

# CHAPTER 12

## INTRODUCTION TO HOSEA 12

This chapter contains complaints and charges both against Israel and Judah, and threatens them with punishment in case they repent not, which they are exhorted to: and first Ephraim is charged with idolatry, vain confidence in, and alliances with, foreign nations, (~~2810~~Hosea 12:1); and then the Lord declares he has a controversy with Judah, and will punish the inhabitants of it for their sins, (~~2811~~Hosea 12:2); which are aggravated by their being the descendants of so great a man as Jacob, who got the advantage of his elder brother, had much power with God, and received favours from him, and they also, (~~2813~~Hosea 12:3-5); and therefore are exhorted to turn to God, wait on him, and do that which is right and good, (~~2816~~Hosea 12:6). Ephraim is again in his turn charged with fraudulent dealing in trade, and with oppression, and the love of it; and yet pretended he got riches by his own labour, without wronging any, (~~2817~~Hosea 12:7,8); nevertheless, the Lord promises them public ordinances of worship, and joy in them, and the ministry of his prophets, (~~2819~~Hosea 12:9,10); though for the present they were guilty of gross idolatry, (~~2821~~Hosea 12:11); which is aggravated by the raising of Jacob their progenitor from a low estate, and the wonderful preservation of him, and the bringing of them out of Egypt, (~~2823~~Hosea 12:12,13); and the chapter is closed with observing Ephraim's bitter provocation of God, for which his reproach should return unto him, and his blood be left upon him, (~~2824~~Hosea 12:14).

**Ver. 1.** *Ephraim feedeth on wind*, etc.] Which will be no more profitable and beneficial to him than wind is to a man that opens his mouth, and fills himself with it: the phrase is expressive of labour in vain, and of a man's getting nothing by all the pains he takes; the same with sowing the wind, and reaping the whirlwind, (~~2817~~Hosea 8:7); and so the Targum has it here,

“the house of Israel are like to one that sows the wind, and reaps the whirlwind all the day;”

and this refers either to the worship of idols, and the calves in particular, and the vain hope of good things promised to themselves from thence; or

to their vain confidence in the alliances and confederacies they entered into with neighbouring nations; from which they expected much, but found little:

*and followed after the east wind*; a wind strong and vehement, burning and blasting, very noxious and harmful; so that, instead of receiving any profit and advantage either by their idolatry or their covenants with other nations, they were only in these things pursuing what would be greatly to their detriment: or they would be no more able to attain by such methods what they sought for, than they would be able to overtake the east wind, which is a very swift and fleeting one; so that this clause exposes their folly, in expecting good things from their idols, or help from their neighbours;

*he daily increaseth lies and desolation*; while they multiplied idols, which are lies fallacious and deceitful, and idolatrous rites and acts of worship, they do but increase their desolation and ruin, which such things are the cause of, and will certainly bring them unto; or, not content with the daily increase of their idolatries among themselves, they continually persecute, spoil, and plunder those who do not give into their false worship: so the Targum,

“lies and spoil they multiply;”

idolaters are generally persecutors:

*and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians*: and gave tribute and presents to their kings, as Menahem did to Pul, and Hoshea to Shalmaneser, not to hurt them, and to help and assist them against their enemies, and to strengthen their kingdom; (see <sup><4259></sup>2 Kings 15:19,20 17:3,4);

*and oil is carried into Egypt*: one while they sent presents to the Assyrians, to obtain their favour and friendship: and at another time to the Egyptians; nay, they sent to So king of Egypt, at the same time they were tributary to Assyria, and, conspiring against him, brought on their ruin; and oil was a principal part of the present sent; for this was carried not by way of traffic, but as a present: so the Targum,

“and they carried gifts to Egypt;”

(see <sup><250></sup>Isaiah 57:9). The land of Israel, being a land of oil olive, was famous for the best oil, of which there was a scarcity in Egypt, and

therefore a welcome present there, as balsam also was; (see <sup><01375></sup>Genesis 37:25 43:11 <sup><3271></sup>Ezekiel 27:17).

**Ver. 2.** *The Lord hath also a controversy with Judah*, etc.] The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, as well as the ten tribes; for though they had ruled with God, and had been faithful with the saints in the first times of the apostasy of Israel; yet afterwards they sadly degenerated, and fell into idolatry likewise, particularly in the time of Ahaz, in which Hosea prophesied; and therefore the Lord had somewhat against them; nor would he spare them, but reprove them by the prophets, and rebuke them in his providences; bring them to his bar, and lay before them their evils, and threaten them with punishment in case of impenitence, as follows:

*and will punish Jacob according to his ways*; all the posterity of Jacob, whether Ephraim or Judah; those of the ten tribes, or of the two, who all descended from Jacob: or, “will visit according to his ways”,<sup>f237</sup>; if right, and agreeably to the mind and word of God, in a way of grace and mercy; but if wrong, crooked, and perverse, then in a way of punishment; for visiting is used both ways:

*according to his doings will he recompense him*; as they were good or bad; if good, will reward them with a reward of grace; if bad, with vengeance. The Targum paraphrases it,

“according to his right works.”

**Ver. 3.** *He took his brother by the heel in the womb*, etc.] That is, Jacob took his brother Esau by the heel, as he came forth from his mother’s womb; the history of it is in (<sup><01225></sup>Genesis 25:25,26). It is here observed, upon mentioning the name of Jacob in (<sup><38110></sup>Hosea 12:2), meaning the posterity, of the patriarch; but here he himself is intended, and occasionally taken notice of, to show how very different his posterity were from him, and how sadly degenerated; as well as to upbraid them with ingratitude, whose ancestors, and they also, had received such and so many favours from the Lord; Jacob the patriarch was a hero from the womb, but they transgressors from it; this action of his observed was a presage and pledge of his having the superiority of his brother, and of his getting the birthright and blessing from him. So the Targum,

“prophet, say unto them, was it not said of Jacob, before he was born, that he would be greater than his brother?”

(see <sup><4911></sup>Romans 9:11,12). In this action there was something divine, miraculous, and preternatural; it was not the effort of nature merely, but contrary to it, or at least above it; and not done by chance, but ordered by the providence of God, as a prediction and testification of his future greatness, and even of his posterity's, in times yet to come, as Kimchi observes, who refers to (Obidiah 1:18);

*and by his strength he had power with God*; the Targum is, with the angel, as in (<sup><2814></sup>Hosea 12:4); he is called a man in the history of this event in (<sup><0324></sup>Genesis 32:24); not that he was a mere man, since he is here expressly called God, and afterwards the Lord God of hosts; and there it is evident, from the context, he was a divine Person, and no other than the Son of God; who, though not as yet incarnate, appeared in a human form, as a presage of his future incarnation; though this was not a mere apparition, spectre, or phantasm, as Josephus<sup>f238</sup> calls it; for it was not in a dream, or in a visionary way, that this wrestling and striving was between this divine Person in this form and Jacob, but in reality; it was a real substance which the Son of God formed, animated, actuated, and assumed, for that time and purpose, and then laid it aside; which touched Jacob, and he touched that, laid hold on it, and held it fast, and strove with it, and had power over it, and over God in it; even over him that is God over all, the true God and eternal life, the Lord Jesus Christ; not a created God, or God by office, but by nature; as the perfections that are in him, and the works and worship ascribed to him, declare: now Jacob had power over him "by his strength"; not by his natural strength; either of his body, which could not have been equal to the strength of this human body assumed for the time, as it was used and managed by a divine Person, unless he had been extraordinarily assisted and strengthened; or of his mind and soul, not by any spiritual strength he had of himself; but by what he had from this divine Person, with whom he wrestled; who put strength into him, and supported and increased the power and strength of faith in prayer; so that he prevailed over him, and got the blessing, for which reason his name was called Israel, (<sup><0328></sup>Genesis 32:28).

**Ver. 4.** *Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed*, etc.] This is repeated in different words, not only for the confirmation of it, it being a very extraordinary thing, and difficult of belief; but to direct to the history here referred to, where the person Jacob prevailed over is called a man, and here the angel; and so Josephus<sup>f239</sup> calls him a divine Person; not a created angel, not Michael, as the Rabbins say, unless the Messiah is meant

by him; nor Jacob's guardian angel, as Kimchi, every man being thought by some to have one; and much less Esau's evil angel, that was against Jacob, as Jarchi and Abarbanel; for of him he would never have sought nor expected a blessing; but an uncreated Angel, the Son of God, the same that went before the Israelites in the wilderness, and that redeemed Jacob from all evil, (<sup><0486></sup>Genesis 48:16 <sup><0720></sup>Exodus 23:20-23); called an Angel, being so not by nature, for he is superior to angels in both his natures, divine and human; but by office, being sent to reveal the will of God, and to do the work of God in the redemption and salvation of men; the same that is called the Angel of the great council in the Greek version of (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 9:6); and the Angel of God's presence, (<sup><2369></sup>Isaiah 63:9); and the Angel or messenger of the covenant, (<sup><3481></sup>Malachi 3:1); the phrases used denote, as before, the power and prevalence Jacob had with this divine Person in prayer; whereby he obtained the blessing of him, even deliverance from his brother Esau, as well as others respecting him and his posterity;

*he wept, and made supplication unto him*; not the angel, entreating Jacob to let him go, as Jarchi and Kimchi, and so some Christian interpreters; who think that an angel in human form may be said to weep, as well as to eat and drink; and the rather, since this angel was not the conqueror, but the conquered; and since Christ, in the days of his flesh, both prayed and wept, and shed tears; but the case here is different; and though he was prevailed over, it was through his own condescension and goodness: but rather Jacob is meant, as Abarbanel and others; who wept not on account of the angel's touching his thigh, and the pain that might put him to; for he was of a more heroic spirit than to weep for that, who had endured so much hardship in Laban's service, in heat and cold; and besides, notwithstanding this, he kept wrestling with him, and afterwards walked, though haltingly: but he wept either because he could not get out the name of the person he wrestled with; or rather the tears he shed were for the blessing he sought of him; for it is joined with his making supplication, and is expressive of the humble, yet ardent, affectionate, fervent, and importunate request he made to obtain it; and here we have another proof of the deity of Christ, in that supplication was made to him, and he is here represented as the object of that part of religious worship, prayer, as he often is in the New Testament. This circumstance is not expressed in (<sup><0331></sup>Genesis 32:1-31), though it may be gathered from what is there said; however, the prophet had it by divine inspiration; and the truth of it is not

to be doubted of, being not at all inconsistent with, but quite agreeable to, that history;

*he found him [at] Bethel*; either the angel found Jacob in Bethel, as he did more than once, both before and after this time, (<sup>OLD</sup>Genesis 28:12-19 35:6,7,9); it is good to be in Bethel, in the house of God; happy are those that dwell there, and are found there living and dying, doing the will and work of God there: or rather Jacob found God or the angel in Bethel; God is to be found in his own house, there he comes and blesses with his gracious presence; here Christ the Angel of his presence is; here he meets with his people, and manifests himself unto them. There is in the words a tacit reflection on Israel, or the ten tribes, that bore the name of Jacob; the patriarch found God in Bethel, Christ the Angel of the Lord; but now, instead of him, there was a calf set up in this place, Israel worshipped; and therefore it was called Bethaven, the house of an idol, or iniquity, instead of Bethel, the house of God;

*and there he spake with us*; not with Esau and his angel, concerning Isaac's blessing of Jacob, as Jarchi; nor with Jacob and his angel, as the father of Kimchi; nor with the prophet, and with Amos, to reprove Israel there for the worship of the calves, as Kimchi himself; but with all the Israelites, of whom the prophet was one; who were then in the loins of Jacob, when he conversed with God, and God with him, at Bethel: or, as Saadiah interprets it, "for us" for our sakes, on our account; or "concerning us"; concerning the multiplication of Jacob's posterity, and the giving the land of Canaan to them, as the Lord did at both times he appeared to Jacob in Bethel; (see <sup>OLD</sup>Genesis 28:14,15 35:11,12); and it is in the house of God, where Christ is as a son, that he speaks with and to his people, even in his word and ordinances there.

**Ver. 5.** *Even the Lord God of hosts*, etc.] The God Jacob had power over, the Angel he prevailed with, to whom he made supplication with weeping, and who spake with him and his in Bethel, is he whose name is Jehovah; who is the true and living God, the Lord of hosts and armies both in heaven and in earth; of all the angels in heaven, and the legions of them; and of the church militant, and all the saints, who are the good soldiers of Christ, his spiritual militia; and he is the Captain of the Lord's host, and of their salvation, and to whom all the numerous hosts of creatures, be they what they will, are subject: this is observed, to set off the greatness of the

person Jacob wrestled with, and his wondrous grace, in condescending to be overpowered by him:

*the Lord [is] his memorial:* or his name, Jehovah, which belongs to this angel, the Son of God, as to his divine Father; and which is expressive of his divine existence, of his eternity and immutability; this is his memorial, or the remembrancer of him; which puts his people in all ages in remembrance of him, what he is, what an infinite, almighty, and all sufficient Being he is; and he is always to be believed in, and trusted to, and to be served, adored, and worshipped. The Targum adds, to every generation and generation.

**Ver. 6.** *Therefore turn thou to thy God,* etc.] Judah, with whom the Lord had a controversy, is here addressed and exhorted to return to the Lord, from whom they had backslidden; and this is urged, from the consideration of their being the descendants of so great a man as Jacob; whose example they should follow, and make supplication to the Lord as he did; and from this instance of their progenitor might encourage themselves, that God, who was his God, and their God, would be gracious and merciful to them, and that they should prevail with him likewise, and obtain the blessing, and especially since he is the everlasting and unchangeable Jehovah. Turning to the Lord, as it supposes a going astray from him, so it signifies a turning from idols, and all vain confidences; and is done by renewed acts of faith and trust in the Lord, and repentance towards him; and cannot be performed aright without grace and strength from him, of which Ephraim was sensible, (<sup>2818</sup>Jeremiah 31:18); as well as the encouragement to it is from a view of God as a covenant God, and as gracious and merciful, So Aben Ezra interprets it of divine help, of turning by thy God, that is, by the help and assistance of thy God; and, indeed, conversion to God, whether at first, or after, is through his powerful and efficacious grace. Kimchi explains it, “thou shalt rest in thy God”<sup>f240</sup>; when want follows is performed, comparing it with (<sup>2815</sup>Isaiah 30:15). The Targum is,

“and thou shall be strong in the worship of thy God;”

*keep mercy and judgment;* or, “observe”<sup>f241</sup> them to do them; to show mercy to persons in misery, to the poor and indigent, which is what the Lord desires and delights in, more than in ceremonial sacrifices; and is a principal part of the moral law, as “judgment” is another; the exercise of justice, both public and private; passing a righteous sentence in courts of judicature, and doing that which is right between man and man; owing no

man anything, but giving to all their due; doing no injury to any man's person, property, or character; which are fruits meet for true repentance; and when they spring from faith and love, and are done with a view to the glory of God, and good of men, are acceptable to the Lord; these are the weightier matters of the law, (~~4233~~ Matthew 23:23);

*and wait on thy God continually*; both in private prayer, and for an answer to it, and in public worship and ordinances, in hope of meeting with him, and enjoying his presence; for this takes in the whole of religious worship, private and public, and all religious exercises, as invocation of God, trust in him, and expectation of seed things from him; and may have a respect to the Messiah, and salvation by him, and a waiting for him and that; as Jacob did, and his posterity should, and many of them were in this posture, before and at his coming; (see ~~4498~~ Genesis 49:18 ~~2379~~ Isaiah 25:9 ~~4125~~ Luke 2:25,38); Agreeable to this the Targum is,

“and wait for the redemption or salvation of thy God continually.”

**Ver. 7.** [*He is*] *a merchant*, etc.] Here is a change of person from “thou” to “he”, from Judah to Ephraim, who is said to be a “merchant”; and if that was all, there is nothing worthy of dispraise in it; but he was a cheating merchant, a fraudulent dealer, as appears by what follows: or he is Canaan, or a Canaanite<sup>f242</sup>; more like a descendant of Canaan, by his manners, than a descendant of Jacob. But the Canaanites dealing much in merchandise, their name became a common name for a merchant, as a Chaldean for an astrologer; and as the children of Israel possessed their land, so they followed the same business and employment of life; which, had they performed honestly, would not have been to their discredit; but they were too much like the Canaanites, of whom Philostratus<sup>f243</sup> says, they were covetous and fraudulent; and this was Ephraim's character. The Targum is,

“be you not as merchants;”

*the balances of deceit [are] in his hand*; he used false weights and measures; made the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsified the balances by deceit; had wicked balances, and deceitful weights, and the scant measure, which is abominable, (~~3086~~ Amos 8:5 ~~3160~~ Micah 6:10,11); they pretended to weigh everything exactly they bought or sold; but cheated either by sleight or hand, holding the balances as they should not; or had one pair of scales and weights to buy with, and another to sell by, contrary to the law of God, (~~4895~~ Leviticus 19:35,36);



*he loveth to oppress*; instead of keeping and doing mercy and justice, they oppressed the poor, ground their faces, defrauded them of their due, and by secret and private methods cheated them in their dealings with them, and brought them to poverty and distress; and this they took delight and pleasure in, which showed a want of a principle of honesty in them, and that they were habituated to such a course of life, and were hardened in it, and had no remorse of conscience for it, but rather gloried in it.

**Ver. 8.** *And Ephraim said, yet I am become rich*, etc.] Notwithstanding they took such unjust methods, as to use deceitful balances, they prospered in the world, got abundance of riches; and therefore concluded from thence that their manner of dealing was not criminal, at least not so bad as the prophets represented to them; and so promised themselves impunity, and that what they were threatened with would not come upon them; and, as long as they got riches, they cared not in what manner; and inasmuch as they prospered and succeeded in their course of trading, they were encouraged to go on, and not fear any evil coming upon them for it. According to Aben Ezra and Kimchi, the sense is, that they became rich of themselves, by their own industry and labour, and did not acknowledge that their riches, and power to get them, were of God. They gloried in them as their own attainments; and which they had little reason to do, since they were treasures of wickedness, and mammon of unrighteousness, which in a day of wrath would be of no service to them;

*I have found me out substance*; they found ways and means of acquiring great riches, and large estates, by their own wisdom and cunning, and all for themselves, for their own use, to be enjoyed by them for years to come; and they were reckoned by them solid and substantial things, when a mere shadow, emptiness, and vanity; and were not to be employed for their own use and advantage only, but should have been for the good of others; nor were they to be attributed to their own sagacity, prudence, and management, but to the providence of God, admitting they had been got in ever so honourable and just a manner;

*[in] all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that [were] sin*: here again Ephraim, or the people of Israel, vainly ascribe all their wealth and riches to their own labour, diligence, and industry, and take no notice of God and his providence, or of his blessing upon them; and pretend to be very upright and honest in their dealings, and that what they got were very honestly got, and would bear the strictest scrutiny; and that if their course

of trade was ever so narrowly looked into, there would be nothing found that was very bad or criminal, that they could be justly reproached the; only some little trifling things, that would not bear the name of “sin”, or deserve any correction or punishment; so pure were they in their own eyes, so blinded and hardened in sin, and fearless of the divine displeasure; like the adulterous woman, wiped their mouths when they had eaten the sweet morsels of sin, and said they had done no wickedness, (<sup><R18D></sup>Proverbs 30:20); or which was involuntary, and not done knowingly, as Kimchi and Abendana: or rather, as Ben Melech renders it, “no iniquity and sin”; and so others: or, best of all, “no iniquity or sin”, as Noldius<sup>f244</sup>; no iniquity, or any kind of sin at all. Thus, as Ephraim was charged before with idolatry and lies in religion, so here with fraudulent dealings, and getting riches in an illicit way in civil things; and of whose repentance and reformation there was no hope.

**Ver. 9.** *And I [that am] the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt,* etc.] Ephraim being so very corrupt in things, both religious and civil, and so very impenitent and impudent, is let alone to suffer the just punishment of his sins; but Judah being called to repentance, and brought unto it, gracious promises are here made unto him, to be fulfilled in the times of the Messiah, either at the first or latter part of them; especially the last is to be understood, when indeed all Israel shall return to the Lord, and be saved; and then it will appear, that the Lord, who was their God, as was evident from his bringing them out of Egyptian bondage, and continued to be so from that time to the Babylonish captivity, and even to the times of the Messiah, will now be their God most clearly and manifestly, having redeemed them from worse than Egyptian bondage; from the bondage of sin, Satan, the law, the world, and death; even the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, they will now seek and embrace, who is God over all, and equal to such a work of redemption and salvation; Immanuel, God with us, God in our nature, our Lord and our God, the God of the Jews now converted, as will be acknowledged, as well as of the Gentiles: and he

*will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast;* alluding to the feast of tabernacles, kept in commemoration of the Israelites dwelling in tents in the wilderness, (<sup><R23D></sup>Leviticus 23:42,43); typical of Christ’s incarnation, expressed by his tabernacling among men in human nature, (<sup><R114></sup>John 1:14); and which feast, though abolished by Christ with the rest, yet it is said will be kept by converted Jews and Gentiles in the latter day; which can be understood no otherwise than of their

embracing and professing the incarnate Saviour, partaking of the blessings of grace that come by him, and attending on those ordinances of public worship instituted by him; (see <sup><3446></sup>Zechariah 14:16-19); and which booths, tents, or tabernacles, the Israelites dwelt in at that feast, were also typical of the churches of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, and which are here meant; and in which it is here promised the converted Jews shall dwell, as they had been used to do in their booths at the solemn feast of tabernacles. These Christian churches resembling them in the matter of them; believers in Christ, the materials of such churches, being compared to goodly trees, to willows of the brook, to palm trees, olive trees, and myrtle trees, with others, the branches of which were used at the above feast, to make their tabernacles with; (see <sup><0830></sup>Leviticus 23:40 <sup><4085></sup>Nehemiah 8:15); and in the use of them, which was to dwell in during the time of the said feast; as the churches of Christ are the tabernacles of the most High, the dwelling places of Father, Son, and Spirit; and the habitation of the saints, where they dwell and enjoy great plenty and prosperity, tranquillity and security; and here it particularly denotes that joy, peace, and the converted Jews shall partake of in the churches of Christ in the latter day; of which the feast of tabernacles was but a shadow, and which was attended with much rejoicing, plenty of provisions, and great safety.

**Ver. 10.** *I have also spoken to the prophets*, etc.] Or, “I will speak”<sup>f245</sup>; for this respects not the Lord’s speaking by the prophets of the Old Testament who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; though all they said were for the use of, and profitable unto, Christian churches; but his speaking by the apostles, prophets, and teachers, under the Gospel dispensation; by whom the doctrines of grace have been more clearly dispensed, and which are no other than the voice of Christ speaking in them; and which it is both a privilege to hear, and a duty to attend unto; (see <sup><4041></sup>Ephesians 4:11);

*and I have multiplied visions*: or, “will multiply visions”<sup>f246</sup>; more than under the former dispensation, as was foretold by Joel, (<sup><3028></sup>Joel 2:28); (see <sup><4016></sup>Acts 2:16,17); witness the visions of the Apostles Peter, Paul, John, and others: or this may respect the more clear sight and knowledge of Gospel truths in the times of the Messiah, then under the Mosaic economy; (see <sup><4013></sup>2 Corinthians 3:13-18);

*and used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets*: or, “will use similitudes”<sup>f247</sup>; for this is to be understood, not of the types and figures

used by the Lord under the legal dispensation, to represent spiritual things, as the brasen serpent, passover lamb, manna, and the sacrifices of the law; nor of the similitudes used by the prophet Hosea, taking a wife and children of whoredoms, to set forth the case and condition of Israel, and of the comparisons he makes of God, to a lion, leopard, bear, etc. or by any other of the former prophets; but of parables and similitudes used in Gospel times; not only such as Christ used himself, who seldom spoke without a parable; (see <sup><4031></sup>Matthew 13:11); but which he used by the ministry of his apostles and prophets, and which are to be met with in their discourses and writings; (see <sup><4016></sup>1 Corinthians 3:6-12); and especially such seem to be meant that respect the conversion of the Jews, and the glory of the church in the latter day, (<sup><4116></sup>Romans 11:16-26) (<sup><4612></sup>Revelation 21:12-23).

**Ver. 11.** [*Is there iniquity [in] Gilead?*] etc.] Idolatry there? strange that there should be, seeing it was a city of the priests; a city of refuge; or there is none there, say the priests, who pretended they did not worship idols, but the true Jehovah in them: or, “is [there] not iniquity”, or idolatry, “in Gilead”<sup>f248</sup>? verily there is, let them pretend to what they will: or, “is [there only] iniquity in it”<sup>f249</sup>? that the men of it should be carried captive, as they were by TiglathPileser, before the rest of the tribes; (see <sup><1259></sup>2 Kings 15:29); no, there is iniquity and idolatry committed in other places, as well as there, who must expect to share the same fate in time: or, “is Gilead Aven?”<sup>f250</sup> that is, Bethaven, the same with Bethel; it is as that, as guilty of idolatry as Bethel, where one of the calves was set up:

*surely they are vanity:* the inhabitants of Gilead, as well as of Bethel, worshipping idols, which are most vain things, vanity itself, and deceive those that serve them, and trust in them:

*they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal:* to idols, as the Targum adds; and so Jarchi and Kimchi; according to Aben Ezra, they sacrificed them to Baal; this shows that Gilead was not the only place for idolatry, which was on the other side Jordan, but Gilgal, which was on this side Jordan, was also polluted with it. The Vulgate Latin version is,

“in Gilgal they were sacrificing to bullocks;”

to the calves there, the same as were at Daniel and Bethel; so, in the Septuagint version of (<sup><1129></sup>1 Kings 12:29); it was formerly read: and so Cyril<sup>f251</sup> quotes it, “[he] (Jeroboam) set the one (calf) in Gilgal, and the

other [in] Dan”; hence the fable that Epiphanius<sup>f252</sup> makes mention of, that, when Elisha was born, the golden ox or heifer at Gilgal bellowed very loudly, and so loud as to be heard at Jerusalem. The Targum makes mention of an idol temple here; and as it was near to Bethel, as appears from (~~Q10B~~ 1 Samuel 10:3,8); and from Josephus<sup>f253</sup>; and so Jerom says<sup>f254</sup>, hard by Bethel; some suspect another Gilgal; hence it might be put for it; however, it was a place of like idolatrous worship; it is mentioned as such along with Bethaven or Bethel, in (~~Q10H~~ Hosea 4:15); see also (~~Q10I~~ Hosea 9:15);

*yea, their altars [are] as heaps in, the furrows of the fields*; not only in the city of Gilgal, and in the temple there, as the Targum; but even without the city, in the fields they set up altars, which looked like heaps of stones; or they had a multitude of altars that stood as thick as they. So the Targum,

“they have multiplied their altars, like heaps upon the borders of the fields;”

and the Jewish commentators in general understand this as expressive of the number of their altars, and of the increase of idolatrous worship; but some interpret it of the destruction of their altars, which should become heaps of stones and rubbish, like such as are in fields. These words respect Ephraim or the ten tribes, in which these places were, whose idolatry is again taken notice of, after gracious promises were made to Judah. Some begin here a new sermon or discourse delivered to Israel.

**Ver. 12.** *And Jacob fled into the country of Syria*, etc.] Or, “field of Syria”<sup>f255</sup>; the same with Padanaram; for “Padan”, in the Arabic language, as Bochart has shown, signifies a field; and “Aram” is Syria, and is the word here used. This is to be understood of Jacob’s fleeing thither for fear of his brother Esau, the history of which is had in (~~Q10K~~ Genesis 28:1-29:35); though some interpret this of his fleeing from Laban out of the field of Syria into Gilead, (~~Q10L~~ Genesis 31:21,23); and so make it to be introduced as an aggravation of the sin of the inhabitants of Gilead, that that place, which had been a refuge and sanctuary to their ancestor in his distress, should be defiled with idolatry; but the words will not bear such a construction, and the following seem to militate against it:

*and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept [sheep]*; and so the last clause is supplied by the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi: this was after his flight into Syria, and before he fled from Laban, whom he served seven

years for Rachel; and then served him by keeping his sheep seven years more for the same: though it may be understood of his two wives, thus; he served seven years for a wife, for Rachel intentionally, but eventually it was for Leah; and then he kept sheep seven years more for his other wife Rachel; the history of this is in (~~(120)~~Genesis 29:1-35). This is mentioned to show the meanness of Jacob the ancestor of the Israelites, from whom they had their original and name; he was a fugitive in the land of Syria; there he was a Syrian ready to perish, a very poor man, obliged to serve and keep sheep for a wife, having no dowry to give; and this is observed here to bring, down the pride of Israel, who boasted of their descent, which is weak and foolish for any to do; and to show the goodness of God to Jacob, and to them, in raising him and them from so low an estate and condition to such eminency and greatness as they were; and to upbraid their ingratitude to the God of their fathers, and of their mercies, whom they had revolted from, and turned to idols.

**Ver. 13.** *And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt*, etc.] Or, “by the prophet”; the famous and most excellent prophet Moses, who, by way of eminency, is so called; him the Lord sent, and employed, and made use of him as an instrument to bring his people out of their bondage in Egypt; in which he was a type of Christ the great Prophet of the church, raised up like unto him, and the Redeemer of his people from sin, Satan, and the world, law, hell, and death, and all enemies:

*and by a prophet he was preserved*; by the same prophet Moses was Israel preserved at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; where they were kept as a flock of sheep from their powerful enemies, and brought to the borders of Canaan’s land. Some understand this last clause of Joshua, by whom the Israelites were safely conducted through Jordan into the land of Canaan, and settled there; and particularly were brought by him to Gilgal, where the covenant of circumcision was renewed, and the first passover in the land kept, but now a place of idolatry, as before mentioned; and which sin was aggravated by this circumstance: but the design of this observation seems to be to put the Israelites in remembrance of their low estate in Egypt, and of the goodness of God to them in delivering them from thence, which they had sadly requited by their degeneracy and apostasy from him; and to him unto them how much they ought to have valued the prophets of the Lord, though they had despised them, since they had received such benefits and blessings by the means of a prophet.

**Ver. 14.** *Ephraim provoked [him] to anger most bitterly*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin version supplies it, me; that is, God, as Kimchi; or his Lord, as it may be supplied from the last clause of the verse; the sense is the same either way: it was God that Ephraim or the ten tribes provoked to stir up his wrath and vengeance against them; notwithstanding all the favours that they and their ancestors had received from him, they provoked him in a most bitter manner, to bitter anger, vehement wrath and fury: or, “with bitternesses”<sup>f256</sup>; with their sins, which are in their own nature bitter, displeasing to God; and in their effects bring bitterness and death on those that commit them; meaning particularly their idolatry, and all belonging to it; their idols, high places, altars, etc. The word here used is rendered “high heaps”<sup>f257</sup>, (<sup>2812</sup>Jeremiah 31:21); and is here by Kimchi interpreted of altars, with which, and their sacrifices on them, they provoked the Lord to anger:

*therefore shall he leave his blood upon him*; the blood of innocent persons, prophets, and other good men shed by him; the sin of it shall be charged upon him, and he shall bear the punishment of it. So the Targum,

“the fault of innocent blood which he shed shall return upon him:”

or “his own blood shall be poured out upon him”<sup>f258</sup>; in just retaliation for the blood of others shed by him, and for all the blood sired by him in idolatrous sacrifices, and other bloody sins; or his own blood being shed by the enemy shall remain upon him unrevenged; God will not punish those that shed it:

*and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him*: that is, as he has reproached the prophets of the Lord for reproving him for his idolatry, and reproached fire Lord himself, by revolting from him, and neglecting his worship, and preferring the worship of idols to him; so, as a just recompence, he shall be delivered up into the hands of the enemy, and become a reproach, a taunt, and a proverb, in all places into which he shall be brought. God is called “his Lord”, though he had rebelled against him, and shook off his yoke, and would not obey him; yet, whether he will or not, he is his Lord, and will show himself to be so by his sovereignty and authority over him, and by the judgments exercised on him. Some understand this of the Assyrian king, become his lord, by taking and carrying him captive, the instrument in God’s hand of bringing him to reproach; but the former sense seems best.