

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 7

In this chapter the Lord, by the prophet, calls the people of the Jews to repentance and reformation; reproves them for their vain confidence; and threatens them with destruction for their many sins, and particularly idolatry. The preface to all this is in (^{<2470B>}Jeremiah 7:1,2), the exhortation to amendment, encouraged to by a promise that they should dwell in the land, is in (^{<2470B>}Jeremiah 7:3), but this was not to be expected on account of the temple, and temple service; but through a thorough reformation of manners; an exercise of justice, and avoiding all oppression and idolatry, (^{<2470B>}Jeremiah 7:4-7), their vain confidence in the temple is exposed; they fancying that their standing there, and doing the service of it, would atone for their theft, murder, adultery, perjury, and idolatry; and that they might commit these with impunity; wherefore they are let to know, that so doing these they made the temple a house of thieves; and that for such wickedness, what the Lord had done to his place in Shiloh, which they are reminded of, he would to the temple, and to them, reject and cast them off, (^{<2470B>}Jeremiah 6:8-15), and seeing they also had a dependence on the prophet's prayer, he is bid not to pray for them, for his prayers would not be heard; and he is directed to observe their wretched idolatry, of which an instance is given, whereby they provoked the Lord to anger; and therefore he was determined to pour out his fury on man and beast, and on the trees and fruit of the field, (^{<2471G>}Jeremiah 7:16-20) and whereas they trusted in their burnt offerings and sacrifices, these are rejected, as being what were not originally commanded; but obedience to the moral law, and the precepts of it, which they refused to hearken to, though they were oft called upon to it by his servants the prophets, (^{<2472I>}Jeremiah 7:21-26), and it is foretold that the Prophet Jeremy would meet with the same treatment; that they would not hearken to his words, nor answer to his call; and therefore he should declare them a disobedient, incorrigible, and an unfaithful people, (^{<2472I>}Jeremiah 7:27,28) hence, either he, or Jerusalem, is called upon to cut off the hair, as a sign of mourning; for their rejection of the Lord, occasioned by their sins, and especially their idolatry, of which instances are given, (^{<2472I>}Jeremiah 7:29-31) and it is threatened that the

place of their idolatry should be a place of slaughter and of burial, till there should be no room for more; and the carcasses of the rest should be the food of fowls and beasts; and all joy should cease from Judah and Jerusalem, (²⁴⁷³Jeremiah 7:32-34).

Ver. 1. *The word that came to Jeremiah*, etc.] The Word of prophecy, as the Targum:

from the Lord, saying; this begins a new prophecy. This verse, and the beginning of the next, are wanting in the Septuagint version.

Ver. 2. *Stand in the gate of the Lord's house*, etc.] That is, of the temple, and the court of it. This gate, as Kimchi says, was the eastern gate, which was the principal gate of all; (see ²⁴⁸⁰Jeremiah 26:2):

and proclaim there this word, and say; with a loud voice, as follows:

hear ye the word of the Lord, all ye of Judah; the inhabitants of the several parts of Judea, which came to the temple to worship; very probably it was a feast day, as Calvin conjectures; either the passover, or pentecost, or feast of tabernacles, when all the males in Israel appeared in court:

that enter in at these gates to worship the Lord; there were seven gates belonging to the court, three on the north, three on the south, and one in the east, the chief of all, as Kimchi, Abarbinel, and Ben Melech observe; and this agrees with the account in the Misna^{f154}. The names of them were these; on the south side were these three, the watergate, the gate of the firstlings; or the gate of offering, and the gate of kindling; on the north were these three, the gate Nitzotz, called also the gate of the song, the gate Korban, sometimes called the gate of women, and Beth Moked; and the gate in the east was the gate Nicanor, and this gate was the most frequented; and therefore Jeremiah was ordered to stand here, and deliver his message.

Ver. 3. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel*, etc.] The Lord of armies above and below in general, and the God of Israel in particular; wherefore they ought to hearken to what he was about to say, and to be obedient to him:

amend your ways and your doings; or, “make them good”^{f155}; which shows that they were bad, and were not agreeable to the law and will of God, to

which they ought to have been conformed; and the way to amend them was to act according to the rule of the divine word they were favoured with:

and I will cause you to dwell in this place; to continue to dwell in Jerusalem, and in Judea, the land of their nativity, and in the temple, the house of God, and place of religious worship; but, if not, it is suggested that they should not continue here, but be carried captive into a strange land.

Ver. 4. *Trust ye not in lying words*, etc.] In the words of the lying prophets, as the Targum; and to the same purpose is the Arabic version,

“do not trust in lying words, for the false prophets do not profit you in anything;”

the things in which they trusted, and in which the false prophets taught them to place their confidence, were their coming up to the temple at certain times for religious exercises, and their attendance on temple service and worship, offering of sacrifices, and the like. The Septuagint version is, “trust not in yourselves, in lying words”; (see ^{<DIB>}Luke 18:9), in their external actions of devotion, in their ritual performances, taking them for righteousness; and adds, what is not in the Hebrew text, “for they altogether profit you not”; in the business of justification before God, and acceptance with him:

saying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these; that is, the people that hypocritically worshipped there, as the false prophets told them; and so the Syriac version, “ye are the temple of the Lord”; though that begins the next verse, with the last clause of this,

if ye amend your ways, etc. (see ^{<BIB>}1 Corinthians 3:16,17) or rather the temple of the Lord are those gates through which they entered, (^{<DIB>}Jeremiah 7:2) or those buildings which were pointed at with the finger; or **hnh**, “these”, is a clause by itself; and the sense is, these are the lying words that should not be trusted in, namely, the temple and temple services; when all manner of sin and wickedness were committed by them, which they thought to atone for by coming to the temple and worshipping there. The mention of these words three times is, as Jarchi thinks, in reference to the Jews appearing in the temple three times a year, at the feast of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; and so the Targum,

“who say (i.e. the false prophets), before the temple of the Lord ye worship; before the temple of the Lord ye sacrifice; before the temple of the Lord ye bow; three times in a year ye appear before him.”

Kimchi’s father, R. Joseph, is of opinion, that it refers to the three parts of the temple, the porch, the holy place, and the holy of holies; but Kimchi himself takes it that these words are trebled for the greater confirmation of them; and they may denote the vehemence and ardour of affection for the temple.

Ver. 5. *For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings*, etc.] Or, “if ye make your ways good, and do your works well”, which is what is exhorted to (^{247B}Jeremiah 7:3), and respects the duties of the moral law; which are more acceptable to God than legal sacrifices, when done from right principles, and with right views, from love, in faith, and to the glory of God; which is doing good works well; the particulars of which follow:

if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; without respect to persons, without favour and affection, without bribery and corruption; passing a righteous sentence, and making an equitable decision of the case between them, according to the law of God, and the rules of justice and equity: this respects judges and civil magistrates.

Ver. 6. *If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow*, etc.] Who have none to help them, and who ought to have mercy and compassion shown them, as well as justice done them; and should not be injured by private men in their persons and properties, and much less oppressed in courts of judicature by those who should be the patrons and defenders of them:

and shed not innocent blood in this place: in the temple, where the sanhedrim, or great court of judicature, sat; for this does not so much respect the commission of murder by private persons, as the condemnation of innocent men to death by the judges, which is all one as shedding their blood; and by which actions they defiled that temple they cried up, and put their trust in; to shed innocent blood in any place, Kimchi observes, is an evil; but to shed it in this place, in the temple, was a greater evil, because this was the place of the Shechinah, or where the divine Majesty dwelt:

neither walk after other gods to your hurt; the gods of e people, as the Targum; “for this”, as the Arabic version renders it, “is pernicious to you”;

idolatry was more hurtful to themselves than to God; and therefore it is dissuaded from by an argument taken from their own interest.

Ver. 7. *Then will I cause you to dwell in this place*, etc.] In the land of Judea, and not suffer them to be carried captive, which they had been threatened with, and had reason to expect, should they continue in their sins, in their impenitence and vain confidence:

in the land that I gave to your fathers; to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by promise; and to the Jewish fathers in the times of Joshua, by putting them in actual possession of it:

for ever and ever: for a great while; a long time, as Kimchi explains it; from the days of Abraham for ever, even all the days of the world, provided they and their children walked in the ways of the Lord. This clause may either be connected with the word “dwell”, or with the word give; and the sense is, either that they should dwell in it for ever and ever; or it was given to their fathers for ever and ever.

Ver. 8. *Behold, ye trust in lying words*, etc.] What they are dissuaded from, (^{2100b}Jeremiah 7:4), is here affirmed they did, and which is introduced with a note of asseveration, attention, and admiration; it being a certain thing that they did so; and was what was worthy of their consideration and serious reflection upon; and it was astonishing that they should, since so to do was of no advantage to them, but the contrary:

that cannot profit; temple worship and service, legal sacrifices and ceremonies, could not take away sin, and expiate the guilt of it; or justify men, and render them acceptable to God; these, without faith in the blood and sacrifice of Christ, were of no avail; and especially could never be thought to be of any use and profit, when such gross abominations were indulged by them as are next mentioned.

Ver. 9. *Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely*, etc.] At the same time they offered sacrifices, and trusted in them, they did those things, which would not be grateful to the Lord, nor profitable to them; or, “ye do steal”, etc.; so the Septuagint, and all the Oriental versions; and likewise the Targum; as charging them with them; these are sins against the second table of the law, as what follow are against the first:

and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; for they not only burnt incense to Baal, which was an act of idolatrous

worship; but served other strange gods they had not known before; whose names they had never heard of, and of whose help and assistance they now had no experience, nor received any benefit from, as they had on the one and only true God; and therefore it was great folly and ingratitude in them to forsake the Lord, and walk after these.

Ver. 10. *And come and stand before me in this house*, etc.] In the temple; this they did after they had been guilty of such immoralities and idolatry; thinking by their appearance there, and their performance of a few ceremonies, and offering of some sacrifices, that all were atoned for: or this denotes their impudence, that, after the commission of such notorious crimes, they should have the front to come into the house of God, and stand before him, as if they had never departed from him, and were his people, and the true worshippers of him:

which is called by my name; the temple of God, the house of God, the sanctuary of the Lord; and where his name was also called upon, being a house of prayer; or where prayer was made to the Lord:

and say, we are delivered; from the punishment of the above sins, by coming into the temple, and standing before the Lord in it; by calling on his name, and offering sacrifices, though with impure hearts and hands, and in a hypocritical way

to do all these abominations; before mentioned; theft, murder, adultery, perjury, and idolatry. The sense is, either we are delivered and freed from punishment, that we may do these things with impunity; this is the use we make of, and the inference we draw from, our deliverance from evil: or we are delivered, though we commit these abominations, and therefore in them: or, seeing we are delivered, therefore do we these things; not that they really said these words, but this was the language of their actions. The Syriac version is, “deliver us, while we commit all these sins”.

Ver. 11. *Is this house, which is called by my name*, etc.] Meaning the temple:

become a den of robbers in your eyes? or do you look upon it, and make use of it, as thieves do of dens; who, when they have robbed and murdered men, betake themselves to them, not only to share their spoil, but to hide themselves? just so those thieves, murderers adulterers, perjurers, and idolaters, after they had committed such gross enormities, came into the temple and offered sacrifices; thinking hereby to cover their sins, and

expiate the guilt of them, and to be looked upon as good men, and true worshippers of God, when they were no better than thieves and robbers; and such were the Pharisees in Christ's time, and such was the temple as made by them; (see ^{<4213>}Matthew 21:13):

behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord; not only all the abominations committed by them, but the use they made of the temple and the worship of it; all the hypocrisy of their hearts, and the inward thoughts of them, and their views and intentions in their offerings and sacrifices; as well as what ruin and destruction the Lord designed to bring shortly upon them, and upon that house which they had made a den of robbers; as follows:

Ver. 12. *But go ye now unto my place, which was in Shiloh,* etc.] A city in the tribe of Ephraim, on the north of Bethel, and the south of Lebonah, and not far from Shechem, (^{<47219>}Judges 21:19) here were the tabernacle, the ark and altar of the Lord, and the sacrifices; and therefore the tabernacle is called the tabernacle of Shiloh, (^{<49780>}Psalm 78:60), and here the Lord calls it his place; the place of the house of his Shechinah, as the Targum paraphrases it; and where he would have those people go; which is not to be understood locally, but of their taking this place into the consideration of their minds, and observe what was done to it, and became of it; though it was once the place where the Lord dwelt, and where his name was called formerly; as follows:

where I set my name at the first; when the children of Israel first entered into Canaan's land, the tabernacle was set up and established in Shiloh, in Joshua's time, (^{<4680>}Joshua 18:1) and there it continued to the times of Eli:

and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of my people Israel; he refused and forsook his tabernacle there; he suffered the ark, which was fetched from thence in the times of Eli, to be taken and carried captive, and that because of the sins of his people, (^{<49780>}Psalm 78:60,61,67 ^{<49004>}1 Samuel 4:4,11). Jerom^{f156} says, in his time, the altar that was pulled down was shown, though scarce the foundations of it were to be seen. Now the Lord would have these people consider what was done to Shiloh; that though this was the first place where the tabernacle was set in the land of Canaan, and so the inhabitants of it had antiquity on their side; yet this did not secure them, nor the tribe it was in, from being rejected by the Lord, when they sinned against him; nor should the tribes of Judah and Benjamin think themselves secure because of the temple of the Lord, since they might

expect he would do to them for their sins what he had done to others before.

Ver. 13. *And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord,* etc.] Meaning evil works, such as theft, murder, adultery, perjury, and idolatry, mentioned (^{<24008>}Jeremiah 7:8) or the same which were done by the people of Israel, on account of which the tabernacle at Shiloh was left:

and I spake unto you, rising up early; that is, by his servants the prophets, whom he sent unto them, and by whom he spoke, as the Targum paraphrases it, and as it is in (^{<24075>}Jeremiah 7:25 44:4 ^{<4865>}2 Chronicles 36:15), which shows the Lord's great concern for this people, his early care of them, in sending his servants betimes to warn, rebuke, and reclaim them:

and speaking, but ye heard not; would not listen to the words of the prophets, and of the Lord by them; but turned a deaf ear to them, which aggravates their stubbornness, obstinacy, and wickedness, that so much respect should be shown them, so much pains should be taken with them, and that so early, and yet to no purpose:

and I called you, but ye answered not; this call was by the external ministry of the prophets, and was with great vehemence in them, but not with divine energy; however, it was sufficient to leave the Jews without excuse; and their inattention to it exposes their hardness and wilful obstinacy; (see ^{<20024>}Proverbs 1:24).

Ver. 14. *Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name,* etc.] The temple, as in (^{<24071>}Jeremiah 7:11), for though it was called by his name, and his name was called upon in it, yet this could not secure it from desolation; for so the name of the Lord was set in the tabernacle at Shiloh, and yet he forsook it through the wickedness of the people:

wherein ye trust; they trusted in the sacrifices there offered up, and the service there performed; in the holiness of the place, and because it was the residence of the divine Majesty; wherefore they thought this would be a protection and defence of them; and this was trusting in lying words, as in (^{<24074>}Jeremiah 7:4):

and unto the place which I gave unto you and your fathers; meaning either Jerusalem; and so the Syriac version renders it, "and to the city"; or the whole land of Judea, as in (^{<24077>}Jeremiah 7:7):

as I have done to Shiloh; (See Gill on “^{Q172}Jeremiah 7:12”).

Ver. 15. *And I will cast you out of my sight*, etc.] Or, “from before my face”, or “faces”^{f157}; out of the land of Judea, and cause them to go into captivity; and so the Targum paraphrases it,

“I will cause you to remove out of the land of the house of my majesty:”

as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim; or Israel, as the Targum; that is, the ten tribes so called, because Ephraim, a principal tribe, and the metropolis of the kingdom, was in it, and Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes, was of it: now, as they were carried captive into Babylon, so should the Jews; or they of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; who could not expect to fare better than their brethren, who were more in number than they; and especially since they were guilty of the same sins.

Ver. 16. *Therefore pray not thou for this people*, etc.] These are the words of the Lord to the Prophet Jeremiah, forbidding him to pray for the people of the Jews; which he either was doing, or about to do, and which, from the great affection he had for them, he was inclined unto; wherefore, to show how much the Lord was displeased with them, and how determined he was to punish them with captivity, he orders the prophet not to make any supplication for them:

neither lift up cry nor prayer for them; referring to the gestures of lifting up the eyes and hands in prayer, and also to the frame of the heart, in the exercise of faith and holy confidence: “cry” and “prayer” are put together, because prayer is sometimes made, especially when persons are in great distress, with strong cryings and tears; (see ^{S107}Hebrews 5:7):

neither make intercession to me; or, “meet me”^{f158}; or come between him and this people, and so act the part of a mediator, of which office intercession is a branch; it properly belongs to Christ. The Jews say^{f159} there is no **h[ygp]**, “meeting”, but prayer, or that is always intended by it; for proof of which they cite this passage:

for I will not hear thee; on the behalf of them, being so highly provoked by them, and determined they should go into captivity; (see ^{Q150}Jeremiah 15:1).

Ver. 17. *Seest thou not what they do in the cities Judah,* etc.] Not in one city only, but in all of and particularly the chief of them; as follows:

and in the streets of Jerusalem? these words, with what is said next, show the reason why the prophet was forbid to pray for this people, and the Lord was so provoked with them as to cast them out of his sight; and he appeals to the prophet, and to what he saw, or which he might see; for what was done was done not in secret, but openly, in the very streets of the city; by which he might be sufficiently convinced it was but just with God to do what he determined to do with them.

Ver. 18. *The children gather wood,* etc.] In the fields, or out of the neighbouring forest; not little children, but young men, who were able to cut down trees, and bear and carry burdens of wood:

and the fathers kindle the fire; take the wood of their children, lay it in order, and put fire to it; which shows that they approved of what their children did, and that what they did was by their direction and order:

and the women knead their dough; so that every age and sex were employed in idolatrous service, which is here intended; the corruption was universal; and therefore the whole body was ripe for ruin; nor would the Lord be entreated for them: and all this preparation was,

to make cakes for the queen of heaven; the moon, as Abarbinel; which rules by night, as the sun is the king that rules by day; and which was much worshipped by the Heathens, whom the Jews imitated. Some render it,

to the work, or workmanship, of heavens;^{f160} that is, to the whole host of heaven, sun, moon, and stars, which were worshipped in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem, (^{<423>}2 Kings 23:5). The Targum renders it,

“to the star of heaven;”

and Jarchi interprets it of some great star in the heaven, called the queen of heaven; and thinks that these cakes had the impress of a star upon them; (see ^{<318>}Amos 5:26) where mention is made of “Chiun, your image, the star of your god”. The word “chiun” is akin to the word here translated cakes, and thought to be explained by a star; see also (^{<418>}Acts 7:43) but it seems rather to be the moon, which is expressly called by Apuleius^{f161} the queen of heaven; and often by others Coelestis; and Urania by the Africans, as

Tertullian^{f162} and Herodian^{f163} affirm; as also Beltis, by Abydenus^{f164}; and Baaltis, by Philo-Byblius, or Sanchoniatho^{f165}; which have the signification of “queen”; and these cakes might have the form of the moon upon them, and be made and offered in imitation of the shewbread:

and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods; not different from the queen of heaven, and the hosts thereof; for to her and them drink offerings were poured out, (~~2448~~Jeremiah 44:18,19) but other gods besides the one, only, living, and true God:

that they may provoke me to anger; not that this was their intention, but so it was eventually.

Ver. 19. *Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord*, etc.] No: he cannot be provoked to anger as men are; anger does not fall upon him as it does on men; there is no such affection in God as there is in men; his Spirit cannot be irritated and provoked in the manner that the spirits of men may be; and though sin, and particularly idolatry, is disagreeable to him, contrary to his nature, and repugnant to his will; yet the damage arising from it is more to men themselves than to him; and though he sometimes does things which are like to what are done by men when they are angry, yet in reality there is no such perturbation in God as there is in men:

do they not provoke themselves to the confusion of their own faces? the greatest hurt that is done is done to themselves; they are the sufferers in the end; they bring ruin and destruction upon themselves; and therefore have great reason to be angry with themselves, since what they do issues in their own shame and confusion. The Targum is,

“do they think that they provoke me? saith the Lord; is it not for evil to themselves, that they may be confounded in their works?”

Ver. 20. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God*, etc.] Since these are their thoughts, and this the fruit of their doings:

behold, my anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place; like fire, to consume and destroy it; meaning Jerusalem, which was burned with fire; as an emblem of God’s wrath, and an instance of his vengeance upon it, for sins; which came down in great abundance, like a storm or tempest:

upon man and upon beast; upon beasts for the sake of man, they being his property, and for his use; otherwise they are innocent, and do not deserve the wrath of God, nor are they sensible of it:

and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of your ground; which should be blighted by nipping winds, or cut down and trampled upon by the Chaldean army:

and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched; that is, the wrath of God shall burn like fire, and shall not cease until it has executed the whole will of God in the punishment of his people.

Ver. 21. *Thus saith the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel*, etc.] The Lord of armies above and below, and the covenant God of the people of Israel; who were bound to serve him, not only by the laws of creation, and the bounties of Providence, but were under obligation so to do by the distinguishing blessings of his goodness bestowed upon them; wherefore their idolatry, and other sins committed against him, were the more heinous and aggravated:

put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh; that is, add one offering to another; offer every kind of sacrifice, and, when you have done, eat the flesh of them yourselves; for that is all the advantage that comes by them; they are not acceptable to me, as Jarchi observes, therefore why should you lose them? burnt offerings were wholly consumed, and nothing was left of them to eat; but of other sacrifices there were, particularly the peace offerings; which the Jewish commentators think are here meant by sacrifices; and therefore the people are bid to join them together, that they might have flesh to eat; which was all the profit arising to them by legal sacrifices. The words seem to be sarcastically spoken; showing the unacceptableness of legal sacrifices to God, when sin was indulged, and the unprofitableness of them to men.

Ver. 22. *For I spake not unto your fathers*, etc.] Meaning not Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but Moses, Aaron, and others, who were living at the time of the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, as appears by what follows:

nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings, or sacrifices; these are not in the decalogue or ten commands; these are no part of that law or covenant, but are an appendage or addition to it; and though they are of early institution

and use, yet they never were appointed for the sake of themselves, but for another end; they were types of Christ, and were designed to lead the faith of the people of God to him; they never were intended as proper expiations of sin, and much less to cover and encourage immorality; whenever therefore they were offered up in a hypocritical manner, and without faith in Christ, and in order to atone for sinful actions, without any regard to the sacrifice of Christ, they were an abomination to the Lord. These were not the only things the Lord commanded the children of Israel; nor the chief and principal ones; and in comparison of others, of more consequence and moment, were as none at all; and which are next mentioned.

Ver. 23. *But this thing commanded I them, saying,* etc.] This was the sum and substance of what was then commanded, even obedience to the moral law; this was the main and principal thing enjoined, and to which the promise was annexed:

obey my voice: the word of the Lord, his commands, the precepts of the decalogue; obedience to which was preferable to the sacrifices of the ceremonial law; (see ⁽¹⁹⁵²⁾1 Samuel 15:22), wherefore it follows:

and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; the meaning is, that while they were obedient to him, he would protect them from their enemies, and continue them in their privileges and blessings, which he had bestowed upon them as his peculiar people:

and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you; not only in some of them, but in all of them; not merely in the observance of legal sacrifices, but chiefly in the performance of moral actions; even in all the duties of religion, in whatsoever is required in the law, respecting God or man:

that it may be well unto you; that they might continue in the land which was given them for an inheritance, and enjoy all the blessings promised to their obedience.

Ver. 24. *But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear,* etc.] Neither to the law that was given them, nor to the promises that were made unto them, this was the case of the Jewish fathers, and also of their posterity, to whom belonged the law, and the promises, and the service of God:

but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart; what their evil heart imagined, advised and directed to, that they attended to, walked in, and pursued after. The heart of man is evil; it is desperately

wicked, even wickedness itself; and so is every thought and every imagination of the thoughts of it and all its counsels, machinations and contrivances; and therefore the consequence of walking in these, or steering the course of life according to them, must be bad:

and went backward, and not forward; they went backwards from the ways of God, and walked not in them. The Targum is,

“they turned the back in my worship, and did not put my fear before their face;”

or else this may design, not their sin, but their punishment, as Kimchi interprets it; they did not prosper, but suffered adversity; a curse, and not a blessing, attended the works of their hands.

Ver. 25. *Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day*, etc.] That is, in all generations; ever since their first coming out of Egypt, they had been disobedient to the commands of God, and had walked after their own hearts’ lusts, and had gone backward, and not forward; for this is not to be connected with what follows:

I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them; which should be rendered, “although I have sent”^{f166}; which is an aggravation of their sin, that they should continue in their disobedience, though the Lord sent to them to exhort and warn them, not one, or two, of his servants the prophets, but all of them, and that daily; who rose early in the morning, which denotes their care and diligence to do their message; and which, because they were sent of the Lord, and did his work as he directed them, it is attributed to himself; and of these there was a constant succession, from the time of their coming out of Egypt unto that day; which shows the goodness of God to that people, and their slothfulness, hardness, and obstinacy.

Ver. 26. *Yet they hearkened not unto me*, etc.] Speaking by the prophets: *nor inclined their ear*; to what was said to them; would not listen to it, and much less obey what was commanded them:

but hardened their neck; and so became stiffnecked, and would not submit to bear the yoke of the law:

they did worse than their fathers; every generation grew more and more wicked, and went on to be so until the measure of their iniquity was filled up; hence it follows:

Ver. 27. *Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them*, etc.]

Before mentioned in the chapter; exhortations to duty, dehortations from sin, promises and threatenings:

but they will not hearken to thee: so as to reform from their evil ways, and do the will of God; they will neither be allured by promises, nor awed by menaces:

thou shalt also call unto them; with a loud voice, showing great vehemency and earnestness, being concerned for their good, and knowing the danger they were in:

but they will not answer thee; this the Lord knew, being God omniscient; and therefore, when it came to pass, it would be a confirmation to the prophet of his mission; and being told of it beforehand, was prepared to meet with and expect such a reception from them; so that he would not be discouraged at it; and at the same time it would confirm the character given of this people before.

Ver. 28. *But thou shalt say unto them*, etc.] Having found by experience, after long speaking and calling to them, that they are a disobedient and incorrigible people:

this is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God; who, though the Lord is their God, and has chosen and avouched them to be his special people, whom he has distinguished by special favours; yet what he says by his prophets they pay no regard unto, and are no better than the Gentiles, which know not God:

nor receiveth correction; or “instruction”^{f167}; so as to be reclaimed, and made the better; neither by the word, nor by the rod; neither had any effect upon them:

truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth; neither faith nor faithfulness is in them; nothing but lying, hypocrisy, and insincerity.

Ver. 29. *Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away*, etc.] This supplement is made, because the word is feminine; and therefore cannot be directed to the prophet, but to Jerusalem, and its inhabitants; shaving the

head is a sign of mourning, (^{<1812>}Job 1:20) and this is enjoined, to show that there would soon be a reason for it; wherefore it follows:

and take up a lamentation on high places: that it might be heard afar off; or because of the idolatry frequently committed in high places. The Targum is,

“pluck off the hair for thy great ones that are carried captive, and take up a lamentation for the princes:”

for the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath; a generation of men, deserving of the wrath of God, and appointed to it, on whom he determined to pour it out; of which his rejection and forsaking of them was a token: this was remarkably true of that generation in which Christ and his apostles lived, who disbelieved the Messiah, and had no faith in him, and spoke lying and blasphemous words concerning him; and therefore were rejected and forsaken by the Lord; and wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

Ver. 30. *For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the Lord,* etc.] Meaning not a single action only, but a series, a course of evil actions; and those openly, in a daring manner, not only before men, but in the sight of God, and in contempt of him, like the men of Sodom, (^{<0133>}Genesis 13:13):

they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to defile it; that is, set their idols in the temple; here Manasseh set up a graven image of the grove, (^{<1207>}2 Kings 21:7) which was done, as if it was done on purpose to defile it.

Ver. 31. *And they have built the high places of Tophet,* etc.] Where was the idol Moloch; and which place had its name, as Jarchi thinks, from the beating of drums, that the parents of the children that were burnt might not hear the cry of them: which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom; a valley near Jerusalem, and lay to the south of it, (^{<0158>}Joshua 15:8 18:16):

to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire: which was done, as Jarchi says, by putting them into the arms of the brasen image Moloch, heated hot. The account he gives of Tophet is this,

“Tophet is Moloch, which was made of brass; and they heated him from his lower parts; and his hands being stretched out, and made

hot, they put the child between his hands, and it was burnt; when it vehemently cried out; but the priests beat a drum, that the father might not hear the voice of his son, and his heart might not be moved:”

but in this he is mistaken; for “Tophet” was not the name of an idol, but of a place, as is clear from this and the following verse. There is some agreement between this account of Jarchi, and that which Diodorus Siculus^{f168} gives of Saturn, to whom children were sacrificed by the Carthaginians; who had, he says, a brasen image of Saturn, which stretched out his hands, inclining to the earth; so that a child put upon them rolled down, and fell into a chasm full of fire:

which I commanded them not: not in my law, as the Targum; nor by any of the prophets, as Jarchi paraphrases it; he commanded them, as Kimchi observes, to burn their beasts, but not their sons and daughters. The instance of Abraham offering up Isaac will not justify it. The case of Jephthah’s daughter, if sacrificed, was not by divine command. The giving of seed to Moloch, and letting any pass through the fire to him, is expressly forbidden, (~~CR21~~ Leviticus 18:21 20:23):

neither came it into my heart; it was not so much as thought of by him, still less desired, and much less commanded by him. Jarchi’s note is,

“though I spoke to Abraham to slay his son, it did not enter into my heart that he should slay him, but to make known his righteousness.”

Ver. 32. *Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord,* etc.] And they were coming on apace; a little longer, and they would be come; for it was but a few years after this ere Jerusalem was besieged and taken by the army of the Chaldeans, and the slaughter made after mentioned:

that it shall no more be called Tophet: no more be used for such barbarous and idolatrous worship; and no more have its name from such a shocking circumstance:

nor the valley of the son of Hinnom; as it had been from the times of Joshua:

but the valley of slaughter: or, “of the slain”; as the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; because of the multitude of men that should be killed there, or brought there to be buried; as follows:

for they shall bury in Tophet till there be no place: till there be no more room to bury there; or, “because there was no place”^{f169} elsewhere; the number of the slain being so many: this was in righteous judgment, that where they had sacrificed their children, there they should be slain, at least buried.

Ver. 33. *And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth*, etc.] That is, those which remain unburied, for which there will be found no place to bury them in; all places, particularly Tophet, being so full of dead bodies; not to have a burial, which is here threatened, was accounted a great judgment:

and none shall fray them away; or frighten them away; that is, drive away the fowls and the beasts from the carcasses. The sense is, either that there should be such a vast consumption of men, that there would be none left to do this, and so the fowls and beasts might prey upon the carcasses without any disturbance; or else that those that were left would be so devoid of humanity, as not to do this office for the dead.

Ver. 34. *Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem*, etc.] Signifying that the devastation should not only be in and about Jerusalem, but should reach all over the land of Judea; since in all cities, towns, and villages, would cease

the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness; upon any account whatever; and, instead of that, mourning, weeping, and lamentation:

the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; no marrying, and giving in marriage, and so no expressions of joy on such occasions; and consequently no likelihood, at present, of re-peopling the city of Jerusalem, and the other cities of Judah:

for the land shall be desolate; without people to dwell in it, and till it. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, “the whole land”.