

# CHAPTER 11

## INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 11

This chapter gives an account of the free and ancient love of God to Israel, and of the benefits and blessings of goodness he bestowed upon them; and of their ingratitude in not owning them, nor hearkening to his prophets, but sacrificing and burning incense to idols, (<sup>2810E</sup>Hosea 11:1-4); wherefore they are threatened with disappointment of relief from Egypt, with captivity into Assyria, and with the ravages of the sword in all places, being a people bent to backsliding, and incorrigible, (<sup>2810E</sup>Hosea 11:5-7); and yet, notwithstanding all this, the bowels of the Lord yearn after them, and promises of mercy are made to them; that they shall not utterly be destroyed, but a remnant shall be spared; which in the latter day shall be called and follow after the Lord, the King Messiah, and be returned from their captivity, and be resettled in their own land, and replaced in their own houses, (<sup>2810E</sup>Hosea 11:8-11); the chapter is concluded with an honourable character of Judah, (<sup>2811E</sup>Hosea 11:12).

**Ver. 1.** *When Israel [was] a child, then I loved him*, etc.] Or, “for Israel [was] a child”<sup>f215</sup>; a rebellious and disobedient one, therefore his king was cut off in a morning, and he has been, and will be, without a king many days; yet still “I loved him”: or, “though Israel [was] a child”<sup>f216</sup>; a weak, helpless, foolish, and imprudent one, “yet I loved him”: or, “when a child”; in the infancy of his civil and church state, when in Egypt, and in the wilderness; the Lord loved him, not only as his creature, as he does all the works of his hands, but with a more special love than he loved others; choosing them to be a special people above all others; giving them his law, his statutes, and his judgments, his word and his worship, which he did not give to other nations. So he loves spiritual and mystical Israel, all the elect of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, when children, as soon as born, and though born in sin, carnal and corrupt; yea, before they are born, and when having done neither good nor evil; and so may be expressive both of the earliness and antiquity of his love to them, and of the freeness of it, without any merits or motives of theirs;

*and called my son out of Egypt*, not literal Israel, as before, whom God called his son, and his firstborn, and demanded his dismissal from Pharaoh, and called him, and brought him out of Egypt with a mighty hand and outstretched arm; and which was a type of his calling spiritual Israel, his adopted sons, out of worse than Egyptian bondage and darkness: but his own natural and only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; for these words are expressly said to be fulfilled in him, (<sup><4125></sup>Matthew 2:15); not by way of allusion; or by accommodation of phrases; or as the type is fulfilled in the antitype; or as a proverbial expression, adapted to any deliverance; but literally: the first and only sense of the words respects Christ, who in his infancy was had to Egypt for shelter from Herod's rage and fury, and, when he was dead, and those that sought the life of Jesus, he was by an angel of the Lord, warning Joseph of it, called out of Egypt, and brought into Judea, (<sup><4129></sup>Matthew 2:19-23); and this as a proof of the love of God to Israel; which as it was expressed to him in his infancy, it continued and appeared in various instances, more or less unto the coming of Christ; who, though obliged for a while to go into Egypt, must not continue there, but must be called from thence, to be brought up in the land of Judea; to do his miracles, preach his doctrines, and do good to the bodies and souls of men there, being sent particularly to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and, above all, in order to work out the salvation and redemption of his special people among them, and of the whole Israel of God everywhere else; which is the greatest instance of love to them, and to the world of the Gentiles, that ever was known, (<sup><4136></sup>John 3:16) (<sup><4137></sup>1 John 2:2 4:9,10).

**Ver. 2.** [*As they called them, so they went from them*, etc.] That is, the prophets of the Lord, the true prophets, called Israel to the worship and service of God; but they turned a deaf ear to them, and their backs upon them; and the more they called to them, the further they went from them, and from the way of their duty; (see <sup><4107></sup>Hosea 11:7). So the Targum,

“I sent the prophets to teach them, but they wandered from them;”

Moses and Aaron were sent unto them, and called them out of Egypt, but they hearkened not unto them; (see <sup><4109></sup>Exodus 6:9,12); in later times the prophets were sent unto them, to exhort them to their duty, and to reclaim them from their evil ways, but they despised and refused to attend to their advice and instructions; and this was continued to the times of Israel, or the ten tribes, departing from the house of David, and setting up idolatrous worship; and during their revolt and apostasy: but all in vain. So after

Christ was called out of Egypt, he and his apostles, and John the Baptist before them, called them to hearken to him, but they turned away from them. Aben Ezra interprets it of the false prophets, who called them to idolatry, and they went after them. Schmidt understands it of the Israelites calling one another to it, and going after it, for their own sakes, and because it pleased them, and was agreeable to them;

*they sacrificed to Baalim, and burnt incense to graven images:* they joined themselves to Baalpeor, and worshipped the golden calf, fashioned with a graving tool, in the wilderness; they sacrificed to Baalim, one or another of them, in the times of the judges, and of Ahab, and committed idolatry with other graven images, of which burning incense is a part. And the Jews in Christ's time, instead of hearkening to him and his apostles, followed the traditions of the elders, and the dictates of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were their Baals, their lords and masters and they sought for life and righteousness by their own works, which was sacrificing to their net, and burning incense to their drag; all this was great ingratitude. Next follows a narrative of other benefits done to this people.

**Ver. 3.** *I taught Ephraim also to go,* etc.] All the tribes of Israel and Ephraim, or the ten tribes with the rest; these the Lord instructed in the way of his commandments, and taught them to walk therein; he his angel before them, to conduct them through the wilderness; yea, he himself went before them in the pillar of cloud by day, and in the pillar of fire by night, to which history this seems to refer. So the Targum,

“I, by an angel sent by me, led Israel in the right way.”

The allusion seems to be to a mother or nurse accommodating herself to her child, beginning to go; she stoops down, sets it on its feet, and one foot before another, forms its steps, teaches it how to go, and walks its pace with it. And in like manner the Lord deals with his spiritual Israel, his regenerated ones, who become like little children, and are used as such; as in regeneration they are quickened, and have some degree of spiritual strength given them, they are taught to go; they are taught what a Saviour Christ is, and their need of him; they are instructed to go to him by faith for everything they want, and to walk by faith on him, as they have received him; and having heard and learned of the Father, they go to Christ, (~~John~~ John 6:45); and are taught also to go to the throne of grace for all supplies of grace; and to the house of God, to attend the word and

ordinances, for the benefit of their souls; and to walk in the ways of the Lord, for his glory, and their good;

*taking them by their arms*; or “on his own arms”<sup>f217</sup>; bearing and carrying them in his arms, as a father his son; (see <sup><R03></sup>Deuteronomy 1:31 32:10-12) (<sup><0112></sup>Numbers 11:12); so the Lord deals with his spiritual Israel, either holding them by their arms while walking, as nurses their children, to help and ease them in walking, and that they may not stumble and fall; so the Lord holds up the goings of his people in his ways, that their footsteps slip not, and upholds them with the right hand of his righteousness: or taking them up in his own arms when weary, he carries them in his bosom; or, when they are failing or fallen, lays hold on them, and takes them up again; and so they are not utterly cast down, whether the fall is into sin, or into some calamity and affliction; when he puts underneath his everlasting arms, and bears them and keeps them from sinking, as well as from a final and total falling away. Abarbinel, and others after him, interpret this of Ephraim taking up and carrying in his arms Baalim, the graven images and golden calves; which is mentioned as an instance of ingratitude; but very wrongly;

*but they knew not that I healed them*; of the diseases of Egypt, or preserved them from them: this includes the whole of their salvation and deliverance from Egypt, and all the benefits and favours accompanying it, which they imputed to their idols, and not to the Lord; (see <sup><0135></sup>Exodus 15:26 32:4). “Healing”, in a spiritual sense, generally signifies the forgiveness of sin, which the Lord’s people may have, and not know it; and, through want of better light and knowledge, may also ascribe it to their repentance, humiliation, and tears, when it is alone owing to the grace of God, and blood of Christ.

**Ver. 4.** *I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love*, etc.] As Ephraim is compared to a heifer in the preceding chapter, here he is said to be drawn; but not with such cords and bands as cattle are, but with such as men are; in a rational and gentle way, in a kind, loving, tender, humane, friendly, and fatherly way and manner; so the Lord drew Israel on in the wilderness, till he was brought to Canaan’s land, by bestowing kind favours upon them, and by making precious promises to them. So the Lord deals with his spiritual Israel; he draws them out of the present state and circumstances, in which they are by nature, to himself, and to his Son, and to follow after him, and run in the ways of his commandments; and which he does not by force and compulsion against their wills, nor by mere moral

persuasion, but by the invincible power of his grace, sweetly working upon them, and attracting them; he does it by revealing Christ in them, in the glories of his person and in the riches of his grace, and by letting in his love into their hearts; and by kind invitations, precious promises, and divine teachings, attended with his powerful and efficacious grace; (see ~~2403~~ Jeremiah 31:3 ~~4054~~ John 6:44 ~~2004~~ Song of Solomon 1:4);

*and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws*; as one that is merciful to his beast; as a kind and humane husbandman, when his cattle have been hard at work, takes off their bridles or muzzles, or the yokes on them, fastened with a halter about their jaws, that they may have liberty to feed on food set before them, as the next clause shows. So the Targum,

“my word was to them as a good husbandman, who lightens the shoulder of oxen, and looses “the bridles” on their jaws.”

This may refer to Israel’s deliverance from their bondage in Egypt; and be spiritually applied to Christ, the essential Word of God, breaking and taking the yoke of sin, Satan, and the law from off his people, and bringing them into the liberty of the children of God. Schmidt reads and interprets the words quite otherwise, “and I was to them as they that lift up the yoke upon their jaws”; not remove it from them but put it on them; expressing their ignorance and ingratitude, who, when the Lord drew them in the kind and loving manner he did, reckoned it as if he put a yoke upon them, and treated them rather as beasts than men; but this seems not to agree with what follows:

*and I laid meat unto them*: or declined, or brought it down to them, to their very mouths; referring to the manna and quails he rained about their tents. So the Targum,

“and, even when they were in the wilderness, I multiplied to them good things to eat.”

And thus in a spiritual sense the Lord gives meat to them that fear him, while in the wilderness of this world; he brings it near, and sets it before them, in the ministry of the word and ordinances; even that meat which endures to everlasting life, the flesh of Christ, which is meat indeed; and the doctrines of the Gospel, which are milk for babes, and strong meat for more experienced saints.

**Ver. 5.** *He shall not return into the land of Egypt*, etc.] Ephraim or Israel, the ten tribes: and the Septuagint and Arabic versions express them by name, though they give a wrong sense of the words, rendering them, “and Ephraim dwelt in Egypt”; he did so indeed with the other tribes formerly; but here it is said he shall not go thither again to be a captive there, but shall go into bondage more severe than that in Egypt, even into captivity in Assyria: rather the sense is, they should not go thither for shelter, at least not as a body, though some few of them might, as in (~~2008~~ Hosea 9:3); the far greater part of them should he carried captive by the Assyrians: or they should not return to Egypt to seek for help and assistance, as they had done; either they ought not to do it, nor would there be any need of it, did they but return to the Lord, as Kimchi observes; or rather they should now be so straitly shut up in Samaria, besieged so closely by the enemy, or else carried into distant lands, that, if they would, they could not apply to Egypt for relief;

*but the Assyrian shall be his king*; the king of Assyria shall be king over the ten tribes, whether they want him or not; they shall be forced to acknowledge him as their king, and be subject to him, being taken and carried captive into his land:

*because they refused to return*: to the Lord, from whom they had backslidden, and to his pure worship, word, and ordinances, they had departed from, setting up the calves at Daniel and Bethel; they refused to relinquish worshipping idols instead of the true God; thus ungratefully behaving to him for all the above favours bestowed upon them; wherefore they are righteously threatened with captivity and bondage in Assyria.

**Ver. 6.** *And the sword shall abide on the cities*, etc.] Or “shall fall”<sup>f218</sup>, and continue; meaning the sword of the Assyrians, whereby Ephraim should be brought into subjection to them, and the king of Assyria become king over them; his sword should be drawn, and rest upon them, not only on their chief city Samaria, besieged three years by him, but upon all their other cities, which would fall into his hands, with the inhabitants of them:

*and shall consume his branches, and devour [them]*; that is, the towns and villages adjoining to the cities; which were to them as branches are to a tree, sprung from them, and were supported by them; and, being near them, prospered or suffered as they did: some render it, “his bars”<sup>f219</sup>, as the word is sometimes used, and interpret it of the great men and nobles of the land. So the Targum,

“and it shall slay his mighty men, and destroy his princes;”

with which Jarchi agrees;

*because of their own counsels*; which they took and pursued, contrary to the counsel of God, the revelation of his mind and will; particularly in setting up idolatrous worship, and continuing in it, notwithstanding all the admonitions, exhortations, counsels, and threatenings of God by his prophets; or else because of their counsels with the Egyptians, and their covenants with them, for help against the Assyrian, whose yoke they were for casting off, and refused to pay tribute to; which provoked him to draw his sword upon them, which made the havoc it did in their cities, and the inhabitants of them.

**Ver. 7.** *And my people are bent to backsliding from me*, etc.] There is a propensity in thorn to it, through prevailing corruption in them; they are inclined unto it, the bias of their minds is that way; they are bent upon it, and pertinaciously abide in it; nor will they be reclaimed from it, by all the means and methods made use of, even though they had been, and professed themselves to be the people of God. Some understand this, not of their backsliding and aversion from God; but either of his return to them, or of their return to him, rendering the words, “and my people are in suspense”<sup>f220</sup>; like a man that hangs in the air, as Aben Ezra, neither ascends nor descends; that is, they are in doubt of what should be done to thorn, or they themselves should do: either “about my return”<sup>f221</sup>; that is, to them; whether after all they may expect that God would be kind and merciful to them, so Abarbinel: or “about return to me”<sup>f222</sup>; whether they should or not, inclining rather not to return. So the Targum,

“my people divide (or hesitate) to return to my law;”

with which Jarchi agrees, paraphrasing it,

“when the prophets instruct them to return unto me, they are in suspense whether to return or not;”

but Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe the word is always used in a bad sense, of aversion or backsliding, and that the word is in another form when used for repentance or returning;

*though they called them to the most High*; that is, the prophets of the Lord called them to turn from their idols, and return to the most high God, the

true and the living God, from whom they had backslidden, and to his true worship, they had neglected and forsaken:

*none at all would exalt [him]*; the most high God, and give him the praise and glory due to his name; but, on the other hand, extolled their idols, and ascribed all their good things to them: or “none would exalt them”,<sup>f223</sup> the prophets of the Lord that called them; would not give that honour to them that was due to their office, or pay any regard to them, or to their admonitions and advice, but depreciated them, and reproached and persecuted them: or “none at all would lift up”: that is, their head, as Aben Ezra, toward the heaven, and to God in it, to whom they were called; but kept looking on the earth, and to earthly things, particularly to their idols; and did not lift up or erect their ears, to hearken to what was said to them, but were deaf to all counsel and reproof. The Targum is,

“they walked not in an erect stature.”

Agreeably to which the former clause may be rendered, as by some, “and they called them to things above”; but none would look upwards; (see Gill on “<sup>2376</sup>Hosea 7:16”).

**Ver. 8.** *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? [how] shall I deliver thee, Israel?* etc.] That is, as usually interpreted, into the hand of the enemy, or unto wrath, ruin, and destruction; for, notwithstanding all the sins of this people before observed, and the punishment threatened to be inflicted on them, the Lord is pleased here, and in the following verses, to give some intimations of his goodness, grace, and mercy to them; not to the whole body of them, for they as such were given and delivered up to the enemy, and carried captive, and dispersed among the nations, and were never recovered to this day; but to a remnant among them, according to the election of grace, that should spring from them, for the sake of which they were not all cut off by the sword; but were reserved as a seed for later times, the times of the Messiah, which the prophecy in this and the following words has respect unto; not only the first times of the Gospel, when some of the dispersed of Israel were met with by it, and converted under it; but the last times of it; times yet to come, when all Israel shall be saved; and may be applied to the elect of God, in all ages, and of all nations, The words are generally understood as a debate in the divine mind, struggling within itself between justice and mercy; justice requiring the delivery of these persons unto it, and mercy being reluctant thereunto, pleading on their behalf; and which at last gets the victory, and rejoices



against judgment. There is a truth in all this; justice seems to demand that sinners, as such, who have injured and affronted him, be given up to, him, and suffer the curse of the law, according to their deserts, and be delivered unto death, even eternal death, as well as to temporal punishments; and which might be expected would be the case, by the instances and examples of the angels that sinned, and of the men of the old world, and of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; but mercy cannot bear it, pleads against; it, and asks how can it be done, since these are my children, my dear child, on, pleasant ones, as Ephraim was, my chosen and my covenant ones, and, besides, for whom provision is made in Christ for the satisfactions of justice? But the sense is rather this, “how might” or “could I give thee up; Ephraim? how might” or “could I deliver thee, Israel”<sup>f224</sup>? that is, with what severity might I deal with thee? and how justly and righteously could I do it? since thy sins are so many, and so great;

*how shall I make thee as Admah? [how] shall I set thee as Zeboim?* two cities that were utterly destroyed by fire from heaven, along with Sodom and Gomorrah, (<sup>f1523</sup>Deuteronomy 29:23); how justly could I have made thee, and put thee in, the same condition and circumstances, as those two cities, and the inhabitants of them, who were so severely punished for their sins, and were never restored again? signifying, that inasmuch as they were guilty of the same or like heinous sins, was he utterly to destroy them, and cut them off from the face of the earth, he should not exceed the due bounds of justice. To this sense Schmidt interprets the words. The design of which is to show the greatness of Ephraim’s sins, as deserving the uttermost wrath and vengeance of God, and to magnify the riches of God’s grace in their salvation, as next expressed; and it is true of all God’s elect, who, considered as sinners in Adam, and by their own transgressions, both before and after conversion, deserved to be treated according to the rigour of justice; but God is merciful to them, according to his choice of them, covenant with them, and provision he has made in Christ, and upon the foot of his satisfaction;

*mine heart is turned within me;* not changed; for there is no shadow of turning with the Lord, neither in his mind and purposes, which he never turns from, nor can be turned back; nor in his affections for them; as his heart is never turned from love to hatred, so neither from hatred to love; or his love would not be from everlasting, as it is, and he rest in it as he does; but this expresses the strong motion of mercy in him towards his people, springing from his sovereign will and pleasure, and what is elsewhere

signified by the troubling, soundings, and yearnings of his bowels towards them; (see <sup><2610></sup>Jeremiah 31:20 <sup><2615></sup>Isaiah 63:15); with which compare (<sup><2010></sup>Lamentations 1:20);

*my repentings are kindled together*; not that repentance properly belongs to God, who is neither man, nor the Son of Man, that he should repent of anything, (<sup><0239></sup>Numbers 23:19 <sup><0152></sup>1 Samuel 15:29); he repents not of his love to his people, nor of his choice of them, nor of his covenant with them, nor of his special gifts and grace bestowed on them; but he sometimes does what men do when they repent, he changes his outward conduct and behaviour in the dispensations of his providence, and acts the reverse of what he had done, or seemed to be about to do; as, with respect to the old world, the making of Saul king, and the case of the Ninevites, (<sup><0016></sup>Genesis 6:6 <sup><0151></sup>1 Samuel 15:11 Jon 3:4,10); so here, though he could, and seemed as if he would, go forth in a way of strict justice, yet changes his course, and steers another way, without any change of his will. The phrase expresses the warmth and ardour of his affections to his people; how his heart burned with love to them, his bowels and inward parts were inflamed with it; from whence proceeded what is called repentance among men, as in the case of Jeremiah, (<sup><2010></sup>Jeremiah 20:9). The Targum is,

“the word of my covenant met me; my mercies (or bowels of mercies) were rolled together.”

**Ver. 9.** *I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger*, etc.] That is, his wrath and fury to the uttermost; his people are deserving of his wrath as others, being by nature children of wrath as the rest; which they are sensible of under spiritual conviction, and therefore flee from it, where they may be safe: and though the Lord often chastises and afflicts them, yet not in wrath; or however but in a little wrath, as it seems to them; he does not stir up all his wrath, nor any in reality; all being poured upon his Son, their surety, who saves and delivers them from wrath to come;

*I will not return to destroy Ephraim*; or “again”, or “any more, destroy”<sup>f225</sup> him; not twice; he might be destroyed when carried captive into Assyria; but the remnant that shall spring from him in the latter day shall not be destroyed, but saved. The Targum is,

“my word shall not return to destroy the house of Israel;”

or I will not return from my love and affections to them, I will never be wroth with them any more; nor from my mercy to them, which is from

everlasting to everlasting; or from my covenant, promise, and resolution to save them, they shall not be punished with everlasting destruction:

*for I [am] God, and not man*; a God gracious and merciful, longsuffering, slow to anger, and pardoning sin, and not man, cruel, revengeful, implacable, who shows no mercy when it is in the power of his hands to avenge himself; or God that changes not in his purposes and counsels, in his love and affections, and therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed, and not man that repents, is fickle, inconstant, and mutable; or God that is faithful to his covenant and promises, and not man that lies and deceives, promises and never performs. The Targum is,

“seeing I am God, my word remains for ever, and my works are not as the works of the flesh (or of men) who dwell upon the earth;”

*the Holy One in the midst of thee*; being in the midst of his people, he protects and defends them, and so they are safe; and being the Holy One there, he sanctifies them, and saves them, in a way consistent with his own holiness and justice: or there is “a Holy One”, or Holy Ones, the singular put for the plural, “in the midst of thee”<sup>f226</sup>; and therefore thou shalt not be destroyed for their sakes, as Sodom would not, had there been ten righteous persons in it, to which some think the allusion is:

*and I will not enter into the city*; in a hostile way to destroy or plunder it; but this is not to be understood either of Samaria or Jerusalem, which were entered into in this manner. The Targum is,

“I have decreed by my word that my holy Shechinah shall be among you, and I will not change Jerusalem again for another city;”

which sense the Jewish commentators follow; but, as this respects Gospel times, the meaning seems to be, that God would dwell among his people everywhere, and would not be confined to any city or temple as heretofore; but wherever his church and people were, there would be his temple, and there he would dwell.

**Ver. 10.** *They shall walk after the Lord*, etc.] That is, after the Messiah, who is Jehovah our righteousness; that Jehovah the Jews pierced, and now shall mourn at the sight of, being converted to him; for these are the chosen of God among that people, who in the latter day shall partake of the grace and favour before expressed, in consequence of which they shall be set a seeking the Lord their God, and David their King; and, finding him, shall

follow after him, as sheep go after their shepherd, being led by him into green pastures; as subjects follow their prince, obeying his commands and orders; as soldiers march after their leader and commander, so these after Christ, the great Captain of their salvation, part of whose armies they will make: they will walk under the influence of his grace, having life, strength, guidance, and direction, from him, which walking implies; they will walk not after the flesh, as they now do, but after the Spirit of Christ, taking him for their guide, by whom they will be led into all truth, as it is in Jesus; they will walk in his ways, in all the paths of faith and holiness, truth and righteousness; in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, according to his word. The Targum is,

“they shall go after the worship of the Lord;”

*he shall roar like a lion*: the Lord Christ they walk after; who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Israelites shall now follow after; receiving, embracing, and confessing him the true Messiah. So the Targum,

“and his Word shall be as a lion that roars;”

Christ, the essential Word of God: and so Jarchi, according to Lyra, interprets it of the Messiah to come; who is compared to a lion for his strength and courage, and for the fierceness of his wrath against his enemies; and his voice, in his word, is like the roaring of a lion, exceeding loud, and reaching far, even the uttermost parts of the earth; as it did in the first times of the Gospel, and will in the last; and which the Jews particularly, in each of the parts of the world, will hear, and Gentiles also, and be affected with it; for it will be also very strong, powerful, and efficacious; which is another reason of its being compared to a lion roaring; (see <sup>2016</sup> Joel 3:16 <sup>6002</sup> Revelation 10:2);

*when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west*; the children of Israel, the children of God, his adopted ones, whom he has predestinated to the adoption of children; these, through the first impressions of Christ’s voice or word upon them, shall startle, and be set a trembling, and be astonished, as Saul was, when called and converted; as it is reported of the lion, that, when it roars, other beasts are so terrified that they are quite stunned and amazed, and are not able to stir; but though the first sound of the voice of Christ may have some effect upon the Jews, yet this will not cause them to tremble at him so as to flee from him, but to cause them to flee to him: for the phrase is expressive of motion towards

him, and to their own land, as appears from (<sup>f211b</sup>Hosea 11:11); when filled with a sense of his majesty and grace, they shall approach him with a holy awe of him, with fear and trembling: or “come with honour”<sup>f227</sup>; agreeably to (<sup>f211a</sup>1 Samuel 16:4); having high, honourable, and grand sentiments and apprehensions of him; so that this trembling, at least, issues in a godly and filial fear and reverence of him, suitable to their character as children. The phrase, “from the west”, or “from the sea”<sup>f228</sup>, meaning the Mediterranean sea, which lay west of Judea, and is often used for the west, may signify the western or European part of the world, where the Jews for the most part are, and from whence they will be gathered. The Targum is,

“for he shall roar, and the captives shall be gathered from the west.”

**Ver. 11.** *They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt*, etc.] They shall come from thence with fear and trembling; which may allude to the trembling of birds at the roaring of a lion, or to the trembling motion of their wings in flying; and denotes the swiftness of the motion of the Israelites and Jews to Christ, and to his church and people, and to their own land, under divine influence and direction: or “shall come with honour”<sup>f229</sup>; with all readiness and cheerfulness, in the obedience of faith:

*and as a dove out of the land of Assyria*; which is expressive of the same things, the dove being both a timorous and swift creature. Birds in common are very timorous, and tremble at any noise, and fearful of everything that disturbs them, and therefore make all the haste and speed they can to get out of the way, and to do which they are naturally provided; and more especially the dove is always represented as very fearful and trembling, especially when pursued by the hawk, as the poet<sup>f230</sup> observes. Though, it may be, these figures may only signify, as the weak and impotent state of the Jews, considered in themselves at this time, so the quick speed and haste they shall make to their own land. And perhaps there may be something alluded to in the text, that may refer to the dove as peculiar to Assyria, as it should seem to be. Now it is said of Semiramis, an ancient queen of Assyria, that being exposed when an infant, was nourished by doves, and at her death was turned into one; and from hence it is not only said she had her name, which signifies a dove, in the Syriac tongue, but doves by the Syrians were worshipped as deities<sup>f231</sup>. And Derceto, a Syrian goddess, supposed to be her mother, having a temple at Askelon, perhaps the above story may be the reason why the inhabitants of that

place reckoned doves so sacred that they did not kill them; for Philo<sup>f232</sup>, who lived there some time, having observed great numbers of them in the highways, and in every house, asked the reason of it; and he was answered, that the citizens were of old forbid the use of them: and it may be further observed, that, in honour of Semiramis, the kings of Assyria bore a dove in their coat of arms<sup>f233</sup>; but whether there is any thing peculiar or no in this reference is not certain: and, besides what has been observed of the fearfulness of this creature, and its swiftness and haste it makes in flying, it may also denote the characters of meekness, humility, and harmlessness, which the Jews, now converted, will have by the grace of God, as well as their mournful disposition. Egypt and Assyria are particularly mentioned, as they generally are where the return of Israel and Judah into their own land is prophesied of, (~~2311~~ Isaiah 11:11 ~~3100~~ Zechariah 10:10); and may signify the Turks, in whose possession these countries are, and among whom many Jews live: and the one lying to the south, and the other to the north of Judea, and the west being observed before, this shows that these people should be gathered from all parts of the world, where they are dispersed; the east is not mentioned, because their land they will be returned unto lies there;

*and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord*; it is not said in towns and cities, and fortified places, but in houses, signifying that they should dwell in their own land, in a civil sense, securely, and in their habitations, under their vines and fig trees, being in no fear and danger of enemies, and live in the utmost safety, under the government and protection of the King Messiah; or, in a spiritual sense, they will be placed in the congregations of the saints in the churches of Christ, which will be as dove houses to them, and whither they shall fly as doves to their windows, (~~2308~~ Isaiah 60:8); and it is observed of doves, that they fly the swiftest when they make to their own houses: and at last, as all the people of God will, they will be placed in the mansions of glory, in Christ's Father's house, those everlasting habitations. These words, "saith the Lord", are added, for the certain and sure accomplishment of all this. The Targum of the whole is,

"as a bird which comes openly, so shall they come who are carried captive into the land of Egypt; and as a dove that returns to its dove house, so shall they return who are carried into the land of Assyria; and I will return them in peace to their houses, and my word shall be their protection, saith the Lord."

**Ver. 12.** *Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit,* etc.] Here properly we should begin a new chapter, as many interpreters and commentators do; for the prophet, or the Lord by him, in (~~2811~~ Hosea 11:11), having finished his predictions concerning the call and conversion of the Israelites, and their return to their land, here begins a new discourse, by comparing the characters of Ephraim and Judah, and thence descends to the sins and punishment of both. The former, namely, Ephraim or Israel, that is, the ten tribes, surrounded either the prophet, to hear him prophesy, and professed a great regard to what he said; though it was all deceit and flattery: or rather the Lord himself, whom they pretended to serve and worship when they worshipped the calves at Daniel and Bethel; and would have it thought they did not worship them, but the Lord in them, and by them, as the Papists now say of their images and image worship; but let them not deceive themselves, God will not be mocked: or when they did at any time seem to approach unto him in any branch of religious worship, either to pray unto him, or to praise him, it was not done with sincerity; it was only with their mouths, not with their hearts; these agreed not together, but, like their ancestors of old, “they did flatter, him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongues”, (~~2836~~ Psalm 78:36); and so all such professors of religion, who are not sincere in their service and worship of God; or meet together to speak and hear false doctrines, which are lies in hypocrisy; or attend to superstition and will worship, and set up ordinances and institutions of their own, neglecting those which are of God, do as Ephraim did, encompass the Lord with lies and deceit;

*but Judah yet ruleth with God;* a theocracy was as yet acknowledged and supported among them; God ruled in the midst of them, and; they ruled with him; their kings ruled in the fear of God, and according to his laws, statutes, and appointment, and not their own; particularly in the days of Hezekiah, which may be here respected, the people retained and practised the true worship and service of God: which, as it is the truest liberty, so is the highest honour and dignity: such are rulers with God, as all the Lord’s people, all that believe in Christ, are; they are made by his grace kings and princes; and they appear to be so by their new birth; they are clothed, fed, and guarded as princes, as the sons of a king, as kings themselves; they have the riches and power of kings; they are possessed of a kingdom of grace now, which is within them, and where grace reigns, through righteousness, over their lusts and corruptions; and great power, like

princes, have they in prayer with God, and are heirs of the kingdom of glory, as well as shall reign with Christ on earth. Gussetius renders it, “Judah yet weeps with God”: as his father Jacob did, imitating him, as in (~~311~~Hosea 12:4);

*and is faithful with the saints*; which Kimchi’s father interprets of God himself; and so Lyra, and according to him Jarchi: and then the sense is, “and he”, that is, God, “is faithful with the saints”; in fulfilling all his counsels, purposes, and designs of grace concerning them; in making good his covenant with them, and his promises unto them; and by bringing them to the enjoyment of all that grace and glory he calls them to: but this is rather an epithet of Judah, who kept to the word and worship of the true God, as the saints of old, their ancestors, had done; walked in the good old way, in the way of good men, and kept the paths of the righteous; abode by the true priests of the Lord, who were set apart and sanctified for that office; and hearkened to the prophets, the holy men of God, who spake to them, being moved by the Holy Spirit: and adhered firmly “to the holy things”<sup>f234</sup>, as it may be rendered; to the holy temple, and the worship in it; to the holy sacrifices, altars, etc. when the ten tribes departed from them: and so this may be applied to the faithful in Christ Jesus, that believe in him truly, and continue in the faith of him in all ages; and who are “faithful with the Holy Ones”<sup>f235</sup>; the same with God in the former clause; so Kimchi interprets it, and so the word is used in (~~310~~Proverbs 9:10 30:3); (see ~~319~~Joshua 24:19); that is, with Father, Son, and Spirit; with the Father, when they worship him in spirit and truth; with the Son, when they cleave to him with full purpose of heart; with the Spirit, when they walk after him, and give to each the glory due unto them: or rather, “faithful with holy men”<sup>f236</sup>; sanctified by the Spirit and grace of God; as they are, when they hold fast the faith delivered to the saints without mixture or wavering, with courage and manliness; though the greater number is against them, and they are reproached and persecuted for so doing; when they abide by the ordinances of Christ, as they were delivered, and keep them in faith and love, without sinister views; when they continue steadfastly in the communion of the saints, attending with them on the word and ordinances, and do not forsake their assembling together; and when they constantly exhort and stir up one another to the duties of religion, and faithfully admonish and reprove each other as there is occasion for it.