

# CHAPTER 7

## INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 7

This chapter contains a prophecy of the preservation of the kingdom of Judah, from its enemies; a confirmation of it by a sign; and a prediction of various calamities that should come upon it, antecedent to the accomplishment of that sign. The enemies of Judea are named, and the besieging of Jerusalem by them, and the date of it, which was without effect, are mentioned, (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 7:1) the fear and dread which seized the house of David upon the news of this confederacy, (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 7:2) the orders given by the Lord to the Prophet Isaiah, to take with him his son, and meet Ahaz, at a certain place pointed at, (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 7:3) whose errand was to comfort him, and exhort him to be quiet and easy; since the conspiracy formed against him should be fruitless, and the kingdom of Israel should be broken to pieces, (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 7:4-9) after which the king is put upon asking a sign of the Lord, for the confirmation of it; which he refusing to do, under a pretence of tempting the Lord, is reproved; and a sign nevertheless is given; which is that of the birth of the Messiah of a virgin, who would be truly God, as his name Immanuel shows, and truly man, as his birth, his food, and gradual knowledge of good and evil, prove, (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 7:10-15) yea, it is suggested that the deliverance of Judea from the two kings of Syria and Israel should be very speedy; even before the young child Isaiah had with him was capable of knowing to refuse evil, and chose good, (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 7:16) but as a chastisement of the house of David for their incredulity in this matter, and slight of the divine goodness, various things are threatened to befall them, before the birth of the Messiah; even such as had not been since the revolt of the ten tribes; as that their enemies, the Assyrians and others, should come upon them in great numbers, and fill all places, so that they would be in the utmost distress, and not be able to escape, (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 7:17-19) there would be a great consumption of men of all sorts, high and low, signified by shaving off the hair of the head, beard, and feet; so that the few that remained would enjoy plenty, (<sup><2370></sup>Isaiah 7:20-22) and for want of men to till the land, it would be covered with thorns and briars; and because of wild beasts, the few men in it would be obliged to defend themselves with bows

and arrows, (<sup><230723></sup>Isaiah 7:23,24) and yet, after this, the land should become fruitful again, before the Messiah's coming, (<sup><230725></sup>Isaiah 7:25), as some interpret it.

**Ver. 1.** *And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah king of Judah, &c.*] Here begins a new prophecy under the reign of another king; who, though a wicked king, had religious ancestors; and who are mentioned, not, as the Jewish writers<sup>f117</sup> generally say, because it was owing to their worthiness that the enemies of Ahaz could not prevail against him; but because it was under these kings the prophet had prophesied: what is contained in the first five chapters were delivered in the times of Uzziah; and the vision in the sixth was in the times of Jotham, in the beginning of his reign; and what is said here, and in some following chapters, was in the time of Ahaz; so that this is mentioned to fix and carry on the date of the prophecy:

*[that] Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah king of Israel, went up towards Jerusalem to war against it;* at the latter end of Jotham's reign, and the beginning of Ahaz's; these two separately came up against Judah, and greatly distressed and afflicted the kingdom, slew many, and carried others captive, (<sup><12157></sup>2 Kings 15:37) (<sup><14385></sup>2 Chronicles 28:5-7) but afterwards, in the third<sup>f118</sup> or fourth<sup>f119</sup> year of Ahaz, as it is said, they joined together to besiege Jerusalem, which this refers to, (<sup><12165></sup>2 Kings 16:5):

*but could not prevail against it;* or "he could not"; that is, according to Aben Ezra, the king of Israel, Pekah, the son of Remaliah; but, according to Kimchi, it was Rezin king of Syria, who, he says, was the principal in the war, and brought Pekah along with him; but it may very well be understood of them both, since in (<sup><12165></sup>2 Kings 16:5), the plural number is used; "and they could not"; and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Oriental versions here.

**Ver. 2.** *And it was told the house of David, &c.*] Ahaz, and his family, the princes of the blood, his court and counsellors; who had intelligence of the designs and preparations of the Syrians and Israelites against them:

*saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim;* the ten tribes; or the kingdom and king of Israel. Some render it, "Syria led"; that is, its army "unto Ephraim"<sup>f120</sup>; marched it into the land of Israel, and there joined the king of Israel's army; others, as the Vulgate Latin version, "Syria rests upon

Ephraim”<sup>f121</sup>; depends upon, trusts in, takes heart and encouragement from Ephraim, or the ten tribes, being his ally. The Septuagint version is, “Syria hath agreed with Ephraim”; entered into a confederacy and alliance with each other; which is the sense of our version; and is confirmed by the Targum, which is,

“the king of Syria is joined with the king of Israel:”

*and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind*; the metaphor denotes the strength and force of the confederate armies, comparable to a strong, blustering, boisterous wind; (see <sup><330></sup>Isaiah 32:2 <sup><3011></sup>Jeremiah 4:11,12) and the weakness of the king and people of Judah, who were like to trees shaken by the wind; and also the fear they were possessed with, partly through consciousness of guilt, and partly through distrust of divine power and Providence; and also on account of what they had suffered already from these powerful enemies, when they attacked them singly; and therefore might much more dread them, as they were combined together against them; (see <sup><435></sup>2 Chronicles 28:5-8).

**Ver. 3.** *Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, &c.*] The prophet, the inspired penman of these prophecies, that go by his name; what follows, the Lord said unto him in vision, or by an articulate voice, or by an impulse on his mind:

*go forth now to meet Ahaz*; the prophet was in the city of Jerusalem, and Ahaz was without, as appears by the place after mentioned, where he was to meet him; perhaps Ahaz was at his country house, which, upon the news brought him of the designs of his enemies, he leaves, and betakes himself to Jerusalem, his metropolis, and fortified city, where he might be more safe; or he had been out to reconnoitre the passes about Jerusalem, and give orders and directions for the strengthening and keeping of them:

*thou, and Shearjashub thy son*: whose name signifies “the remnant shall return”, and who was taken with the prophet, to suggest either that the remnant that were left of the former devastations by those two kings ought to return to the Lord by repentance; or that though the people of Judah should hereafter be carried captive by the Assyrians, yet a remnant should return again. The Targum interprets this not of Isaiah’s natural son, but of his disciples; paraphrasing it thus,

“thou, and the rest of thy disciples, who have not sinned, and are turned from sin:”

*at the end of the conduit of the upper pool*; for there was an upper pool and a lower one; (see <sup><2723></sup>Isaiah 22:9) this was outside the city, and is the same place where Rabshakeh afterwards stood, and delivered his blasphemous and terrifying speech, (<sup><21817></sup>2 Kings 18:17):

*in the highway of the fuller's field*; where they washed and dried their garments, and whitened them; the pool, conduit, and field, being fit for their purpose.

**Ver. 4.** *And say unto him, take heed, and be quiet*, &c.] Or “keep” thyself, not within the city, and from fighting with his enemies, but from unbelief, fear, and dread; or, as the Septuagint version, “keep” thyself, “that thou mayest be quiet”<sup>f122</sup>; be easy, still, and silent, and see the salvation of God: the Jewish writers interpret the first word of resting and settling, as wine upon the lees: (see <sup><24811></sup>Jeremiah 48:11):

*fear not*; this explains the former:

*neither be fainthearted*; or “let thy heart soft”<sup>f123</sup>, and melt like wax, through dread and diffidence:

*for the two tails of these smoking firebrands*: meaning the two kings of Syria and Israel: and so the Targum,

“for these two kings, who are as smoking firebrands;”

a metaphor used to express the weakness of these princes, their vain wrath and impotent fury, and the short continuance of it; they being like to firebrands wholly burnt and consumed to the end; a small part remaining, which could not be laid hold upon to light fires or burn with, and that only smoking, and the smoke just ready to vanish.

*For the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah*; this shows who are meant by the two firebrands, Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel; and what by the smoke of them, their fierce anger; which, though it seemed to threaten with utter destruction, in the opinion of Ahaz and his court, was only like the smoke of a firebrand burnt to the end, weak and vanishing.

**Ver. 5.** *Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, &c.*] Not that there were three parties in the counsel and confederacy against Judah, only two, the kingdoms of Syria and Ephraim, or Israel; the king of the former is not mentioned at all, and the latter only as if he was the son of a private person, which is purposely done by way of contempt:

*have taken evil counsel against thee:* which is expressed in the next verse; *saying;* as follows.

**Ver. 6.** *Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, &c.*] By besieging or distressing it; or “stir it up” to war, as Jarchi interprets it:

*and let us make a breach therein for us;* in the walls of the city of Jerusalem, and enter in at it; the Targum is,

“let us join, and put it to us;”

and so Jarchi, let us level it with us, as this valley, which is even: the sense may be, let us make a breach and division among them, and then part the kingdom between us<sup>f124</sup>; or if we cannot agree on that, let us set up a king of our own, as follows:

*and set a king in the midst of it, [even] the son of Tabeal;* which Jarchi, by a situation of the alphabet the Jews call “albam”, makes it to be the same with Remala, that is, Remaliah; and so supposes, that the intention was to set Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, over Judah; but it is not reasonable to think that the king of Syria should join in such a design; and besides, the method of interpretation, Aben Ezra says, is mere vanity; and whose sense of the words is much preferable, taking Tabeal to be the name of some great prince, either of Israel or of Syria; and so Kimchi thinks that he was a man of the children of Ephraim, whom they thought to make king in Jerusalem. The Targum understands not any particular person, but anyone that should be thought proper; and paraphrases it thus,

“let us appoint a king in the midst of it, who is right for us,”

or pleases us; the name seems to be Syriac, (see ~~<1500>~~Ezra 4:7 ~~<11518>~~1 Kings 15:18). Dr. Lightfoot thinks it is the same with Tabrimmon, the name of some famous family in Syria. One signifies “good God”: and the other “good Rimmon”, which was the name of the idol of the Syrians, (~~<12518>~~2 Kings 5:18).

**Ver. 7.** *Thus saith the Lord GOD, it shall not stand*, &c.] That is, the counsel they had taken against Judah to vex it, make a breach in it, and set a king of their own liking over it; so the Septuagint and Arabic versions render the words, “that counsel shall not stand”; the counsel of God shall stand, but not the counsel of men, when it is against him, (<sup><2092></sup>Proverbs 19:21 <sup><340></sup>Isaiah 46:10):

*neither shall it come to pass*; or “shall not be”; so far from standing, succeeding, and going forward, till it is brought to a final accomplishment, it should not take footing, or have a being.

**Ver. 8.** *For the head of Syria [is] Damascus*, &c.] Damascus was the metropolis of Syria, the chief city in it, where the king had his palace, and kept his court; of which (see Gill on “<sup><0152></sup>Genesis 15:2”) (see Gill on “<sup><490></sup>Acts 9:2”):

*and the head of Damascus [is] Rezin*; he was king of it, as of all Syria; the meaning is, that Syria, of which Damascus was the principal city, was the only country that Rezin should govern, his dominion should not be enlarged; and Ahaz, king of Judah, might assure himself that Rezin should never possess his kingdom, or be able to depose him, and set up another; and as for Ephraim or Israel, the ten tribes, they should be so far from succeeding in such a design against him, that it should befall them as follows:

*and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people*; which is by some reckoned, not from the time of this prophecy, that being in the third or fourth year of Ahaz, who reigned in all but sixteen years; and in the ninth of Hosea king of Israel, and in the sixth of Hezekiah king of Judah, Samaria was taken, and Israel carried captive into Assyria, (<sup><276></sup>2 Kings 17:6 18:1) which was but about eighteen or nineteen years from this time: some think indeed the time was shortened, because of their sins; but this does not appear, nor is it probable: and others think that it designs any time within that term; but the true meaning undoubtedly is, as the Targum renders it,

“at the end of sixty and five years, the kingdom of the house of Israel shall cease.”

This is commonly reckoned by the Jewish writers<sup>f125</sup> from the prophecy of Amos, who prophesied two years before the earthquake in Uzziah’s time, concerning the captivity both of Syria and Israel, (<sup><300></sup>Amos 1:1,5)

(<sup><3071></sup>Amos 7:11,17) which account may be carried either through the kings of Judah or of Israel; Jarchi goes the former way, reckoning thus,

“the prophecy of Amos was two years before Uzziah was smitten with the leprosy, according to (<sup><3001></sup>Amos 1:1). Uzziah was a leper twenty five years, lo, twenty seven. Jotham reigned sixteen years, Ahaz sixteen, and Hezekiah six; as it is said, “in the sixth year of Hezekiah (that is, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel) Samaria was taken”, (<sup><12810></sup>2 Kings 18:10) lo, sixty five years.”

So Abarbanel; but Kimchi goes another way, which comes to the same, reckoning thus,

“the prophecy of Amos, according to computation, was in the seventeenth year of Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel, how is it? Jeroboam reigned forty one years, Menahem ten, so there are fifty one; Pekahiah the son of Menahem two, so fifty three; and Pekah twenty, so seventy three; and Hoshea the son of Elah nine, and then Israel were carried captive, so there are eighty two: take out of them seventeen (the years of Jeroboam before the prophecy), and there remain sixty five, the number intended; for we do not reckon the six months of Zechariah, and the month of Shallum.”

Cocceius reckons from the death of Jeroboam, who died in the forty first year of his reign, and in the fifteenth of Uzziah, so that there remained thirty seven years of Uzziah; in the twentieth of Jotham, that is, in the fourth after his death, Hoshea son of Elah was made king, this was the twelfth of Ahaz, (<sup><12530></sup>2 Kings 15:30 17:1) and in the ninth of Hoshea, Samaria was taken, and Israel carried captive. But Junius and Tremellius are of a different mind from either of these, and think the prophecy wholly respects time to come; they observe, that

“Isaiah in these words first shows, that the kingdom of Syria should be immediately cut off, and the king should die, which at furthest must needs happen four years after; so (say they) we may suppose that these things were said by the prophet in the first year of Ahaz; thence, from the destruction of the Syrians, to the full carrying captive of the Israelites, or from the time of this prophecy, sixty five years must have run out; for although the kingdom of Israel was abolished in the sixth year of Hezekiah, yet Israel did not immediately cease to be a people when only some part of it was

carried away; but they entirely ceased to be a people when new colonies were introduced by Esarhaddon, the son of Sennacherib, and all the Israelites were forced into bondage, which the Samaritans explain, (<sup>150B</sup>Ezra 4:2) wherefore so we fix the series of the times, from the fourth year of Ahaz, in which the kingdom of Syria fell, unto the end, are eleven years, Hezekiah reigned twenty nine years, so the last translation of the Israelites was in the twenty fifth year of Manasseh's reign; but if you begin from the time of the prophecy; the thing will fall upon the twenty first or twenty second of Manasseh's reign; at which time perhaps, as some say, Manasseh was carried captive into Babylon."

And of this mind was the learned Dr. Prideaux<sup>f126</sup>, who observes, that in the twenty second year of Manasseh, Esarhaddon prepared a great army, and marched into the parts of Syria and Palestine, and again added them to the Assyrian empire; and adds,

"and then was accomplished the prophecy which was spoken by Isaiah in the first year of Ahaz against Samaria, that within threescore and five years Ephraim should be absolutely broken, so as from thenceforth to be no more a people; for this year being exactly sixty five years from the first of Ahaz, Esarhaddon, after he had settled all affairs in Syria, marched into the land of Israel, and there taking captive all those who were the remains of the former captivity (excepting only some few, who escaped his hands, and continued still in the land), carried them away into Babylon and Assyria; and then, to prevent the land becoming desolate, he brought others from Babylon, and from Cutha, and from Havah, and Hamath, and Sephervaim, to dwell in the cities of Samaria in their stead; and so the ten tribes of Israel, which had separated from the house of David, were brought to a full and utter destruction, and never after recovered themselves again."

And this seems to be the true accomplishment of this prophecy; though the sense of the Jewish writers is followed by many, and preferred by Noldius; so that there is no need with Grotius and Vitringa to suppose a corruption of the text. Gussetius<sup>f127</sup> fancies that  $\mu\upsilon\zeta\zeta$  signifies twice six, that is, twelve; as  $\mu\upsilon\rho\zeta$  twice ten, or twenty; and so five, added to twelve, makes seventeen; and from the fourth of Ahaz, to the taking of Samaria, was about seventeen years.



**Ver. 9.** *And the head of Ephraim [is] Samaria, &c.*] Samaria was the metropolis or chief city of Ephraim, or the ten tribes of Israel:

*and the head of Samaria [is] Remaliah's son*; Pekah, son of Remaliah, was king of Samaria, as of all Israel. The sense is, that, until the sixty five years were ended, there should be no enlargement of the kingdom of Israel; Judah should not be added to it; Samaria should continue, and not Jerusalem be the metropolis of it; and Pekah, during his life, should be king of Israel, but not of Judah.

*If ye will not believe*; the Targum adds,

“the words of the prophet;”

*surely ye shall not be established*, or remain<sup>f128</sup>; that is, in their own land, but should be carried captive, as they were after a time; or it is, “because ye are not true and firm”; in the faith of God, as Kimchi interprets it; or, “because ye are not confirmed”<sup>f129</sup>; that is, by a sign; wherefore it follows:

**Ver. 10.** *Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, &c.*] By the prophet Isaiah:

*saying*; as follows:

**Ver. 11.** *Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, &c.*] For though Ahaz was a wicked man, yet the Lord was his God, as he was the God of the people of Israel in general, as a nation; and knowing his unbelief and diffidence of his word unto him, offers to confirm it by a sign or miracle:

*ask it either in the depth, or in the height above*, in earth, or in heaven: so the Targum,

“ask that a miracle may be done for thee upon earth, or that a sign may be shown thee in heaven;”

either that the earth might gape and open its mouth, as in the days of Moses; or that the sun might stand still, as in the times of Joshua; or that a dead man might be raised out of the depth of the earth; or that there might be some strange appearances in the heavens.

**Ver. 12.** *But Ahaz said, I will not ask, &c.*] That is, a sign or miracle to be wrought; being unwilling to take the advice to be still and quiet, and make no preparation for war, or seek out for help from the Assyrians, and to rely

upon the promise and power of God, and therefore chose not to have it confirmed by a sign; adding as an excuse,

*neither will I tempt the Lord*, by asking a sign; suggesting that this was contrary to the command of God, (<sup>(1816)</sup>Deuteronomy 6:16) so pretending religion and reverence of God; whereas, to ask a sign of God, when it was offered, could not be reckoned a tempting him; but, on the contrary, to refuse one; when offered, argued great stubbornness and ingratitude, as Calvin well observes.

**Ver. 13.** *And he said*, &c.] That is, the Prophet Isaiah; which shows that it was by him the Lord spoke the foregoing words:

*hear ye now, O house of David*; for not only Ahaz, but his family, courtiers, and counsellors, were all of the same mind with him, not to ask a sign of God, nor to depend upon, his promise of safety, but to seek out for help, and provide against the worst themselves. Some think that Ahaz's name is not mentioned, and that this phrase is used by way of contempt, and as expressive of indignation and resentment:

*[is it] a small thing for you to weary man*; meaning such as himself, the prophets of the Lord; so the Targum,

“is it a small thing that ye are troublesome to the prophets;”

disturb, grieve, and vex them, by obstinacy and unbelief:

*but will ye weary my God also?* the Targum is,

“for ye are troublesome to the words of my God;”

or injurious to them, by not believing them; or to God himself, by rejecting such an offer of a sign as was made to them.

**Ver. 14.** *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign*, &c.] Whether they would ask one or not; a sign both in heaven and earth, namely, the promised Messiah; who being the Lord from heaven, would take flesh of a virgin on earth; and who as man, being buried in the heart of the earth, would be raised from thence, and ascend up into heaven; and whose birth, though it was to be many years after, was a sign of present deliverance to Judah from the confederacy of the two kings of Syria and Israel; and of future safety, since it was not possible that this kingdom should cease to be one until the Messiah was come, who was to spring from Judah, and be of

the house of David; wherefore by how much the longer off was his birth, by so much the longer was their safety.

*Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son;* this is not to be understood of Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, by his wife, as some Jewish writers interpret it; which interpretation Jarchi refutes, by observing that Hezekiah was nine years old when his father began to reign, and this being, as he says, the fourth year of his reign, he must be at this time thirteen years of age; in like manner, Aben Ezra and Kimchi object to it; and besides, his mother could not be called a “virgin”: and for the same reason it cannot be understood of any other son of his either by his wife, as Kimchi thinks, or by some young woman; moreover, no other son of his was ever lord of Judea, as this Immanuel is represented to be, in (<sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 8:8) nor can it be interpreted of Isaiah’s wife and son, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi think; since the prophet could never call her a “virgin”, who had bore him children, one of which was now with him; nor indeed a “young woman”, but rather “the prophetess”, as in (<sup>2388</sup>Isaiah 8:3) nor was any son of his king of Judah, as this appears to be, in the place before cited: but the Messiah is here meant, who was to be born of a pure virgin; as the word here used signifies in all places where it is mentioned, as (<sup>01248</sup>Genesis 24:43 <sup>01088</sup>Exodus 2:8) (<sup>09825</sup>Psalms 68:25 <sup>27008</sup>Song of Solomon 1:3 6:8) and even in (<sup>2388</sup>Proverbs 30:19) which is the instance the Jews give of the word being used of a woman corrupted; since it does not appear that the maid and the adulterous woman are one and the same person; and if they were, she might, though vitiated, be called a maid or virgin, from her own profession of herself, or as she appeared to others who knew her not, or as she was antecedent to her defilement; which is no unusual thing in Scripture, (see <sup>05228</sup>Deuteronomy 22:28) to which may be added, that not only the Evangelist Matthew renders the word by *παρψευος*, “a virgin”; but the Septuagint interpreters, who were Jews, so rendered the word hundreds of years before him; and best agrees with the Hebrew word, which comes from the root *מל* [ ], which signifies to “hide” or “cover”; virgins being covered and unknown to men; and in the eastern country were usually kept recluse, and were shut up from the public company and conversation of men: and now this was the sign that was to be given, and a miraculous one it was, that the Messiah should be born of a pure and incorrupt virgin; and therefore a “behold” is prefixed to it, as a note of admiration; and what else could be this sign or wonder? not surely that a young married woman, either Ahaz’s or Isaiah’s wife, should be with child, which is nothing

surprising, and of which there are repeated instances every day; nor was it that the young woman was unfit for conception at the time of the prophecy, which was the fancy of some, as Jarchi reports, since no such intimation is given either in the text or context; nor did it lie in this, that it was a male child, and not a female, which was predicted, as R. Saadiah Gaon, in Aben Ezra, would have it; for the sign or wonder does not lie in the truth of the prophet's prediction, but in the greatness of the thing predicted; besides, the verification of this would not have given the prophet much credit, nor Ahaz and the house of David much comfort, since this might have been ascribed rather to a happy conjecture than to a spirit of prophecy; much less can the wonder be, that this child should eat butter and honey, as soon as it was born, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi suggest; since nothing is more natural to, and common with young children, than to take down any kind of liquids which are sweet and pleasant.

*And shall call his name Immanuel;* which is, by interpretation, "God with us", (<sup><4023></sup>Matthew 1:23) whence it appears that the Messiah is truly God, as well as truly man: the name is expressive of the union of the two natures, human and divine, in him; of his office as Mediator, who, being both God and man, is a middle person between both; of his converse with men on earth, and of his spiritual presence with his people. (see <sup><3014></sup>John 1:14 <sup><5016></sup>1 Timothy 3:16).

**Ver. 15.** *Butter and honey shall he eat.* &c.] As the Messiah Jesus no doubt did; since he was born in a land flowing with milk and honey, and in a time of plenty, being a time of general peace; so that this phrase points at the place where, and the time when, the Messiah should be born, as well as expresses the truth of his human nature, and the manner of his bringing up, which was in common with that of other children. **hamj** signifies the "cream of milk", as well as "butter", as Jarchi, in (<sup><0188></sup>Genesis 18:8), observes; and milk and honey were common food for infants:

*that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good;* meaning not knowledge of good and bad food, so as to choose the one, and refuse the other; but knowledge of moral good and evil; and this does not design the end of his eating butter and honey, as if that was in order to gain such knowledge, which have no such use and tendency; but the time until which he should live on such food; namely, until he was grown up, or come to years of discretion, when he could distinguish between good and evil; so that as the former phrase shows that he assumed a true body like ours,

which was nourished with proper food; this that he assumed a reasonable soul, which, by degrees, grew and increased in wisdom and knowledge; (see <sup>(4152)</sup>Luke 2:52). **wt[dl]** should be rendered, “until he knows”; as **çrpl** in (<sup>(4342)</sup>Leviticus 24:12) which the Chaldee paraphrase of Onkelos renders, “until it was declared to them”; and so the Targum here,

“butter and honey shall he eat, while or before the child knows not, or until he knows to refuse the evil, and choose the good.”

**Ver. 16.** *For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good,* &c.] This may be understood of Isaiah’s child, Shearjashub, he had along with him, he was bid to take with him; and who therefore must be supposed to bear some part, or answer some end or other, in this prophecy; which it is very probable may be this, viz. to assure Ahaz and the house of David that the land which was abhorred by them should be forsaken of both its kings, before the child that was with him was grown to years of discretion; though it may be understood of any child, and so of the Messiah; and the sense be, that before any child, or new born babe, such an one as is promised, (<sup>(2374)</sup>Isaiah 7:14), arrives to years of discretion, even in the space of a few years, this remarkable deliverance should be wrought, and the Jews freed from all fears of being destroyed by these princes:

*the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings;* meaning not the land of Judea, now distressed by them, which they should leave; for that could not be said to be abhorred by Ahaz, or the house of David; but the land of Israel and Syria, called one land, because of the confederacy between the kings of them, Rezin and Remaliah’s son, which Ahaz and his nobles abhorred, because of their joining together against them; and so it was, that in a very little time both these kings were cut off; Pekah the son of Remaliah was slain by Hoshea the son of Elah, who reigned in his stead, (<sup>(4250)</sup>2 Kings 15:30) and Rezin was slain by the king of Assyria, (<sup>(4249)</sup>2 Kings 16:9).

**Ver. 17.** *The Lord shall bring upon thee,* &c.] These words are directed to Ahaz; and show, that though he and his kingdom would be safe from the two kings that conspired against him, yet evils should come upon him from another quarter, even from the Assyrians he sent to for help, and in whom he trusted; in which the Lord himself would have a hand, and permit them in his providence, in order to chastise him for his unbelief, stubbornness, and ingratitude in refusing the sign offered him, and for his other sins; and

the calamities threatened began in his time; and therefore it is said, “upon thee”; for Tilgathpilneser, king of Assyria, to whom he sent for help, instead of helping and strengthening him, distressed him, (<sup><1483></sup>2 Chronicles 28:20,21):

*and upon thy people, and upon thy father’s house*; so in the reign of his son Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded the land of Judah, took all its fenced cities, excepting Jerusalem, and came up even to that, (<sup><1283></sup>2 Kings 18:13-17) and in the times of Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up against Jerusalem, and destroyed it, and carried the people of Judah captive, (<sup><1281></sup>2 Kings 25:1-21) and these are the evil days, the days of affliction and adversity, here threatened:

*days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah*: meaning the revolt of the ten tribes from the house of David, in the times of Rehoboam, (<sup><1126></sup>1 Kings 12:16-20) which was a day of great adversity, a great affliction to the house of Judah; and there had been several evil days since, and that very lately; as when the king of Syria came into the land, and carried away great multitudes captives to Damascus; and when Pekah, king of Israel, slew in Judah, on one day, a hundred and twenty thousand valiant men, and carried captive two hundred thousand women, sons and daughters, with a great spoil, (<sup><1485></sup>2 Chronicles 28:5-8) and yet these were not to be compared with the calamitous times yet to come:

*[even] the king of Assyria*; or “with the king of Assyria”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; rather the meaning is, that those days of trouble should come by the king of Assyria<sup>f130</sup>, as they did. The Septuagint version renders it, “from the day that Ephraim took away from Judah the king of the Assyrians”; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, just the reverse, “from the day that the king of the Assyrians”, or “Assyria, carried away Ephraim from Judea”; neither of them right.

**Ver. 18.** *And it shall come to pass in that day*, &c.] the time when those evil days before spoken of should take place:

*[that] the Lord shall hiss for the fly that [is] in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt*; or flies, as the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions render it; the Egyptians, so called because their country abounded with flies; and because of the multitude of their armies, and the swiftness of their march; this seems to have had its accomplishment when Pharaohnechoh king of Egypt slew Josiah, put his son Jehoahaz, that reigned after him, in

bands, placed Eliakim his brother in his stead, and made the land of Judah tributary to him, (<sup><1239></sup>2 Kings 23:29-35) though some think either the Edomites or Philistines, that bordered on Egypt, are meant; who in Ahaz's time invaded Judah, and brought it low, (<sup><1487></sup>2 Chronicles 28:17-19) or else the Ethiopians, that inhabited on the furthestmost borders of Egypt, and the rivers of it; who either came up separately against Judah, or served under Nebuchadnezzar; (see <sup><2181></sup>Isaiah 18:1 20:1-5 37:9 <sup><1241></sup>2 Kings 24:2):

*and for the bee that [is] in the land of Assyria*; the Assyrian army, so called because the country abounded with bees; and because of the number of their armies, their military order and discipline, and their hurtful and mischievous nature. The Targum paraphrases the whole thus,

“and it shall be at that time that the Lord shall call to a people, bands of armies, of mighty men, who are numerous as flies, and shall bring them from the ends of the land of Egypt; and to mighty armies, who are powerful as bees, and shall bring them from the uttermost parts of the land of Assyria:”

hissing or whistling for them denotes the ease with which this should be done, and with what swiftness and readiness those numerous and powerful armies should come; and the allusion is to the calling of bees out of their hives into the fields, and from thence into their hives again, by tinkling of brass, or by some musical sound, in one way or another.

**Ver. 19.** *And they shall come*, &c.] The Egyptian and Assyrian armies, when the Lord calls for them in his providence, and his time is come to make use of them as a scourge to his people:

*and shall rest all of them in the desolate valleys*: made so by war; this is said in allusion to flies and bees resting on trees and flowers; and signifies that these armies, after long and tedious marches, should all of them, without being diminished by the way, enter the land of Judea, fill all places, and take up their abode there for a while:

*and in the holes of the rocks*. Kimchi thinks that the former phrase designs cities in valleys, and this fortified cities which are upon rocks:

*and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes*; in allusion to flies and bees. Kimchi interprets this of unwall'd towns and villages. The Targum of the whole verse is,

“and they shall all of them come and dwell in the streets of the cities, and in the cliffs of the rocks, and in all deserts full of sedges, and in all houses of praise.”

The sense is, that they should be in all cities, towns, and villages, whether fortified or not, and in all houses of high and low, rich and poor, in cottages and in palaces; there would be no place free from them, nor no escaping out of their hands.

**Ver. 20.** *In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired,* &c.] Meaning the Assyrian monarch, whom he would use as an instrument in his hand to spoil and cut off the people of the Jews; who is compared to a “razor” for sharpness; and for the thorough work, and utter ruin and destruction, he should be the means of; and called a “hired” one, either in reference to the present Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria, by which he prevailed upon him to come and help him against the kings of Syria and Israel, (<sup>1247</sup>2 Kings 16:7-9) or to a reward given by the Lord to Nebuchadnezzar for the service in which he employed him, (see <sup>338</sup>Ezekiel 29:18-20):

*[namely], by them beyond the river;* not Nile, but Euphrates; even the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Babylonians, who lived on the other side that river; which, with what follows, explains the simile of the razor:

*by the king of Assyria;* who ruled over those beyond the river:

*the head, and the hair of the feet; and it shall also consume the beard;* signifying that as a razor cuts off the hair entirely where it is applied, and leaves nothing behind, whether of the head, beard, or feet, or privy parts, which are meant by the latter; so the king of Assyria should carry all clean off captive out of the land of Judea; king, princes, nobles, and common people; those of the highest, and of the middling, and of the lowest class. The Targum is,

“in that time the Lord shall slay them as one is slain by a sharp sword, by clubs, and by saws, by those beyond the river, and by the king of Assyria; the king, and his army, and even his rulers, together shall he destroy.”

So Jarchi explains it. Several of the Jewish writers, as Aben Ezra, Abarbinel, and Kimchi<sup>f131</sup>, explain this of the Angel of the Lord destroying Sennacherib’s army, when before Jerusalem, in Hezekiah’s time; so the



latter interprets it: “the head”; the heads of his armies: “the hair of the feet”; the multitude of the people: “the beard”; the king, who died, not in the camp, but was killed by his sons in his own land; but this is not a prophecy of the destruction of the Assyrian army, but of the Jewish people by it; and the whole denotes the mean and low condition, the state of slavery and bondage, the Jews should be brought into; of which the shaving of the hair is the symbol; it was usual to shave the head and hair of such as were taken captive, as a sign of reproach and servitude; (see ~~<1000>~~ 2 Samuel 10:4) <sup>f132</sup>.

**Ver. 21.** *And it shall come to pass in that day, &c.*] Not in the days of Hezekiah, after the destruction of Sennacherib’s army, when there followed great fruitfulness and plenty, (~~<2373>~~ Isaiah 37:30,31) as Kimchi and Jarchi interpret it; but in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, after the destruction of Jerusalem, when some poor men were left in the land to till it, (~~<2390>~~ Jeremiah 39:10) for of these, and not of rich men, are the following words to be understood:

*[that] a man shall nourish a young cow and two sheep;* this seems to denote both the scarcity of men and cattle, through the ravages of the army of the Chaldeans; that there should not be large herds and flocks, only a single cow, and two or three sheep; and yet men should be so few, and families so thin, that these would be sufficient to support them comfortably.

**Ver. 22.** *And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk [that] they shall give, &c.*] The cow and the two sheep, having large pastures, and few cattle to feed upon them, those few would give such abundance of milk, that the owner of them would make butter of it, and live upon it, having no occasion to eat milk; and there being few or none to sell it to:

*he shall eat butter;* the milk producing a sufficient quantity of it for himself and his family:

*for butter and honey shall everyone eat that is left in the land:* signifying that though they would be few, they would enjoy a plenty of such sort of food as their small flocks and herds would furnish them with, and the bees produce. The Targum and Jarchi interpret this of the righteous that shall be left in the land; but it is rather to be extended unto all, righteous and unrighteous.

**Ver. 23.** *And it shall come to pass in that day; [that] every place shall be, &c.]* Barren and unfruitful, for want of men to till the ground:

*where there were a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings;* which were so good, as to be sold or let out for so many silver shekels<sup>1133</sup>; or the fruit of them came to such a price; (see <sup><281></sup>Song of Solomon 8:11):

*it shall [even] be for briers and thorns;* for want of persons to stock the ground and cultivate it.

**Ver. 24.** *With arrows and with bows shall [men] come thither, &c.]* For fear of wild beasts, serpents, and scorpions, as Jarchi; or in order to hunt them, as others; or because of thieves and robbers, as Aben Ezra:

*because all the land shall become briers and thorns;* among which such creatures, and such sort of men, would hide themselves.

**Ver. 25.** *And [on] all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, &c.]* Which could not be ploughed with a plough, but used to be dug with a mattock or spade, and then sowed with corn:

*there shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns;* where thorns and briers used not to grow, and where there was no fear or danger of being overrun with them, as the vineyards in the valleys and champaign country; yet those places should become desolate in another way; or rather, there shall be now no fences made of briers and thorns, which deter cattle from entering into fields and vineyards thus fenced:

*but it shall be for the setting forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle;* there being no fence of briers and thorns to keep them out, cattle both of the greater and lesser sort should get into the corn, and feed upon it, and make such places desolate, where much pains were taken to cultivate them. The Targum is,

“it shall be for a place of lying down of oxen, and for a place of dwelling of flocks of sheep;”

not for pastures, but for folds for them; though the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, suggest these places should become pastures; and therefore some understand this as a prophecy of a change in the country for the better, and of the great fruitfulness of it after the Jews' return from the Babylonish captivity.