

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 8

This chapter treats of the sins and punishment of Israel for them, as the preceding; it is threatened and proclaimed that an enemy should come swiftly against them, because of their transgression of the covenant and law of God, (~~280E~~Hosea 8:1); their hypocrisy is exposed, (~~280D~~Hosea 8:2); they are charged with the rejection of that which is good, and therefore should be pursued by the enemy, (~~280B~~Hosea 8:3); with setting up kings and princes without consulting the Lord, (~~280A~~Hosea 8:4); and with making of idols, particularly the golden calves, which would be of no use to them, disappoint them, and at last be broke to pieces, (~~280F~~Hosea 8:4-6); their seeking to their neighbours for help, and entering into alliances with them, are represented as vain and fruitless, and issuing in their ruin and destruction, (~~280G~~Hosea 8:7-10); their sins of multiplying altars, contrary to the law of God, and in contempt of it, and offering sacrifices to the Lord, are observed; and they with a visitation from him, (~~280I~~Hosea 8:11-13); and the chapter is concluded with some notice and Judah, the one building temples, and multiplying fenced cities, which should be by fire, (~~280H~~Hosea 8:14).

Ver. 1. [*Set the trumpet to thy mouth*, etc.] Or, “the trumpet to the roof of thy mouth”^{f142}; a concise expression denoting haste, and the vehemence of the passions speaking; they are either the words of the Lord to the prophet, as the Targum,

“O prophet, cry with thy throat as with a trumpet, saying;”

Aben Ezra take them to be the words of the Lord the prophet, and the sense agrees with (~~280I~~Isaiah 58:1). The prophet is here considered as a watchman, and is called upon to blow his trumpet; either to call the people together, “as an eagle to the house of the Lord”^{f143}, as the next clause may be connected with this; that is, to come as swiftly to the house of the Lord, and hear what he had to say to them, and to supplicate the Lord for mercy in a time of distress: or to give the people notice of the approach of the enemy, and tell them that

[he shall come] as an eagle against the house of the Lord; “flying as an eagle over”^{f144} or “against the house of the Lord”: or they are the words of the Lord, or of the prophet, to the enemy, to blow his trumpet, and sound the alarm of war, and call his army together, and bid them fly like an eagle, with that swiftness and fierceness as that creature does to its prey, against the house of the Lord; meaning not the temple at Jerusalem, but the nation of Israel, formerly called the house and family of God, and still pretended to be so. There may be some allusion to Bethel, which signifies the house of God, where they practised their idolatry. This is to be understood, not of Nebuchadnezzar, sometimes compared to an eagle, (^{37B}Ezekiel 17:3); for not the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem is here meant; nor of the Romans, as Lyra seems to understand it, the eagle being the ensign of the Romans; but of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, compared to this creature for his swiftness in coming, his strength, fierceness, and cruelty; this creature being swift in flight, and a bird of prey. So the Targum interprets it of a king and his army,

“behold, as an eagle flieth, so shall a king with his army come up and encamp against the house of the sanctuary of the Lord.”

Some reference seems to be had to (^{158D}Deuteronomy 28:49);

because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law; the law that was given to Israel by Moses at the appointment of God, to which they assented, and promised to observe: and so it had the form of a covenant to them: the bounds of this law and covenant they transgressed, and dealt perfidiously with, and prevaricated in, and wilfully broke all its commands, by their idolatry, murder, adultery, theft, and other sins.

Ver. 2. *Israel shall cry unto me, my God, we know thee.*] In their distress they shall cry to the Lord to help them, and have mercy on them, as they used to do when in trouble, (³³⁶Isaiah 26:16); when the eagle is come upon them, and just ready to devour them; when Samaria is besieged with file Assyrian army, their king taken prisoner, and they just ready to fall into the hands of the enemy, then they shall cry to God, though in a hypocritical manner; own him to be the true God, and claim their interest in him, and pretend knowledge of him, and acquaintance with him; though they have not served and worshipped him, but idols, and that for hundreds of years; like others who profess to know God, but in works deny him, (⁵⁰¹⁶Titus 1:16). Israel is the last word in the verse, and occasions different versions:

“they shall cry unto me”; these transgressors of the covenant and the law, these hypocrites, shall pray to God in trouble, saying, “my God, we Israel”, or Israelites, “know thee”; or, “we know thee who are Israel”^{f145}; and to this sense is the Targum,

“in every time that distress comes upon them, they pray before me, and say, now we know that we have no God besides thee; redeem us, for we are thy people Israel;”

why may they not be rendered thus, “they shall cry unto me; my God, we know thee, Israel” shall say? Castalio renders them to this sense, “my God”, say they; but “we know thee, Israel”; we, the three Persons in the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit, we know thy hypocrisy and wickedness, that it is only outwardly and hypocritically, and not sincerely, that thou criest unto and callest upon God.

Ver. 3. *Israel hath cast off [the thing that is] good*, etc.] Or “rejected [him that is] good”^{f146}; that is, God, as Kimchi observes; for there is none good but him, (⁴³⁹⁷Matthew 19:17); he is the “summum bonum”, “the chiefest good” to men, and is essentially, originally, and infinitely good in himself, and the fountain of all goodness to his creatures; and yet Israel has rejected him with detestation and contempt, as the word^{f147} signifies, though they pretended to know him, which shows their hypocrisy; and therefore it is no wonder that their prayers were rejected by him: or they rejected the good word of God, the law, or doctrine contained in it, and the good worship, service, and fear of God, and indeed everything that was good, just, and right. Cocceius renders it, “the good One”, or he that is God, the good God, “hath cast off Israel”. This reading of the words Drusius also mentions, and seems to like best, and as agreeing with what follows; so Rivet; but the position of the words in the Hebrew text, and the accents, do not favour it;

the enemy shall pursue him; who is before compared to an eagle, which flies swiftly, and pursues its prey with eagerness and fierceness: Shalmaneser is meant, who should invade the land, come up to Samaria, besiege and take it; nothing should stop him, nor should Israel escape from him, since they had cast off the Lord, and everything that was good. The Targum is,

“the house of Israel have erred from my worship, for the sake of which I brought good things upon them; henceforward the enemy shall pursue them.”

Ver. 4. *They have set up kings, but not by me*, etc.] Not by his authority, order, and command; not by asking advice of him, or his leave, but of themselves, and of their own, accord: this refers to the case of Jeroboam their first king, after their separation from the house of David, and from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; for though his becoming king of Israel was according to the secret will of God, and by his overruling providence; yet it was done without his express orders, and without asking counsel of him, or his consent, and of their own heads; and many of his successors were conspirators, and set up themselves with the consent of the people, to the dethroning of others, and upon the slaughter of them, as Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea: the people of Israel had no right to choose a king for themselves; the right was alone in the Lord; it was he that chose, appointed, and constituted their kings, (^{<6175>}Deuteronomy 17:15); thus Saul, David, and Solomon, were chose and appointed by him, (^{<0902>}1 Samuel 10:24 ^{<1012>}2 Samuel 5:2 ^{<1385>}1 Chronicles 28:5); it was not the person of Jeroboam chosen God disliked; but their taking it upon them to choose and set him up without his leave;

they have made princes, and knew [it] not; that is, they set up subordinate governors, judges, civil magistrates, elders of the people, over them, without his approbation, and such as were very disagreeable to him; otherwise he knew what was done by them, as being the omniscient God, but he did not approve of what they did. Some observe, that Ç, in the word used, is put for S, and should be rendered, “they have removed”, so Jarchi and Japhet; that is, they have set up kings, and they have removed them; they have took it upon them to make and pose kings at pleasure, without seeking the Lord about it, when this is his prerogative, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, (^{<2021>}Daniel 2:21); which sense makes a strong and beautiful antithesis;

of their silver and their gold have they made their idols; some of their idols were made of silver, others of gold; particularly the calves at Daniel and Bethel, which are called the golden calves, because made of gold; as was the calf in the wilderness, (^{<1123>}1 Kings 12:28); (see ^{<346>}Isaiah 46:6 ^{<318>}Hosea 2:8);

that they may be cut off: which denotes not the end, intentions, and design of making these idols of silver and gold, but the event thereof; namely, either the destruction of the idols themselves, which, for the sake of the silver and gold they were made of; were cut in pieces by a foreign enemy; or the gold and silver were cut off from the people, their riches and wealth were wasted by such means; or rather the people were cut off, everyone of them, because of their worship of them, or this would be the case.

Ver. 5. *Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast [thee] off*, etc.] Or, is the cause of thy being cast off by the Lord, and of being cast out of thine own land, and carried captive into another; the past tense is used for the future, as is common in prophetic writings, to denote the certainty of the thing: or “thy calf hath left thee”^{f148}; in the lurch; it cannot help thee; it is gone off, and forsaken thee; it has “removed” itself from thee, according to the sense of the word in (²³⁰⁷Lamentations 3:17); as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe; or is removed far from thee, being carried captive itself into Assyria; for, when the king of Assyria took Samaria, he seized on the golden calf for the sake of the gold, and took it away; (see ²³⁰⁵Hosea 10:5,6 ^{2301B}Isaiah 10:11); or “he hath removed thy calf”^{f149}; that is, the enemy, taking it away when he took the city; or God has rejected it with the utmost contempt and abhorrence: the calf is here, and in the following verse, called the calf of Samaria, because this was the metropolis of the ten tribes, in which the calf was worshipped, and because it was worshipped by the Samaritans; and it may be, when Samaria became the chief city, the calf at Bethel might be removed thither, or another set up in that city:

mine anger is kindled against them: the calves at Daniel and Bethel, the singular before being put for the plural; or against the if of Samaria, and Samaria itself; or the inhabitants of it, because of the worship of the calf, which was highly provoking to God, it being a robbing him of his glory, and giving it to graven images:

how long [will it be] ere they attain to innocency? or “purity”^{f150}; of worship, life, and conversation: the words may be rendered thus, “how long?”^{f151} for there is a large stop there; and this may be a question of the prophet’s, asking how long the wrath of God would burn against the people, what; would be the duration of it, and when it would end? to which an answer is returned, as the words may be translated, “they cannot bear purity”^{f152}; of doctrine, of worship of heart, and life; when they can, mine anger will cease burning: or, as the Targum,

“as long as they cannot purify themselves,”

or be purified; so long as they continue in their sins, in their superstition and idolatry, and other impieties, and are not purged from them.

Ver. 6. *For from Israel [was] it also*, etc.] That is, the calf was from Israel; it was an invention of theirs, as some say; they did not borrow it from their neighbours, as they did other idols, but it was their own contrivance: but this tines not seem to be fact; for the calf, the making of it indeed, was of themselves, but the worship of it they borrowed from the Egyptians; with this difference, the Egyptians worshipped a living cow or ox, these the golden image of a calf: but rather the sense is, that this calf was made by the advice of Israel, by the advice of Jeroboam their king, and of their princes, they assenting to it, so Aben Ezra; or the gold and silver of which it was made was exacted on them, and collected from them, as the Targum and Jarchi; or workmen were employed by them to make it; and so it was of them also, as any other work that was done by their advice and direction, and at their expense; and therefore could never have any divinity in it, any more than other things they did; though this is commonly interpreted as having respect to the making of the golden calf by Aaron, that this also was of Israel as well as that:

the workman made it; therefore it [is] not God; a strong and invincible reason this; for, since the call was the work of an artificer, of the goldsmith or founder, it could not be God; there could not be deity in it; for a creature cannot make a God, or give that which itself has not; if the workman was not God, but a creature, if deity was not in him, he could never give it to a golden image, a lifeless statue fashioned by him: this, one would think, should have been a clear, plain, striking, and convincing argument to them, that their calf was, as the Targum has it,

“a deity in which there was no profit:”

but the calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces; or “for^{f153} the calf of Samaria”, etc. being another reason to prove it could not be God; if the former would not convince them, this surely would, when they should see it broke to pieces by the enemy, from whom it could not save itself; and therefore could not be a god that could be of any service to them, or save them. The Vulgate Latin version renders it, “for the calf of Samaria shall become spiders webs”: and Jerom says he learned it of a Jew that the word so signifies; but his Jew imposed upon him: it, does not appear to be any

where so used, either in the Bible, or in any other writings. Kimchi interprets it shivers, fragments, broken pieces of anything. Jarchi says it signifies, in the Syriac language, beams, planks, and boards, pieces of them; so the Targum and Ben Melech from the Rabbins; or rather the dust which falls from them in sawing, sawdust; to dust as small as that should this calf be reduced, as the golden calf was ground to powder by Moses, to which, it is thought, there is an allusion.

Ver. 7. *For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind,* etc.] The sense is, the Israelites took a great deal of pains in the idolatrous worship of the calves, and made a great stir, bustle, and noise in it, like the wind; were very vainglorious and ostentatious, made a great show of religion and devotion, and promised themselves great things from it, peace and plenty, wealth and riches, all prosperity and happiness, enjoyed by Heathen nations; but this was lost labour, it was labouring for the wind, or sowing that; they got nothing by it, or what was worse than nothing; it proved not only useless, but hurtful, to them; for, for their idolatry, and continuance in it, the whirlwind of God's wrath would be raised up against them, and the Assyrian army, like a vehement storm of wind, would rush in upon them, and destroy them; so they that sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, (~~808~~ Galatians 6:8);

it hath no stalk; what they sowed did not rise up above ground; or, if it did, it did not spring up in a blade or stalk, which was promising of fruit; no real good, profit, and advantage, sprung from their idolatrous practices:

the bud shall yield no meal; yea, though it rise up into a stalk, and this stalk produced ears of corn, yet those so thin, that no meal or flour could be got out of them, and so of no worth and use:

and if so be it yield: any meal or flour:

the strangers shall swallow it up; the Israelites should not be the better for it; it should till come into the hands of foreigners, the Assyrian army. The meaning is, that if they did prosper and increase in riches, yet they should not long enjoy them themselves, but be pillaged and spoiled of them; as they were by the exactions of Pul, and by the depredations of Shalmaneser, kings of Assyria. So the Targum,

“if they got substance, the nations shall spoil them of it.”

Ver. 8. *Israel is swallowed up*, etc.] Not only their substance, but their persons also, the whole nation of them, their whole estate, civil and ecclesiastic: it notes the utter destruction of them by the Assyrians, so that nothing of them and theirs remained; just as anyone is swallowed up and devoured by a breast of prey; the present is put for the future, because of the certainty of it:

now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein [is] no pleasure; when Shalmaneser took Samaria, and with it swallowed up the whole kingdom of Israel, he carried captive the inhabitants of it, and placed them among the nations, in “Halah, Habor, by the river Gozan”, and in the cities of the Medes, (^{<12716>}2 Kings 17:6); where they lived poor, mean, and abject, and were treated with the utmost neglect and contempt; no more regarded than a broken useless vessel, or than a vessel of dishonour, that is made and used for the ease of nature, for which no more regard is had than for that service: thus idolaters, who dishonour God by their idolatries, shall, sooner or later, be brought to disgrace and dishonour themselves.

Ver. 9. *For they are gone up to Assyria*, etc.] Or, “though they should go up to Assyria”^{f154}; to the king of Assyria, to gain his friendship, and enter into alliance with him; as, when Pal king of Assyria came against them, Menahem king of Israel went forth to meet him, and gave him a thousand talents of silver to be his confederate, and strengthen his kingdom, (^{<12519>}2 Kings 15:19); yet this hindered not but that Israel was at length swallowed up by that people, and scattered by them among the nations; for this is not to be understood of their going captive into the land of Assyria, as the Targum interprets it:

a wild ass alone by himself; which may be applied either to the king of Assyria, and be considered as a description of him, to whom Israel went for help and friendship; who, though he took their present, and made them fair promises, yet was perfidious, unsociable, and inhuman, studied only his own advantage, and not their good: or to the Israelites that went to him, who were as sottish and stupid as the ass, and as headstrong and unruly as that, and, like it, lustful, and impetuous in their lusts; running to and fro for the satisfying of them, and taking no advice, nor suffering themselves to be controlled, and, being alone, became an easy prey to the Assyrian lion: or yet they should be as “a wild ass alone by itself”^{f155}; notwithstanding all the methods they took to obtain the friendship and alliance of the king of Assyria, yet they should be carried captive by him, and dwell in the

captivity like a wild ass in the wilderness; and so it is to be understood here, agreeably to (^{<3846>}Job 24:5 ^{<3424>}Jeremiah 2:24); otherwise, as Bochart^{f156} has proved from various writers, these creatures go in flocks:

Ephraim hath hired lovers; by giving presents to the kings of Assyria and Egypt, to be their allies and confederates, patrons and defenders, (^{<1259>}2 Kings 15:19 17:3,4); who are represented as their gallants, with whom Ephraim or the ten tribes committed adultery, departing from God their Husband, and liege Lord and King, and from his true worship; (see ^{<3106>}Ezekiel 16:26,28,33 23:4,5). R. Elias Levita^{f157} observes, that some interpret the words, “Ephraim made a covenant with lovers”.

Ver. 10. *Yea, though they have hired among the nations*, etc.] That is, lovers, as before; got into confederacies and alliances with the nations about them, thinking thereby to strengthen their hands, and secure themselves and their kingdom; particular regard may be had to the Egyptians, as distinct from the Assyrians, whom they privately engaged on their side to shake off the Assyrian yoke, or their obligation to send yearly presents to the Assyrian king:

now will I gather them; either the Assyrians against them, to invade their land, besiege their city, and take and carry them captive; or the Israelites in a body into the city of Samaria, and there be cooped up, and taken and destroyed, or carried captive; for this is not to be interpreted of the collection of them out of their captivity, as the Targum and Jarchi, but of the gathering of them together for their destruction:

and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes; the tax or tribute imposed upon them by the king of Assyria, whose princes were altogether kings, (^{<2308>}Isaiah 10:8); and who used to be called king of kings, being at the head of a monarchy, which had many kings subject to it; as the kings of Babylon were afterwards called, (^{<2630>}Ezekiel 26:7); this may refer to the yearly present or tribute, which Hoshea king of Israel was obliged to give to the king of Assyria, which he was very uneasy at, and did not pay it, which drew upon him the resentment of the Assyrian king; and that sorrow and uneasiness which that tribute gave the king of Israel and his people were but little and small in comparison of what they after found; it was the beginning of sorrows to them: and so some render the words, “they began”^{f158}; that is, to sorrow and complain “a little”; or this may refer to their burdens and oppressions when in captivity, which were laid upon them by the king of Assyria, and the princes, the rulers, and governors of

the several places where the Israelites were carried captive: even the “few [that] shall remain”^{f159}, as some render it; and not die by famine, pestilence, and sword. Kimchi and Ben Melech think there is a deficiency of the copulative and between king and princes; which is supplied by the Targum, and by the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, which read, “the king and princes”.

Ver. 11. *Because Ephraim hath, made many altars to sin*, etc.] Not with an intention to commit sin, but to offer sacrifice for sin, and make atonement for it, as they thought; but these altars being erected for the sake of idols, and sacrifices offered on them to them, they sinned in so doing, and were the cause of sin in others, who were drawn into it by their example; as they were made to sin, or drawn into it, by Jeroboam their king. These altars were those set up at Daniel and Bethel, and in all high places, and tops of mountains, where they sacrificed to idols; and which was contrary to the express command of God, who required sacrifice only at one place, and on one altar, (^{f155}Deuteronomy 12:5,6); typical of the one altar Christ, and his alone sacrifice, who is the only Mediator between God and man; and they are guilty of the same crime as Ephraim here, who make use of more, or neglect him;

altars shall be unto him for sin; either these same altars, and the sacrifices offered on them, shall be reckoned and imputed to him as sins, and shall be the cause of his condemnation and punishment: or, “let the altars be unto him for sin”, so some^{f160}; since he will have them, let him have them, and go on in sinning, till he has filled up the measure of his sins, and brought on him just condemnation; or else other altars are meant, even in the land of Assyria, where, since they were so fond of multiplying altars, they should have altars enough to sin at, whereby their sins would be increased, and their punishment for them aggravated. The Targum is,

“seeing the house of Ephraim hath multiplied altars to sin, the altars of their idols shall he to them for a stumbling block,”

or ruin; so sin is taken in a different sense, both for guilt, and the punishment of it.

Ver. 12. *I have written to him the great things of my law*, etc.] Which was given by Moses to Israel at the appointment of God, in which were many commands, holy, just, and true; a multiplicity of them, as the Targum, relating to the honour of God, and the good of men; many excellent and

useful ones of a moral nature, and others of a ceremonial kind; and particularly concerning sacrifices, showing what they should be, the nature and use of them, and where and on what altar they should be offered; and which pointed at the great sacrifice of the Messiah, who is both altar, sacrifice, and priest: and these things were frequently inculcated by the prophets, who from time to time were sent unto them; so that the Lord was continually writing these things to them by them, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech interpret it; hence they could not plead ignorance, and excuse themselves on that account. The law sometimes not only designs the law of the decalogue, and the ceremonial law, respecting sacrifices, etc. but all the books of Moses, in which are written many great and excellent things concerning Christ, his person, offices, and grace; yea, all the books of the prophets, the whole of Scripture, which is by inspiration of God, and is the writing and word of God, and not men; and of which holy men of God were the “amanuenses”; and in which many valuable and precious things are recorded, even all the works of God, of creation, providence, and grace; yea, the various thoughts, counsels, and purposes of his heart, relating to the salvation of men, are transcribed here; and the manifold grace of God, or each of the doctrines of grace, are contained herein, especially in the doctrinal and evangelical part of it, which is sometimes called the law of the Lord, even of Christ; and the law or doctrine of faith; (see ^{}Psalm 119:18 ^{}Isaiah 2:3 43:4 ^{}Romans 3:27); here are delivered and held forth the great doctrines of a trinity of Persons in the Godhead; of the everlasting love of God to his people, and of their choice in Christ before the world began; of the covenant of grace; of the incarnation of Christ; of redemption by him; of peace, pardon, righteousness, and atonement, through him; of eternal salvation by him; these things are written, and to be read and referred unto, and observed as the rule of faith and practice, and not unwritten traditions, pretended revelations, reveries, and dreams of men; and written they were, not for the use of the Israelites only under the former dispensation, but for the learning and instruction of us Gentiles also, (^{}Romans 3:2 9:4 15:4);

[but] they were counted as a strange thing; the laws respecting sacrifices more especially, and the place where they were to be offered, which are the things mentioned in the context, had been so long disregarded and disused by Ephraim or the ten tribes, that when they were put in mind of them by the prophets, they looked upon them as things they had no concern with; as laws that belonged to another people, and not to them: and so the great

things of divine revelation, the great doctrines of the Gospel, are treated by many as things they have nothing to do with, not at all interesting to them; yea, as nauseous and despicable things, deserving their scorn and contempt, very ungrateful and disagreeable, and in this sense strange, as Job's breath was to his wife (~~<8897>~~ Job 19:17); and also as foreign to reason and good sense, and what cannot be reconciled thereunto: so the Athenians charged the doctrines of the Apostle Paul as strange, irrational, and unaccountable, (~~<4473>~~ Acts 17:20).

Ver. 13. *They sacrifice flesh [for] the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat [it]*, etc.] Or, "as to the sacrifices mine offerings" or "gifts, they sacrifice flesh, and eat it"^{f161}; these sacrifices, which, according to the law, should given to God when they offered them, they did not give them to him, they took them to themselves, and ate them; they were carnal offerings, and offered with a carnal mind, without faith and piety, without any regard to the glory of God, but merely for the sake of caring: the Targum interprets it of sacrifices got by rapine, which God hates, (~~<2308>~~ Isaiah 61:8);

[but] the Lord accepteth them not; neither the sacrifices, nor the sacrificers, but despised and abhorred them; no sacrifice was acceptable to God but what was offered according to law, and where he directed, and in the faith of Christ, and through him:

now will he remember their iniquities, and visit their sins; he will not pardon them, but punish for them; so far were their sacrifices making atonement for them, as they expected, they added to the measure of their iniquities:

they shall return into Egypt; either flee thither for refuge, many of them it seems did, when the king of Assyria entered their land, and besieged Samaria; where they lived miserably, as in exile, and were there buried, and never returned to their own land any more; (see ~~<3008>~~ Hosea 9:3,6 ~~<5238>~~ Deuteronomy 28:68); or they should be carried captive into Assyria, where they should be in a like state of bondage as their fathers were in Egypt. Some render it, "they return into Egypt"^{f162}; and consider it not as their punishment, but as their sin; that when the Lord was about to visit them for their transgressions, they being made tributary to the Assyrians, instead of returning to the Lord, and humbling themselves before him, they sent to the king of Egypt for help, (~~<2704>~~ 2 Kings 17:4).

Ver. 14. *For Israel hath forgotten his Maker*, etc.] The Creator and Preserver of everyone of them, and who had raised them up to a state and kingdom, and had made them great and rich, and populous, and bestowed many favours and blessings on them; and yet they forgot him, to give him glory, and to serve and worship him:

and buildeth temples; to idols, as the Targum adds; to the calves at Daniel and Bethel, at which places, as there were altars set up, and priests appointed, so temples and houses of high places built to worship in; (see ~~1128~~ 1 Kings 12:31,32 ~~3171~~ Amos 7:10, 13);

and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities; to protect them from their enemies, which was not unlawful; but that they should put their trust and confidence in them, and not in the Lord their God, which was their sin; when they saw the ten tribes carried captive by the Assyrians, they betook themselves to such methods for their security, but were not careful to avoid those sins which brought ruin upon Israel:

but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof; that is, an enemy, that should set fire to their cities, particularly Jerusalem their chief city, and burn the temple of the Lord, the palaces of their king and nobles, and all the fine houses of the great men; which was done many years after this prophecy, by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, (~~2523~~ Jeremiah 52:13).