive of a long and short time, as interpreters differently explain them; of a long time, as the third day is a long time for a man to lie dead, when there can be little or no hope of his reviving, (~~(Luke 24:21)~~ Luke 24:21); or of a short time, for which two or three days is a common phrase; and both true in this case: it is a long time Israel and Judah have been in captivity, and there may seem little hope of their restoration; but it will be a short time with the Lord, with whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years: and this I take to be the sense of the words, that after the second Millennium, or the Lord's two days, and at the beginning of the third, will be the time of their conversion and restoration, reckoning from the last destruction of them by the Romans; for not till then were Israel and Judah wholly in a state of death: many of Israel were mixed among those of Judah before the Babylonish captivity, and many returned with them from it; but, when destroyed by the Romans, there was an end of their civil and church state; which will both be revived on a better foundation at this period of time: but if this conjecture is not agreeable (for I only propose it as such), the sense may be taken thus, that in a short time after the repentance of Israel, and their conversion to the Lord, they will be brought into a very comfortable and happy state and condition, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual;

*and we shall live in his sight*; comfortably, in a civil sense, in their own land, and in the possession of all their privileges and liberties; and in a spiritual sense, by faith on Jesus Christ, whom they shall now embrace, and in the enjoyment of the Gospel and Gospel ordinances; and the prophet represents the penitents and faithful among them as believing and hoping for these things. This may be applied to the case of sensible sinners, who, as they are in their natural state dead in sin, and dead in law, so they see themselves to be such when awakened; and yet entertain a secret hope that sooner or later they shall be revived and refreshed, and raised up to a more comfortable state, and live in the presence of God, and the enjoyment of his favour. The ancient fathers generally understood these words of Christ, who was buried on the sixth day, lay in the grave the whole seventh day, and after these two days, on the third, rose again from the dead; and to this passage the apostle is thought to have respect, (~~45B~~1 Corinthians 15:3); and also of the resurrection of his people in and with him, and by virtue of his: and true it is that Christ rose from the dead on the third day, and all his redeemed ones were quickened and raised up together with him as their head and representative, (~~40B~~Ephesians 2:5,6); and his in virtue of his being quickened that they are regenerated and quickened, and made alive, in a spiritual sense; he is the author of their spiritual life, and their life itself; (see ~~40B~~1 Peter 1:3); and not only in virtue of his resurrection is their spiritual resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace, but even their corporeal resurrection at the last day; and as, in consequence of their spiritual resurrection, they live in the sight of God a life of grace and holiness by faith in Christ, and in a comfortable view and enjoyment of the divine favour; so they shall live eternally in the presence of God, where are fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore: but the first sense is best, and most agreeable to the context and scope of it.

**Ver. 3.** *Then shall we know, [if] we follow on to know the Lord*, etc.] The word “if” is not in the original text, and the passage is not conditional, but absolute; for as persons, when converted, know Christ, and not before, when he is revealed to them, and in them, as the only Saviour and Redeemer, so they continue and increase in the knowledge of him; they earnestly desire to know more of him, and eagerly pursue those means and methods by which they attain to a greater degree of it; for so the words are, “and we shall know, we shall follow on to know the Lord”<sup>f114</sup>; that grace, which has given the first measure of spiritual and experimental knowledge of him, will influence and engage them to seek after more. The

Jews, when they are quickened, and turn to the Lord, will know him, own and acknowledge him, as the Messiah, the only Redeemer and Saviour; and will be so delighted with the knowledge of him, that they will be desirous of, and seek after, a larger measure of it; and indeed they shall all know him, from the least to the greatest, when the covenant of grace shall be renewed with them, manifested and applied to them. The words may be considered as a continuation of their exhortation to one another from (~~2000~~ Hosea 6:1); thus, “and let us acknowledge, let us follow on to know him”<sup>f115</sup>; let us own him as the true Messiah, whom we and our fathers have rejected; and let us make use of all means to gain more knowledge of him: or let us follow after him, to serve and obey him, which is the practical knowledge of him; let us imitate him, and follow him the Lamb of God, embrace his Gospel, and submit to his ordinances. So Kimchi interprets it, “to know him”; that is, to serve him; first know him, then serve him;

*his going forth is prepared as the morning*; that is, the Lord’s going forth, who is known, and followed after to be more known; and is to be understood, not of his going forth in the council and covenant of grace from everlasting; nor of his incarnation in time, or of his resurrection from the dead; but of his spiritual coming in the latter day, with the brightness of which he will destroy antichrist; or of his going forth in the ministration of the Gospel, to the conversion of Jews and Gentiles, the light of which dispensation will be very great; it will be like a morning after a long night of darkness with the Jewish and Pagan nations; and be as grateful and delightful, beautiful and cheerful, as the morning light; and move as swiftly and irresistibly as that, and be alike growing and increasing: and so the words are a reason of the increasing knowledge of the Lord’s people in those times, because he shall go forth in the ministration of the word like the morning light, which increases more and more till noon; and of the evidence and clearness of it, it being like a morning without clouds; with which agrees the note of Joseph Kimchi,

“we shall know him, and it will be as clear to us as the light of the morning without clouds:”

and also of the firmness and certainty of it; for both the increasing knowledge of the saints, and the going forth of Christ in a spiritual manner, is “firm” and “sure” (which may be the sense of the word<sup>f116</sup>) as the morning; for, as sure as the night cometh, so also the morning;

*and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter [and] former rain unto the earth*; in the land of Israel they had usually two rains in a year; the one in autumn, or quickly after the seed was sown; the other in the spring, when the corn was ripe, and harvest near, and which was very reviving and refreshing to the earth, and the fruits of it; and such will be the coming of Christ unto his people, in the ministration of the Gospel in the latter day, which will drop as the rain, and distil as the dew, as the small rain on the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass; and in the discoveries of his favour and love to them, and in the distribution of the blessings of his grace among them. Much the like phrases are used of the spiritual coming of Christ in the latter day, (<sup>497B</sup>Psalm 72:6). The Targum is,

“and we shall learn, and we shall follow on, to know the fear of the Lord, as the morning light, which darts in its going out; and blessings will come to us as a prevailing rain, and as the latter rain which waters the earth.”

**Ver. 4.** *O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee?* etc.] Or, “for thee”<sup>f117</sup>? The Lord having observed the effect and consequence of his going and returning to his place, of his leaving his people for a long time under afflictions and in distress; namely, their thorough conversion to him in the latter day, and the blessings attending it; returns to the then present times again, and to the state and condition in which Ephraim and Judah, the ten and two tribes, were; and speaks as one at a loss, and under difficulties, to know what to do with them and for them; how as it were to give them up to ruin and destruction; and yet, having tried all ways with them, and in vain, asks what further was to be done, or could be done, to bring them to a sense of their sins, to reform them, and cause them to return to him;

*for your goodness [is] as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away*; meaning not the goodness of God bestowed upon them, and the mercy he showed to them; but the goodness that appeared in them, and all the good things done by them, their repentance, reformation, holiness, and righteousness; these, which were only in show, did not last long, came to nothing, and disappeared; like a light cloud in the morning, which vanishes away when the sun rises; or like the dew that falls in the night, which is quickly dried up and gone, after the sun has been up a small time. Thus it was with Ephraim, or the ten tribes, in the time of Jehu; there was a show of zeal for religion, and a reformation from idolatry; but it did not go on,

nor last long; and with the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin in the times of Hezekiah and Josiah, who did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord; but then the Jews, in the times of their successors, returned to their former evil ways. And so the best works, holiness and righteousness of men, can no more stand before the justice of God, and the strict examination of it, than a thin light morning cloud, or the small drops of dew, before the light, force, and heat of the sun; nor do formal and carnal professors continue in these things; they may run well for a while, and then drop their profession and religion, and turn from the holy commandment. And this being the case, what can they expect from the Lord?

**Ver. 5.** *Therefore have I hewed [them] by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth,* etc.] Sharply reprov'd them for their sins by the prophets, who were as lapidaries that cut stone, or us hewers of timber that cut off the knotty parts; so these by preaching the terrors of the law, which is a killing letter, and by delivering out the threatenings of the Lord, and denouncing his judgments upon them for their sins, cut them to the heart, and killed them; for their foretelling and prophesying of their being slain, ruined, and destroyed, was a slaying of them; (see <sup><3010></sup>Jeremiah 1:10). The Targum is,

“because I admonished them by the message of my prophets, and they returned not, I will bring upon them those that slay, because they have transgressed the word of my will.”

But the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and so Aben Ezra and Joseph Kimchi, understand these words, not of hewing, and cutting, and slaying of the people by the prophets, but of the cutting and slaying the prophets themselves, and read the words, “therefore have I cut off the prophets, and slain them etc.”, either the false prophets, some of them that caused the people to err, that they might not repent, as Aben Ezra; as the prophets of Baal in the times of Elijah, and the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ’s time, who were in the way of the people’s repentance, reformation, and reception of Christ; these he cut off, and their doctrine, and condemned by his own, and the doctrine of his apostles, the words of the Lord’s mouth; (see <sup><3108></sup>Zechariah 11:8); and this he did for the good of his people, in answer to the question put by himself in (<sup><2104></sup>Hosea 6:4); so Schmidt interprets it: or else the true prophets of God, who were exposed to death, to be cut off and slain, for the messages they were sent with: or those messages were such as were killing to them to carry them, and

deliver them; and they were so constantly employed, early and late, in such service, that for the work of the Lord they were often nigh unto death: but our version, and the sense agreeable to it, scent best;

*and thy judgments [are as] the light [that] goeth forth;* that is, their judgments, the people's, a sudden change of person: meaning either the statutes and judgments prescribed them by the Lord, and to be observed by them; which were clear and plain as the light at noon day, and therefore could not plead any excuse of ignorance of them, that they did not observe them: or the judgments of God upon them for their sins; which were open and manifest to all, and increasing like the light, more and more, and no more to be resisted than that; and the righteousness of God in them was very conspicuous; his judgments were manifest, and the justice of them. Some understand this of the judgments or righteousnesses of the saints, both imputed and inherent, (~~41516~~ Romans 5:16 ~~4006~~ Luke 1:6); which appear light and clear, the darkness of pharisaism being removed by Christ. The Targum is,

“my judgment goes forth as the light.”

**Ver. 6.** *For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice,* etc.] That is, the one rather than the other, as the next clause explains it. Sacrifices were of early use, even before the law of Moses; they were of divine appointment, and were approved and accepted of by the Lord; they were types of Christ, and led to him, and were continued unto his death; but in comparison of moral duties, which respect love to God, and to our neighbour, the Lord did not will them, desire them, and delight in them; or he had more regard for the former than the latter; (see ~~0952~~ 1 Samuel 15:22 ~~4123~~ Mark 12:33,34); nor did he will or accept at all of the sacrifices ordered to the calves at Daniel and Bethel; nor others, when they were not such as the law required, or were not offered up in the faith of Christ, attended with repentance for sin, and in sincerity, and were brought as real expiatory sacrifices for sin, and especially as now abrogated by the sacrifice of Christ. And as these words are twice quoted by our Lord, at one time to justify his mercy, pity, and compassion, to the souls of poor sinners, by conversing with them, (~~4193~~ Matthew 9:13); and at another time to justify the disciples in an act of mercy to their bodies when hungry, by plucking ears of corn on the sabbath day, (~~4017~~ Matthew 12:7); “mercy” may here respect both acts of mercy shown by the Lord, and acts of mercy done by men; both which the Lord wills, desires, and delights in: he takes pleasure in showing mercy himself,



as appears by his free and open declarations of it; by the throne of grace and mercy he has set up; by the encouragement he gives to souls to hope in his mercy; by the objects of it, the chief of sinners; by the various ways he has taken to display it, in election, in the covenant of grace, in the mission of Christ, in the pardon of sin by him, and in regeneration; and by his opposing it to everything else, in the affair of salvation. And he likewise has a very great regard to mercy as exercised by men; as this is one of the weightier matters of the law, and may be put for the whole of it, or however the second table of it, which is love to our neighbours, and takes in all kind offices done to them; and especially designs acts of liberality to necessitous persons; which are sacrifices God is well pleased with, even more than with the ceremonious ones; these being such in which men resemble him the merciful God, who is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil;

*and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings*; which were reckoned the greatest and most excellent sacrifices, the whole being the Lord's; but knowledge of God is preferred to them; by which is meant, not the knowledge of God, the light of nature, which men might have, and not him; nor by the law of Moses, as a lawgiver, judge, and consuming fire; but a knowledge of him in Christ, as the God and Father of Christ, as the God of all grace, gracious and merciful in him; as a covenant God and Father in him, which is through the Gospel by the Spirit, and is eternal life, (<sup><BIB></sup>John 17:3); this includes in it faith and hope in God, love to him, fear of him and his goodness, and the whole worship of him, both internal and external. These words seem designed to expose and remove the false ground of trust and confidence in sacrifices the people of Israel were prone unto; as we find they were in the times of Isaiah, who was contemporary with Hoses; (see <sup><BIB></sup>Isaiah 1:12-15). The Targum interprets them of those that exercise mercy, and do the law of the Lord.

**Ver. 7.** *But they, like men, have transgressed the covenant*, etc.] The false prophets, as Aben Ezra, whom he threatened to cut off and slay, (<sup><BIB></sup>Hosea 6:5); or rather Ephraim and Judah, whose goodness was so fickle and unstable; and who, instead of doing acts of mercy, and seeking after the true knowledge of God and his worship, which are preferable to all sacrifices, they transgressed the law of God, which they promised at Mount Sinai to obey; the precepts of the moral law, even of both tables, which concern both God and man; and also the ceremonial law, by appointing priests to sacrifice who were not of the tribe of Levi, as did Ephraim or the

ten tribes under Jeroboam; and by offering sacrifices to their calves, and by not observing the solemn feasts; and the precepts relating to both these laws constitute the covenant made with the children of Israel at Sinai, (<sup>(124B)</sup>Exodus 24:3-8); which they transgressed, either “like Adam”,<sup>f118</sup> the first man, as Jarchi; who transgressed the covenant of works in paradise God made with him, and all mankind in him: or like the men of old, the former generations, as the Targum; meaning either the old inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites; or the men of the old world at the time of the flood, who were a very wicked and abandoned generation of men; or like men in common, depraved and degenerated, fickle and inconstant, vain and deceitful, and not at all to be depended upon; especially like the lower sort of men, the common people, who have no regard to their word, covenant, and agreement; or particularly like such men that are given to penury, and make no conscience of oaths and covenants ever so solemnly made: or, as others read the words, “but they have transgressed the covenant like man’s”<sup>f119</sup>; making no more account of it than if it was a man’s covenant;

*there have they dealt treacherously against me*; in the covenant they entered into, by breaking it, not performing their promises; and even in the very sacrifices they offered, and were so fond of, and put their confidence in; either by offering such sacrifices as were not legal, or by offering them to idols, under a pretence of offering them to God, which was dealing treacherously against him; and in all other acts of religion, in which they would be thought to have regard to the covenant of God, his laws and precepts, and to be very serious and devout, yet acted the hypocritical part, were false and deceitful, and devoid of all sincerity: or there, in the promised land, where the Lord had so largely bestowed his favours on them; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, agreeably to the Targum, which paraphrases it thus,

“and in the good land, which I gave unto them to do my will, they have dealt falsely with my word.”

**Ver. 8.** *Gilead [is] a city of them that work iniquity*, etc.] The chief city in the land of Gilead, which lay beyond Jordan, inhabited by Gad and Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh; and so belonged to the ten tribes, whose sins are here particularly observed. It had its name from the country, or the country from that, or both from the mountain of the same name. It is thought to be Ramothgilead, a city of refuge, and put for all the cities of refuge in those parts, which were inhabited by priests and Levites; and who

ought to have had knowledge of the laws, and instructed the people in them, and observed them themselves, and set a good example to others; but, instead of this, the whole course of their lives, was vicious; they made a trade of sinning, did nothing else but work iniquity; and this was general among them, the city or cities of them consisted of none else; and all manner of iniquity was committed by them, particularly idolatry; for so the words may be rendered, “a city of them that serve an idol”<sup>f120</sup>; not only at Daniel and Bethel, but in the cities of the priests, idols were set up and worshipped; this shows the state to be very corrupt:

*[and is] polluted with blood;* with the blood of murderers harboured there, who ought not to have been admitted; or with the blood of such who were delivered up to the avenger of blood, that ought to have been sheltered, and both for the sake of money; or with the blood of children, sacrificed to Moloch: the word used has the signification of supplanting, lying in wait, and so is understood of a private, secret, shedding of blood, in a deceitful and insidious way: hence some render it, “cunning for blood”<sup>f121</sup>; to which the Targum seems to agree, calling it a city

“of them that secretly or deceitfully shed innocent blood.”

It has also the signification of the heel of a man’s foot, and is by some rendered, “trodden by blood”<sup>f122</sup>; that is, by bloody men: or “footed” or “heeled by blood”<sup>f123</sup>; that is, such an abundance of it was shed, that a man could not set his foot or his heel any where but in blood.

**Ver. 9.** *And as troops of robbers wait for a man,* etc.] As a gang of highwaymen or footpads lie in wait in a ditch, or under a hedge, or in a cave of a rock or mountain, for a man they know will come by that way, who is full of money, in order to rob him; or, as Saadiah interprets it, as fishermen stand upon the banks of a river, and cast in their hooks to draw out the fish; and to the same purpose is Jarchi’s note from R. Meir:

*[so] the company of priests murder in the way by consent;* not only encourage murderers, and commit murders within the city, but go out in a body together upon the highway, and there commit murders and robberies, and divide the spoil among them; all which they did unanimously, and were well agreed, being brethren in iniquity, as well as in office: or, “in the way of Shechem”<sup>f124</sup>; as good people passed by Gilead to Shechem, and so to Jerusalem, to worship there at the solemn feasts, they lay in wait for them, and murdered them; because they did not give into the idolatrous worship

of the calves at Daniel and Bethel: or, “in the manner of Shechem”<sup>f125</sup>; that is, they murdered men in a deceitful treacherous manner, as the Shechemites were murdered by Simeon and Levi: Joseph Kimchi interprets this of the princes and great men, so the word “cohanim” is sometimes used; but the context seems to carry it to the priests:

*for they commit lewdness*; or “enormity”; the most enormous crimes, and that purposely, with deliberation devising and contriving them.

**Ver. 10.** *I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel*, etc.] Idolatry, the calves set up at Daniel and Bethel, which God saw with abhorrence and detestation; or the prophet saw it, and it made his hair stand on end as it were, as the word<sup>f126</sup> signifies, that such wickedness should be committed by a professing people:

*there [is] the whoredom of Ephraim*; in the house of Israel is the whoredom of Jeroboam, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, and caused Israel to sin, to go a whoring after idols; or the whoredom of the tribe of Ephraim, which belonged to the house of Israel, and even of all the ten tribes; both corporeal and spiritual whoredom, or idolatry, are here meant:

*Israel is defiled*; with whoredom of both kinds; it had spread itself all over the ten tribes; they were all infected with it, and polluted by it; (see ~~288~~Hosea 5:3).

**Ver. 11.** *Also, O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee*, etc.] That is, God hath set and appointed a time of wrath and vengeance for thee, which is sometimes signified by a harvest, (~~645~~Revelation 14:15); because thou hast been guilty of idolatry also, as well as Ephraim or the ten tribes: or rather it may be rendered, “but, O Judah”<sup>f127</sup>, he, that is, God, hath set an harvest for thee; appointed a time of joy and gladness, as a time of harvest is:

*when I returned*, or “return”<sup>f128</sup>,

*the captivity of my people*; the people of Judah from the Babylonish captivity; so that here is a prophecy both of their captivity, and of their return from it: and it may be applied unto their return from their spiritual captivity to sin, Satan, and the law, through the Gospel of Christ and his apostles, first published in Judea, by means of which there was a large harvest of souls gathered in, and was an occasion of great joy.