

CHAPTER 10

INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 10

This chapter is of the same argument with the former, and others before that; setting forth the sins of the ten tribes, and threatening them with the judgments of God for them; and exhorting them to repentance, and works of righteousness. They are charged with unfruitfulness and ingratitude; increasing in idolatry, as they increased in temporal good things, (^{<2801>}Hosea 10:1); with a divided heart, and with irreverence of God, and their king; and with false swearing, covenant breaking, and injustice, (^{<2802>}Hosea 10:2-4); and are threatened with a removal of their king, and with the destruction of their idols, and places of idolatry, which should cause fear in the common people, and mourning among the priests, (^{<2803>}Hosea 10:1,5-8). It is observed, that their sin had been of long continuance, though the Lord had been kind and good unto them, in chastising them in love, giving them good laws, sending his prophets to exhort them to repentance and reformation, but all in vain, (^{<2809>}Hosea 10:9-13); wherefore they are threatened with the spoiling of their fortresses, the destruction of the people, and the cutting off of their king, (^{<2804>}Hosea 10:14,15).

Ver. 1. *Israel [is] an empty vine*, etc.] The people of Israel are often compared to a vine, and such an one from whence fruit might be expected, being planted in a good soil, and well taken care of; (see ^{<2808>}Psalm 80:8 ^{<2801>}Isaiah 5:1-3 ^{<2402>}Jeremiah 2:21); but proved an “empty vine”, empty of fruit; not of temporal good things, for a multitude of such fruit it is afterwards said to have; but of spiritual fruit, of the fruit of grace, and of good works, being destitute of the Spirit of God, and his grace; and, having no spiritual moisture, was incapable of bringing forth good fruit: or, “an emptying vine”^{f185}; that casts its fruit before it is ripe; these people, what fruit they had, they made an ill use of it; even of their temporal good things; they emptied themselves of their wealth and riches, by sending presents, or paying tribute, to foreign princes for their alliance, friendship, and help; or by consuming it on their idols, and in their idolatrous worship. The Targum renders it,

“a spoiled vine^{f186};”

spoiled by their enemies, who robbed them of their wealth and riches, and trampled them under foot. The Septuagint version, and those that follow that, understand it in a sense quite the reverse, rendering it, “a flourishing vine”; putting forth branches, leaves, and fruit; and which the learned Pocock confirms from the use of the word in the Arabic language: but then it follows,

he bringeth forth fruit unto himself; all the good works done by them were not to the praise and glory of God, as fruits of righteousness are, which come by Jesus Christ; but were done to be seen of men, and to gain their applause and esteem, and so were for themselves; and all their temporal good things they abounded with were not made use of in the service of God, and for the promoting of his glory, and of true religion among them; but either consumed on their own lusts, or in the service of idols: or, “the fruit is like unto himself”^{f187}; as was the vine, so was its fruit: the vine was empty, and devoid of goodness, and so the fruit it produced. The Targum is,

“the fruit of their works was the cause of their being carried captive:”

according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars: as the Israelites increased in riches and wealth, their land bringing forth in great abundance, they erected the greater number of altars to their idols, and multiplied their sacrifices to them; this was the ill use they made of what fruit they did produce:

according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images; of richer metal, and more ornamented, and more of them, according to the plenty of good things, corn, and wine, and oil, their land produced; thus abusing the providential goodness of God to such vile purposes!

Ver. 2. *Their heart is divided*, etc.] Some say from Hoshea their king, who would have reformed them from their idolatry, and returned them to the true worship of God; but of that there is no proof; better from one another, their affections being alienated from each other, by their discords and animosities, their conspiracies against their kings, and the murders of them, and the civil wars among themselves; they also not being of one mind, but disagreeing in their sentiments about their idols; some being for one, and some for another: or rather from God himself, from the fear of him, from his worship and service; or from the law, as the Targum; or their hearts

were divided between God and their idols, as in Ahab's time between God and Baal; they pretended to worship God when they worshipped the calves, and so shared the service between them; or it may be rendered, "their heart flatters"^{f188} them; as if they had done that which was right and good, and were guilty of no evil, nor would any punishment be inflicted on them:

now shall they be found faulty; be convicted of their sin and folly, and appear guilty; when they shall be punished for their idolatry, and their idols not able to save them, as the destruction of them next mentioned will fully evince: or, "now shall they become desolate"^{f189} their land shall be desolate, and they carried captive:

he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images: that is, the king of Assyria shall do all this, or God by him: or, "behead their altars"^{f190}; take off the top of them, as the Targum; the horns of them, which might be made of gold, or other ornaments which were of value; and therefore became the plunder of the enemy; and who also would break in pieces their images, for the sake of the metal, gold or silver, of which they were made; as was usually done by conquerors, and to show their entire power over the conquered, that even their gods could not deliver them out of their hands.

Ver. 3. *For now they shall say, we have no king*, etc.] This they would say, either when they had one; but by their conduct and behaviour said they had none; because they had no regard unto him, no affection for him, and reverence of him; but everyone did what was right in his own eyes: or during the interregnum, between the murder of Pekah, which was in the twentieth year of Jotham, and the settlement of Hoshea, which was in the twelfth of Ahaz; (see ^{<DIS>}2 Kings 15:30 17:1); or when the land of Israel was invaded, and their king was shut up in prison, and Samaria besieged, so that it was as if they had no king; they had none to protect and defend them, to sally out at the head of them against the enemy, and fight their battles for them; or rather when the city was taken, the altars broke down, their images spoiled, and they and their king carried captive:

because we feared not the Lord: did not serve and worship him, but idols; and this sin, casting off the fear of the Lord, was the source and cause of all their troubles and sorrows; of the invasion of their land; of the besieging and taking their city, and having no king to rule over them, and protect them:

what then should a king do to us? if they had one, he could be of no service to them; for since they had offended God, the King of kings, and made him their enemy, what could an earthly king, a weak mortal man, do for them, or against him? it was now all over with them, and they could have no expectation of help and deliverance.

Ver. 4. *They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant,* etc.] Those are other crimes they were guilty of, for which the wrath of God could not be awarded from them by a king, if they had one, or by any other. They had used vain and idle words in their common talk and conversation; and lying and deceitful ones to one another in trade and commerce, in contracts and promises; and so had deceived and overreached one another: they had belched out many “oaths of vanity”^{f191}: or vain oaths and curses; their mouths had been full of cursing and bitterness; and they made covenants with God, and their king, and with other kings and princes, and with one another, and had not kept them; and now for these things God had a controversy with them:

thus judgment springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field; either the judgment of God, his wrath and vengeance for the above sins, rose up and spread itself in all their cities, towns, and villages; or rather the judgment and justice they pretended to execute, instead of being what it should have been, useful and beneficial to the people, like a wholesome herb, sprung up like hemlock, bitter and poisonous, and spread itself in all parts of the kingdom. Injustice is meant; (see ^{<inf>}Amos 6:12).

Ver. 5. *The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven,* etc.] Or, “the cow calves”^{f192}, as in the original; so called by way of derision, and to denote their weakness and inability to help their worshippers; and so Bethel, where one of these calves was, is here, as elsewhere, called Bethaven; that is, the house of iniquity, or of an idol, by way of contempt; and may take in Daniel also, where was the other calf, since both are mentioned; unless the plural is put for the singular: now the land of Israel being invaded by the enemy, the inhabitants of Samaria, which was the metropolis of the nation, the king, nobles, and common people that dwelt there, and were worshippers of the calves, were in pain lest they should be taken by the enemy; or because they were, these places falling into his hands before Samaria was besieged, or at least taken; and these calves being broken to pieces, which they had worshipped, and put

their trust in, they were afraid the ruin of themselves and children would be next, and was not very far off:

for the people thereof shall mourn over it; either the people of Samaria, the same with the inhabitants of it; or rather the people of Bethaven, where the idol was; but now was broke to pieces, or carried away; though it is generally interpreted of the people of the calf, the worshippers of it, who would mourn over it, or for the loss of it, being taken away from them, and disposed of as in (^{<3006>}Hosea 10:6). The Jews^{f193} have a tradition, that, in the twentieth year of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglathpileser king of Assyria came and took away the golden calf in Dan; and, in the twelfth year of Ahaz, another king of Assyria (Shalmaneser) came and took away the golden calf at Bethel:

and the priests thereof [that] rejoiced on it; the Chemarims, as in (^{<3004>}Zephaniah 1:4); or “black”,^{f194} ones, because of their meagre and sordid countenances, or black clothing: the same word the Jews use for Popish monks: here it designs the priests of Bethaven, or the calf, who before this time rejoiced on account of it, because of the sacrifices and presents of the people to it, and the good living they got in the service of it; but now would mourn, as well as the people, and more, because of being deprived of their livelihood. Some read the words without the supplement “that, the priests thereof rejoiced on it”; which some interpret according to a tradition of the Jews mentioned by Jerom, though by no other, as I can find; that the priests stole away the golden calves, and put brasen and glided ones in the place of them; so that when they were carried away the people mourned, taking them to be the true golden calves; but the priests made themselves merry with their subtle device, and rejoiced that their fraud was not detected; but rather the word here used, as Pocock and others have observed, is of that kind which has contrary senses, and signifies both to mourn and to rejoice; and here to mourn, as perhaps also in (^{<3022>}Job 3:22 ^{<3021>}Psalms 2:11); and so Ben Melech observes, that there are some of their interpreters who understand it here in the sense of mourning:

for the glory of it, because it is departed from it; either because of the glory of the calf, which was gone from it, the veneration it was had in, the worship which was given to it, and the gems and ornaments that were about it; or rather the glory of Bethaven, and also of Samaria, and indeed

of all Israel, which was carried captive from them; that is, the calf, which was their god, in which they gloried, and put their trust and confidence in.

Ver. 6. *It shall also be carried unto Assyria [for] a present to King Jareb,* etc.] Or, “he himself”^{f195}; not the people of Samaria, or of Bethaven, or of the calf, but the calf itself; which, being all of gold, was sent a present to the king of Assyria, here called Jareb; either Assyria, or the king of it; (see Gill on “^{<2853>}Hosea 5:13”); this was done either by the people of Israel themselves, to appease the king of Assyria; or rather by the Assyrian army, who reserved the plunder of this as a proper present to their king and conqueror, to whom not only nations, but the gods of nations, were subject:

Ephraim shall receive shame; for worshipping such an idol, when they shall see it broke to pieces, and the gold of it made a present to the Assyrian king, and that it could not save them, nor itself:

and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel; of giving in to such idolatry, contrary to the counsel, mind, and will of God; or of the counsel which they and Jeroboam took to set up the calves at Daniel and Bethel, and thereby to keep the people from going up to Jerusalem, (^{<1128>}1 Kings 12:28); as well as of their counsel and covenant with the king of Egypt against the king of Assyria, (^{<1204>}2 Kings 17:4).

Ver. 7. [*As for*] *Samaria,* etc.] The metropolis of the ten tribes of Israel, and here put for the whole kingdom:

her king is cut off; which some understand of Pekah, who was killed by Hoshea; others of several of their kings cut off one after another, very suddenly and quickly, as the metaphor after used shows; or rather Hoshea the last king is meant, who was cut off by the king of Assyria; the present tense is used for the future, to denote the certainty of it. Aben Ezra thinks the verb “cut off” is to be repeated, Samaria is “cut off, her king [is] cut off”; both king and kingdom destroyed. So the Targum,

“Samaria is cut off with her king:”

as the foam upon the water; as any light thing flowing upon it; as the bark of a tree, as Kimchi and Abarbinel; or as the scum upon a boiling pot of water, as Jarchi, and the Targum; or as foam, which is an assemblage of bubbles upon the water; such are kings and kingdoms, swell, look big and high for a while; but are mere bubbles, empty things; and are often

suddenly, quickly, and easily destroyed; so Samaria and her king were by the Assyrian army; the Lord of hosts, the King of kings, being against them.

Ver. 8. *The high places also of Aven*, etc.] Bethel, which is not only as before called Bethaven, the house of iniquity; but Aven, iniquity itself; the high places of it were the temple and altars built there for idolatrous service, which were usually set on hills and mountains:

the sin of Israel shall be destroyed; that is, which high places are the sin of Israel, the occasion of sin unto them; and where they committed sin, the sin of idolatry, in worshipping the calves; these should be thrown down, demolished, and no longer used:

the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; lying in ruins, these shall grow upon them, the people and priests being carried captive that used to sacrifice upon them; but now they shall lie deserted by them, being destroyed by the enemy:

and they shall say to the mountains, cover us; and to the hills, fall on us; not that the high places and altars shall say so in a figurative sense, according to R. Moses in Aben Ezra; but, as Japhet, they that worshipped there, the priests and people of Samaria, Bethaven, and even of all Israel, because of their great distress; and, as persons in the utmost consternation, and in despair, and confounded, and ashamed, shall call to the mountains and hills where they have been guilty of idolatry to hide and cover them from the wrath of God; (see ^{<230>}Luke 23:30) (^{<616>}Revelation 6:16).

Ver. 9. *O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah*, etc.] This has no respect, as the Targum, and others, to Gibeah of Saul, of which place he was, and the choosing him to be king; but to the affair of the Levite and his concubine at Gibeah in the days of the judges, and what followed upon it, (^{<790>}Judges 19:1-20:48); suggesting, that the sins of Israel were not new ones; they were the same with what were committed formerly, as early as the history referred to, and had been continued ever since; the measure of which were now filling up: or, as Aben Ezra and Abarbinel interpret it, “thou hast sinned more than the days of Gibeah”; were guilty of more idolatry, inhumanity, and impurity, than in those times; and yet the grossest of sins, particularly unnatural lusts, were then committed:

there they stood; either the men of Gibeah continued in their sins, and did not repent of them; and stood in their own defence against the tribes of

Israel, and the Benjamites stood also with them, and by them; and stood two battles, and were conquerors in them; and, though beaten in the third, were not wholly destroyed, as now the Israelites would be: or the tribes of Israel stood, and continued in, and connived at, the idolatry of the Levite; or rather stood sluggish and slothful, and were not eager to fight with the Benjamites, who took part with the men of Gibeah; which were their sins, for which they were worsted in the two first battles, and in which the present Israelites imitated them:

the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them; the two first battles against the men of Gibeah and the Benjamites, who are the children of iniquity, the one the actors, and the other the abettors and patrons of it, did not succeed against them, but the Israelites were overcome; and the third battle, in which they got the day, did not overtake them so as utterly to cut them off; for six hundred persons made their escape; but, in the present case prophesied of, it is suggested, that as their sins were as great or greater than theirs, their ruin should be entire and complete: or the sense is, that they were backward to go to battle; they were not eager upon it; they did not at once espouse the cause of the Levite; they did not stir in it till he had done that unheard of thing, cutting his concubine into twelve pieces, and sending them to the twelve tribes of Israel; and then they were not overly anxious, but sought the Lord, as if it was a doubtful case; which backwardness was resented in their ill success at first; and the same slow disposition to punish vice had continued with them ever since; so Schmidt.

Ver. 10. [*It is*] *in my desire that I should chastise them*, etc.] Or, “bind them”^{f196}, and carry them captive; and by so doing correct them for their sins they have so long continued in: this the Lord had in his heart to do, and was determined upon it, and would do it with pleasure, for the glorifying of his justice, since they had so long and so much abused his clemency and goodness:

and the people shall be gathered against them; the Assyrians, who, at the command of the Lord, would come and invade their land, besiege their city, and take it, and bind them, and carry them captive:

when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows; when, like heifers untamed, and bound in a yoke to plough, do not make and keep in one furrow, but turn out to the right or left, and make cross furrows; so it is intimated that this was the reason why the Lord would correct Israel, and

suffer the nations to gather together against them, and carry them captive, because they did not plough in one furrow, or keep in the true and pure worship of God; but made two furrows, worshipping partly God, and partly idols: or, “when they”, their enemies, “shall bind them”, being gathered against them, and carry them captive, they shall make them plough in “two furrows”, the one up, and the other down; and to this hard service they shall keep them continually. There is a double reading of this clause; the “Cetib”, or textual writing or reading, is, “to their two eyes”, or “fountains”: alluding, as Jarchi observes, to the binding of the yoke on oxen on each side of their eyes: or to the fountains in the land of Israel, the abundance of wine, milk, and honey; for the sake of which the people got together, broke in upon them, and bound them, in order to drink of. So Gussetius^{f197} renders the words, “and they shall bind them to drink of their fountains”. The “Keri” or marginal reading is, “their two iniquities”; which the Septuagint follows, rendering it,

“in chastising them, or when they are chastised for their two iniquities;”

so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; meaning either their worshipping the two calves at Daniel and Bethel; or their corporeal and spiritual adultery; or their forsaking the true God, and worshipping idols; (see ²⁴²³Jeremiah 2:13). Schmidt understands all this, not as a punishment threatened, but as an instance of the love of God to them, in chastising them in a loving and fatherly way; which had a good effect upon them, and brought them to repentance; partly in the times of the judges, but more especially in the days of Samuel, when they behaved well; and particularly in the reigns of David and Solomon; and when the people were gathered, not “against”, but “to” them; either became proselytes to them, or tributaries, or coveted their friendship; and when they themselves lived in great concord, in one kingdom, under one king, like oxen ploughing in two contiguous furrows.

Ver. 11. *And Ephraim [is as] an heifer [that is] taught, [and] loveth to tread out [the corn],* etc.] Like a heifer taught to bear the yoke, and to plough; but learned it not, as the Targum; does not like it; chooses to tread out the corn where it can feed upon it, its mouth not being then muzzled, according to the law; oxen or heifers were used both in ploughing and treading out corn, to which the allusion is. The sense is, that Ephraim or the ten tribes were taught to bear the yoke of the law, and yield obedience

to it, and perform good works; but did not like such a course of life; had no further regard for religion than as they found their own worldly profit and advantage in it: or they did not care to labour much in it; they liked the fruit and advantage arising from working, rather than the work itself; and thus, like a heifer, doing little, and living well, they grew fat, increased in power, wealth, and riches; and so became proud and haughty, and kicked against the house of David, and rent themselves from it; and set up a kingdom of their own, and lived and reigned according to their own will and pleasure, like a heifer without yoke and muzzle:

but I passed over upon her fair neck; or, “the goodness of her neck”^{f198}; which is expressive of the flourishing and opulent state and condition of the ten tribes, especially in the times of Jeroboam the second, which made them proud and haughty: but the Lord was determined to humble them, and first in a more light and gentle manner; or caused the rod of correction to pass over them more lightly; or put upon them a more easy yoke of affliction, by causing Pul king of Assyria to come against them; and to get rid of whom a present was given him, exacted of the people; and afterwards Tiglathpileser, another king of Assyria, who carried captive part of their land; and this not having its proper effect, the Lord was determined to proceed against them in a heavier manner:

I will make Ephraim to ride; some, taking the future for the past, render it, “I have made Ephraim to ride”^{f199}; that is, to rule and govern, having royal dignity and power given them, and that greater than that of Judah; and ride over the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who were sometimes very much afflicted by them; and this is thought to be the sense of the following phrases,

Judah shall plough, [and] Jacob shall break his clods; or, “break the clods for him”^{f200}; for Ephraim while he rides, and uses them very hard; as in the days of Joash and Pekah, kings of Israel, when many of the tribes of Judah were slain by them, (¹²⁴²2 Kings 14:12,13 ¹⁴³⁶2 Chronicles 28:6,8); but rather the meaning is, “I will cause to ride on Ephraim”^{f201}; that is, the Assyrians shall ride upon them, get the dominion over them, carry them captive, and use them to hard service and bondage, as a heifer rid upon by a severe rider while ploughing; and the other tribes shall not escape, though they shall not be so hardly dealt with: “Judah shall plough, and Jacob shall break his clods”; these shall be carried captive into Babylon, and employed in hard and servile work, but more tolerable; as ploughing and breaking

clods are easier than to ride upon; and as they had hope of deliverance at the end of seventy years; whereas no promise of return was made to the ten tribes, which is the sense some give; but Pocock and others think that these words regard the tender and gentle methods God took with these people to bring them to obedience to his law. Ephraim being teachable like a heifer, he took hold of her fair neck, and stroked it to encourage her, and accustom her to the hand, and to the yoke; and then put the yoke of his law upon them, add trained them up in his institutions, and used also gentle methods to keep them in obedience; and also set Judah to “plough”, and Jacob to “break the clods”, prescribed for them; and employed them in good works, in the duties of religion, from whence answerable fruit might have been expected; saying to them, by his prophets, as follows:

Ver. 12. *Saw to yourselves in righteousness*, etc.] Not the seed of grace, which bad men have not, and cannot see it; and which good men need not, it being sown in them already, and remaining; rather the seed of the word, which should be laid up in their hearts, dwell richly in them, and be kept and retained by them; though it is best of all to understand it of works of righteousness; as sowing to the flesh is doing the works of the flesh, or carnal and sinful acts; so sowing “unto righteousness”^{f202}, as it may be rendered, is doing works of righteousness; living soberly and righteously; doing works according to the word of righteousness, from good principles, and with good views, with a view to the glory of God: and which will be “sowing to themselves”, turn to their own account; for though such works are not profitable to God, as to merit anything at his hands; yet they are not only profitable to others, but to those that do them; for though not “for”, yet “in keeping” the commands of God there is “great reward”, (^{<D911>}Psalm 19:11). Reap in mercy; or “according to mercy”^{f203} not according to the merit of works, for there is none in them; but according to the mercy of God, to which all blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, are owing; and such who sow to the Spirit, or spiritual things, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting; not as the reward of debt, but of grace; not as of merit, but as owing to the mercy of Christ, (^{<R09>}Galatians 6:9) (^{<R12>}Jude 1:21);

break up your fallow ground; that is, of their hearts; which were like ground unopened, unbroken, not filled and manured, nor sown with seed, but overrun with weeds and thistles; and so were they, hard and impenitent, destitute of grace, and full of sin and wickedness, and stood in need of being renewed in the spirit of their minds; which this exhortation is designed to convince them of, and to stir them up to make use of proper

methods of obtaining it, through the efficacious grace of God; (see ^{<3015>}Jeremiah 4:5);

for [it is] time to seek the Lord: for his grace; as the husbandman seeks, prays, and waits for rain, when he has tilled his ground, and sowed his seed, to water it, and make it fruitful, that he may have a good reaping time, a plentiful harvest; and as there is a time to seek for the one, so for the other:

till he come and rain righteousness upon you; that is, Christ, whose coming is as the rain, (^{<2803>}Hosea 6:3 ^{<19716>}Psalm 72:6); and who, when he should come, whether personally by his incarnation, or spiritually by his gracious presence, would rain a plentiful rain of the doctrines of grace, and the blessings of it, such as peace pardon, righteousness, and eternal life by him; particularly the justifying righteousness wrought out by him, which is fully manifested in the Gospel, the ministration of that righteousness, and is applied unto, and put upon, all them that believe: or “till he come and teach you righteousness”^{f204}; as Christ did when come; he taught the word of righteousness in general, and the righteousness of God in particular, and directed men to seek it; declared he came to fulfil all righteousness, and taught men to believe in him for it, and that he is their righteousness, and the end of the law for it; as well as he taught them to live righteously and godly; (see ^{<3023>}Joel 2:23). The Targum is,

“O house of Israel, do for yourselves good works; walk in the way of truth; establish for yourselves the doctrine of the law; behold, at all times the prophets say to you, return to the fear of the Lord; now shall he be revealed, and bring righteousness to you.”

But these exhortations were vain and fruitless, as appears by what follows:

Ver. 13. *Ye have ploughed wickedness*, etc.] Contrived it, and took a great deal of pains to commit it; by ploughing sowed it, and which sprung up in a plentiful crop: it may denote their first sins, from whence all others arose; as their irreligion and infidelity; their apostasy from God; their idolatry and contempt of his word and prophets:

ye have reaped iniquity; abundance of other sins have sprung up from thence; a large harvest of them have been reaped and got in; or great numbers of other sins have been committed; one sin leads on to another, and these proceed “ad infinitum”; wickedness is of an increasing nature,

and grows worse and worse, and proceeds to more ungodliness: many understand this of the punishment or reward of sin:

ye have eaten the fruit of lies; as a sweet morsel though bread of deceit; which could not profit them, nor yield them in the issue the pleasure it promised them, and they hoped for from it:

because thou didst trust in thy way; in the worship of their idols, and in their alliances with neighbouring nations, and promised themselves great prosperity and happiness from hence:

and in the multitude of thy mighty men; their valiant soldiers, their numerous armies, and the generals of them, well skilled in war, and courageous; and also in their auxiliaries, which they had from the Egyptians and others; these they put their confidences in, to protect them; and so in their garrisons and fortresses, as the following words show:

Ver. 14. *Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people*, etc.] Because of their wickedness and vain confidence, the Assyrian army should invade them; which would cause a tumultuous noise to be made throughout the tribes in all cities and towns, a cry, a howling, and lamentation; especially among fearful and timorous ones as women and children; who would be thrown into a panic at hearing the news of a powerful foreign enemy entering their country, and laying waste all before them; a voice of clamour, as Jarchi observes, crying, flee, flee:

and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled; the strong holds, in which they put their confidence for safety; everyone of these should be taken and demolished by the enemy, in all parts of the kingdom; so that there should be none left to flee unto no place of retreat:

as Shalman spoiled Betharbel in the day of battle; that is, Shalmaneser king of Assyria, his name being abbreviated, as Bethaven is called Aven, (²³⁰⁸Hosea 10:8); who had lately, though there in no account of it elsewhere, spoiled this place, demolished its fortresses, and destroyed the inhabitants of it; which is thought to be either the city of Arbel beyond Jordan, in the Apocrypha:

“Who went forth by the way that leadeth to Galgala, and pitched their tents before Masaloth, which is in Arbela, and after they had won it, they slew much people.” (1 Maccabees 9:2)

which Josephus^{f205} calls a city of Galilee, and sometimes a village; and which, according to him, was not far from Sippore, and in lower Galilee near to which thieves and robbers dwelt in caves and dens, difficult to come at; and so a Jewish writer^{f206} places Arbel between Sippore and Tiberias; and elsewhere^{f207} mention is made of the valley of Arbel, near to these places: and Jerom^{f208} says, there was the village Arbel beyond Jordan, on the borders of Pella, a city of Palestine; and another of this name in the large plain, nine miles from the town of Legio: and he also speaks of an Arbela, the border of the tribe of Judah to the east; perhaps the same with Harbaalah, whence Arbela, or the mount of Baalah, (^(~~Gen~~)Joshua 15:11); now one or other of these places might be laid waste by this king of Assyria, in the first year of Hoshea, when he came up against him, and made him tributary: though some think Arbela in Assyria or Armenia is meant, famous for the utter defeat of Darius by Alexander, four hundred years after this, when it might have been rebuilt, and become considerable again: some of the Jewish writers^{f209} say there was a place near Nineveh so called; Benjamin of Tudela says^{f210}, from Nineveh to Arbel is one “parsa”, or four miles: and others^{f211} think Samaria itself is meant; but that cannot be, since the destruction of that city is here prophesied of, which should be as this: some conjecture it was the temple of a deity called Arbel, as Schmidt: but, be it what or where it will, here was a great devastation and slaughter made; which at this time was well known, and to which the desolation that would be made in the land of Israel is compared. The Vulgate Latin version is, “as Salmana was wasted by the house of him who judged Baal in the day of battle”; which patrons and defenders of interpret of the slaughter of Zalmunna by Jerubbaal, that is, Gideon; but the names of the one and the other are very different; nor does the text speak of the slaughter of a prince, but of the destruction of a city, and not of Shalman, but of Arbel; and refers not to an ancient, but recent history. Mr. Whiston^{f212} places the spoil of Arbela in the year 3272 A.M. or before Christ 732;

the mother was dashed in pieces with [her] children: women big with child, or having their children in their arms, had no mercy shown them, but were destroyed together; so it had been at Arbel, and would be again in Israel, which was dreadful to think of: according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, Arbel was the name of a great man in those days, whose family, meant by beth or a house, was thus cruelly destroyed.

Ver. 15. *So shall Bethel do unto you, because of your great wickedness,* etc.] Or, “because of the evil of your evil”^{f213}; their extreme wickedness, and exceeding sinfulness; the evil of evils they were guilty of was their idolatry, their worshipping the calf at Bethel; and this was the cause of all their ruin: God was the cause of it; the king of Assyria the instrument; but the procuring or meritorious cause was their abominable wickedness at Bethel; which therefore should be as Betharbel; yea, the whole land should be, on the account of that, like unto it, or be spoiled as that was. Or the words may be rendered, “so will he do unto you, O Bethel”^{f214}; that is, either God, or Shalman or Shalmaneser, shall do the same to Bethel as he did to Betharbel; utterly destroy it and its inhabitants, showing no mercy to age or sex;

in a morning shall the king of Israel be utterly cut off; meaning Hoshea the last king of Israel, and the kingdom entirely destroyed; so that afterwards there was no more king in Israel, nor has been to this day; there was not only an utter destruction of that king, but of all kingly power and government, and ever since the children of Israel have been without a king, (~~2KIN~~ Hosea 3:4); and this was to be done, and was done, in a “morning”: in the beginning of his reign, as Joseph Kimchi; but this seems not so well to agree with the history, since it was in the ninth year of his reign that Samaria was taken: but the sense is, either that it would be certainly done, as sure as the morning came; or suddenly and quickly, as the morning light breaks forth; or in the morning of prosperity, when they were expecting light and good days, from their alliance with the king of Egypt, against the king of Assyria.