

# CHAPTER 10

## INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 10

This chapter shows that there is no comparison to be made between God and the idols of the Gentiles; represents the destruction of the Jews as near at hand; and is closed with some petitions of the prophet. It begins by way of preface with an exhortation to hear the word of the Lord, and a dehortation not to learn the way of the Heathens, or be dismayed at their signs, since their customs were in vain, (<sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 10:1-3) which lead on to expose their idols, and set forth the greatness and glory of God. Their idols are described by the matter and makers of them, (<sup>2408</sup>Jeremiah 10:3,4,9) and from their impotence to speak, to stand, to move, or do either good or evil, (<sup>2404</sup>Jeremiah 10:4,5), but, on the other hand, God is described by the greatness of his name and power, and by the reverence that belongs unto him; in comparison of whom all the wise men of the nations are brutish, foolish, and vain, (<sup>2406</sup>Jeremiah 10:6-8), by the epithets of true, living, and everlasting, and by the terribleness of his wrath, (<sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 10:10), by his power and wisdom, in making the heavens and the earth, in causing thunder and lightning, wind and rain, when the gods that have no share in these shall utterly perish, (<sup>2401</sup>Jeremiah 10:11-13) their makers being brutish, and brought to shame; and they falsehood and breathless vanity, the work of errors, and so shall come to ruin, (<sup>2404</sup>Jeremiah 10:14,15), but he, who is Jacob's portion, and whose inheritance Israel is, is not like them; being the former of all things, and his name the Lord of hosts, (<sup>2406</sup>Jeremiah 10:16) and next follows a prophecy of the destruction of the Jews; wherefore they are bid to gather up their wares, since in a very little time, and at once, the Lord would fling them out of the land, and bring them into distress, (<sup>2407</sup>Jeremiah 10:17,18), upon which the prophet expresses his sympathy with his people in trouble, and the part of grief he took and bore with them, (<sup>2409</sup>Jeremiah 10:19), the particulars of his distress, through the desolation of the land, and the captivity of the people, with the cause and authors of it, by whose means these things were brought upon them, are mentioned, (<sup>2400</sup>Jeremiah 10:20,21), and the Chaldean army, the instruments of their ruin, are represented as just at hand, (<sup>2402</sup>Jeremiah 10:22), when the prophet,

directing himself to God, acknowledges the impotence of man in general to help and guide himself, deprecates correction in anger to himself in particular, and prays that the wrath of God might be poured down upon the Heathens, by whom his people were devoured, consumed, and made desolate, (<sup>240B</sup>Jeremiah 10:23-25).

**Ver. 1.** *Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel.*] Or, “upon you”; or, “concerning you”<sup>f203</sup>; it may design the judgment of God decreed and pronounced upon them; or the prophecy of it to them, in which they were nearly concerned; or the word of God in general, sent unto them by his prophets, which they were backward of hearing; and seems to refer particularly to what follows.

**Ver. 2.** *Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the Heathen,* etc.] Of the nations round about them, particularly the Chaldeans; meaning their religious ways, their ways of worship, their superstition and idolatry, which they were very prone unto, and many of which they had learned already; and were in danger of learning more, as they were about to be dispersed in divers countries, and especially in Chaldea, which was a very superstitious and idolatrous nation:

*and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven;* by which are meant, not any extraordinary signs, such as are predicted in (<sup>240B</sup>Joel 2:30,31), and by our Lord, as signs of the last destruction of Jerusalem, and of his coming, and of the end of the world, (<sup>240B</sup>Matthew 24:3,29 <sup>240C</sup>Luke 21:25-28), but ordinary signs, which are no other than the sun, and moon, and stars, which are set up for signs and seasons, and days and years, (<sup>240H</sup>Genesis 1:14), and as long as they are observed as signs of places and of times, it is well enough; but if more is attributed unto them, as portending things future, and as having an influence on the birth and death, dispositions and actions of men, when in such a conjunction, situation, and position, it is wrong; which is what is called judicial astrology, and to which the Chaldeans were much addicted, and is here condemned; nor should men possess themselves with fears with what shall befall them on such accounts, since all things are under the determination, direction, and influence of the God of heaven, and not the signs of them; especially they should not be so observed as to be worshipped, and to be so awed by them as to fear that evil things will befall, if they are not; and to this sense is the Syriac version, “the signs of the heavens do not worship, or fear”. Jarchi interprets them of

the eclipses of the luminaries, which may be thought to forbode some dreadful things<sup>f204</sup>:

*for the Heathen are dismayed at them*; which is a reason why the people of God should not, because it is a Heathenish fear; or, “though the Heathen”<sup>f205</sup>, etc.; though they are frightened at such and such conjunctions and positions of the stars, and fear that such and such dreadful things will follow; and never regard the supreme Being and first cause of all things; yet such who have the knowledge of the true God, and a revelation of his will, ought not to be terrified hereby; (see <sup><2473></sup>Isaiah 47:13). This text is brought to prove that the Israelites are not under any planet<sup>f206</sup>; since the Heathens are dismayed at them, but not they.

**Ver. 3.** *For the customs of the people are vain*, etc.] Or, “their decrees”, or “statutes”<sup>f207</sup>, their determinations and conclusions, founded upon the observation of the stars; or, their “rites and ceremonies”<sup>f208</sup> in religion, in the worship of the sun and moon, and the hosts of heaven. The Syriac version is, “the idols of the people are nothing”; and which appears by what follows:

*for one cutteth a tree out of the forest (the work of the hands of the workman) with the axe*; not for building, or for burning, but to make a god of; the vanity, stupidity, and folly of which are manifest, when it is considered that the original of it is a tree that grew in the forest; the matter and substance of it the body and trunk of a tree cut down with an axe, and then hewed with the same, and planed with a plane, and formed into the image of a man, or of some creature; and now, to fall down and worship this must be vanity and madness to the last degree; (see <sup><2443></sup>Isaiah 44:13-17 45:20).

**Ver. 4.** *They deck it with silver and with gold*, etc.] Cover it with plates of silver and gold, for the sake of ornament, that it may look grand, majestic, and venerable; and by this means draw the eye and attention, and so the devotion of people to it:

*they fasten it with nails and hammers, that it move not*. The sense is, either that the idol was fastened to some post or pillar, or in some certain place on a pedestal, that it might not fall, it not being able otherwise to support itself; or the plates of silver and gold, as Kimchi thinks, were fastened to the idol with nails and hammers, that so they might not be taken away from

it; for, were it not for the nails, the god would not be able to keep his silver and golden deckings.

**Ver. 5.** *They are upright as the palm tree*, etc.] Being nailed to a post, or fastened to a pillar, or set upon a pedestal, and so stand erect without bending any way; and are like a palm tree, which is noted for its uprightness; hence the church's stature is compared to it, (<sup><2100></sup>Song of Solomon 7:7), here it is a sarcasm, and a bitter one:

*but speak not*; man, that is of an erect stature, in which he differs from other creatures, has the faculty of speech, which they that go upon four feet have not; but the idols of the Gentiles, though erect, have not the power of speaking a word; and therefore can give no answer to their worshippers; (see <sup><4985></sup>Psalm 115:5 <sup><1183></sup>1 Kings 18:26),

*they must needs be borne*: or, "in carrying be carried",<sup>f209</sup>; when being made they are fixed in the designed place, or are moved from place to place; they are then carried in men's arms, or on their shoulders:

*because they cannot go*; they have no life, and so are incapable of motion of themselves; they have feet, but walk not; and cannot arise and bestir themselves for the help of those that pray unto them, (<sup><4987></sup>Psalm 115:7),

*be not afraid of them, for they cannot do evil*; that is, inflict judgment, cause drought, famine, or pestilence, or any other evil or calamity:

*neither is it also in them to do good*; to give rains and fruitful seasons, or bestow any favour, temporal or spiritual; (see <sup><2442></sup>Jeremiah 14:21).

**Ver. 6.** *Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord*, etc.] None like him, for the perfections of his nature, for the works of his hands, and for the instances of his kindness and beneficence, both in a way of grace and providence; there is none like him for doing good, or doing evil; that is, for bestowing favours, or inflicting punishments; there is none like him for goodness or greatness, as follows:

*thou art great*; in his nature; of great power, wisdom, faithfulness, truth, and goodness; and in his works of creation and providence, and in everything in which he is concerned; and greatness is to be ascribed to him, and greatly is he to be praised; and all the glory due unto his name is to be given him:

*and thy name is great in might*; his name is himself, and his greatness much appears in the exertion of the attribute of his power and might; in making all things out of nothing, in upholding the whole creation, and in the government of the universe; or the fame of him is great through the effects of his power, which are to be seen throughout the earth.

**Ver. 7.** *Who would not fear thee, O King of nations?* etc.] Not that the fear of him among the nations was general, or that he was owned by them as their King; but inasmuch as of right he was their King, so he ought to have been feared and revered by them; and it was an instance of great stupidity and ingratitude not to do it. The Targum renders it,

“King of all people;”

and the Syriac version, “King of all worlds”; some reference seems to be had to this passage in (<sup><6618></sup>Revelation 15:3,4), where, instead of “King of nations”, the Lord is called “King of saints”; and there refers to a time when he will be feared, that is, worshipped and served by all nations, as he ought to be:

*for to thee doth it appertain*; that is, fear belongs to him, it is his due; and this, with keeping the commandments of God, is the whole duty of man. The Vulgate Latin version is, “thine is the glory”; honour or praise, as the Syriac version; and so Jarchi interprets it of beauty or glory; but the Targum,

“thine is the kingdom;”

and so Kimchi; and to which agrees the Arabic version.

*Forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee*; that is, among all the wise kings of the nations, and all their wise counsellors, there is none like unto God for wisdom, or for glory and majesty; there is none of them that has such a kingdom as he has, or that governs it as he does; and as all their power and government, so all that wisdom by which they manage their political affairs, are from him.

**Ver. 8.** *But they are altogether brutish and foolish*, etc.] In comparison of the Lord, there is no knowledge and wisdom in them, this is a certain fact; they are verily brutish and foolish; or they are one and all so, there is not a wise man among them: or, “in one thing they are brutish”,<sup>f210</sup> etc.; namely,

in their idolatry; however wise they may be in other respects, in this they are foolish: or, to give no more instances of their brutishness<sup>f211</sup> and folly, this one is sufficient, even what follows,

*the stock is a doctrine of vanities*; or what they teach persons, as to worship the trunk of a tree, or any idol of metal, or of wood, is a most vain and foolish thing, and argues gross stupidity and folly, and proves them to be brutish, and without understanding.

**Ver. 9.** *Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish*, etc.] In Cilicia, where the Apostle Paul was born; according to Josephus, as Jerom says, it was a country in India. The Targum renders it, from Africa, and calls it silver “rolled up”, or “covered”; so the Vulgate Latin; such was beaten with a hammer into plates, and might be rolled up for better convenience of shipment; and with which they covered and decked their idols, to make them look glittering and pompous, and command some awe and reverence from the common people. The Arabic version renders it, “solid silver”; it being the same word from whence the firmament of heaven has its name, or the wide expanse; hence we render it “spread”, stretched, and drawn out into plates. The Syriac version is, “the best silver”; as very likely that from Tarshish was reckoned.

*And gold from Uphaz*; called sometimes “the gold of Uphaz”; (<sup>2705</sup>Daniel 10:5) or “Fess”; perhaps the same with the gold of Ophir, (<sup>1886</sup>Job 28:16) and so the Targum here calls it, “gold from Ophir”; to which agrees the Syriac version; and was esteemed the best gold.

*The work of workmen, and of the hands of the founder*; melter or refiner, being first purified by him from dross, and then wrought into plates, and polished, and fitted for the idol; and all this being owing to the art and workmanship of men, shows the brutishness and ignorance of the people, in worshipping it as a god. Blue and purple is their clothing; not the clothing of the workmen, but of the idols; these colours seem to be chosen to dazzle the eyes of the populace, and cause them to entertain a high opinion of them; the “blue” being the colour of the heavens, and the “purple” what is wore by kings; and so both may denote their deity and dominion. But, alas!

*they are all the work of cunning men*: both the idols, and their clothing; especially the latter is meant, which were curiously wrought and embroidered by men skilful in that art.



they cannot bring down rain, and out of the earth they cannot produce fruit:”

so Jarchi observes: it follows in the text,

*the gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens;* which the Targum paraphrases thus,

“they and their worshippers shall perish from the earth, and shall be consumed from under these heavens.”

The words may be considered as a prediction that so it would be; or as an imprecation that so it might be, and be read, “let the gods”, etc.; and considered either way, being put into the mouth of the godly Jews in Babylon, to be openly pronounced by them in the midst of idolaters, and in answer to them, when they should be enticed to idolatry, show how open and ingenuous men should be in the profession of the true God, and his religion and worship: and it may be observed, against the deniers of the true deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, that if he is not that God that made the heavens and the earth, he lies under this imprecation or prediction.

**Ver. 12.** *He hath made the earth by his power,* etc.] The Targum considers these words as a continuation of the answer of the Jews to the Chaldeans, paraphrasing them thus,

“and so shall ye say unto them, `we worship him who hath made the earth by his power’ :”

who stands opposed to the gods that made not the heavens and the earth, that had no title to deity, nor right to worship; but the true God has both; and his making the earth out of nothing, and hanging it upon nothing, and preserving it firm and stable, are proofs of his almighty power, and so of his deity; and consequently that he ought to be worshipped, and he only.

*He hath established the world by his wisdom;* upon the rivers and floods; or he hath poised it in the air; or he hath disposed it in an orderly, regular, and beautiful manner, as the word<sup>f213</sup> used signifies; by making it terraqueous, partly land, and partly water; by opening in it fountains and rivers; by diversifying it with hills and vales, with wood and arable land, etc.; all which show the wisdom as well as the power of God.



*And hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion*; as a canopy over the earth, as a tent to dwell in; and which is beautifully bespangled with the luminaries in it; hence it has the name of expanse, or the firmament of heaven.

**Ver. 13.** *When he uttereth his voice*, etc.] Declares his will and pleasure, issues out his commands; or when he thunders, for thunder is his voice, (<sup><1870></sup>Job 37:2-5 40:9):

*there is a multitude of waters in the heavens*; they are covered with clouds, and these clouds full of water; which is brought about by the following means:

*and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth*; from the north and south, as Kimchi observes from the philosophers; or from all parts of the earth, the most distant, and particularly from the sea, the border of the earth, from whence clouds arise, being exhaled by the sun; (see <sup><1183></sup>1 Kings 18:43,44).

*He maketh lightnings with rain*; which very often go together, and the one makes way for the other, (<sup><1896></sup>Job 28:26), though they are so opposite one to another:

*and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures*; the caverns of the earth, or his fists, in which he holds it, (<sup><2104></sup>Proverbs 30:4) and lets its loose at his pleasure; he has plenty of it in reserve; he is Lord over it; he sends it forth when he pleases, and it fulfils his will and his word.

**Ver. 14.** *Every man is brutish in his knowledge*, etc.] Or science of making an idol, whether it be of wood, or of gold, or silver, or brass; he is no better than a brute, if he thinks, when he has made it, he has made a god: or, “because of knowledge”<sup>f214</sup>; for want of it; being without the knowledge of God and divine things, he is like the beasts that perish, (<sup><1940></sup>Psalms 49:20):

*every founder is confounded by the graven image*; or put to shame on account of it; since, after all his art, and care, and trouble, in melting and refining, and casting it into a form, it is no more than a piece of gold, or silver, or brass, and has no deity, nor anything like it, in it:

*for his molten image is falsehood*; it is a lie, when it is said to be a god; and it deceives those who worship it, and place any confidence in it.

Kimchi renders it, “his covering”<sup>f215</sup>. The covering of the idol with gold and silver, with blue and purple, as in (<sup><240></sup>Jeremiah 10:4,9), is all a piece of deceit, to impose upon the people, and lead them into idolatry:

*and there is no breath in them*; they are mere stocks and stones, lifeless and inanimate creatures; they have neither life themselves, nor can they give it to others.

**Ver. 15.** *They are vanity*, etc.] They are the fruit of the vain imagination of men; to worship them shows the vanity of the human mind; and they are vain things to trust to:

*and the work of errors*; of erroneous men, and which lead men into errors; and are worthy to be laughed at, as the Targum paraphrases it.

*In the time of their visitation they shall perish*; or in the time that I shall visit upon them their sins, as the Targum; that is, when Babylon should be destroyed by the Medes and Persians, as Kimchi interprets it; when their idols were destroyed also; (see <sup><240></sup>Isaiah 46:1).

**Ver. 16.** *The portion of Jacob is not like them*, etc.] Like those idols, vain, and the work of errors, or shall perish; even the true God, who is the portion of his people, of Jacob, whom he has chosen and redeemed; who call themselves by the name of Jacob, and are Israelites indeed, and plain hearted ones; and who have seen the insufficiency of all other portions, and the excellency of this; for there is none like it, none so large, so rich, so satisfying, and so durable; for God is the portion of his, in all the perfections of his nature, which all, some way or other, are for their good and advantage; and in all his persons, and under every character; even all he has is theirs, now and hereafter:

*for he is the former of all things*: which idols are not, being the maker of creatures themselves; wherefore the Creator must be a better portion than they; and as he has all things at his dispose, he bestows them on his people, and they cannot want:

*and Israel is the rod of his inheritance*; chosen and possessed by him, and dear unto him; and wonderful this is, that on the one side he should be the portion of his people; and, on the other, that they should be his portion and his inheritance, when so few in number, and despised by and among men, and but sinful dust and ashes; and especially when what follows is considered:

*the Lord of hosts is his name*: his title is the Lord of armies, above and below; he rules both in heaven and in earth, and has the inhabitants of both worlds, angels and men, at his command; and yet he chooses a handful of people to be his possession and inheritance.

**Ver. 17.** *Gather up thy wares out of the land*, etc.] Or thy merchandise, as the Targum; or thy substance, as the Septuagint; all valuable effects and goods that are movable, which might be carried from place to place. The meaning is, that the Jews would gather up their riches from the several parts of the land of Judea, and bring them to Jerusalem, a fortified place; or they would be in danger of falling into the hands of the enemy. Kimchi interprets the words as if spoken of Babylon, and directed to the Chaldeans, not to be elated with the captivity of Israel; and because the word [nk signifies “to humble and subdue” he takes the sense to be,

“gather in or contract thine humiliation or subjection;”

that is, of other nations; refrain thyself, or cease from subduing kingdoms; that is now at an end, it shall be no more so; but the words manifestly respect the people of the Jews, as is clear from the next verse.

*O inhabitant of the fortress*; of the fortress of Zion, or the fortified city, Jerusalem. The Targum is,

“O thou that dwellest in the strong place, in the fortified cities.”

It may be rendered, “that dwellest in the siege”<sup>f216</sup>; in the besieged city, Jerusalem.

**Ver. 18.** *For thus saith the Lord*, etc.] This is a reason enforcing the exhortation in the preceding verse, and shows that the same people that are spoken of here are addressed there.

*Behold, I will sling out the inhabitants of the land at this once*; meaning the inhabitants of the land of Judea; or otherwise the prophet would never have expressed such a concern for them as he does in the following verse. Their captivity is signified by the slinging of a stone out of a sling, and shows how sudden, swift, and certain, it would be: and that it would as easily and swiftly be done, and with equal force and rapidity, as a stone is slung out of a sling; and that it would be done by the Lord himself, whoever were the instruments:

*and will distress them*; or “straiten”<sup>f217</sup> them, on every side; it seems to intend the siege; or bring them into great straits and difficulties, through the pestilence, famine, sword, and captivity:

*that they may find it*; so as he had spoken by his prophets, it coming to pass exactly as they had foretold. The Targum is,

“that they may receive the punishment of their sins;”

and so the Septuagint and Arabic versions, “that thy stroke may be found”; but the Syriac version is very different from either, “that they may seek me and find”; which is an end that is sometimes answered by afflictive dispensations.

**Ver. 19.** *Woe is me for my hurt!* etc.] Or “breach”<sup>f218</sup>; which was made upon the people of the Jews, when besieged, taken, and carried captive; with whom the prophet heartily sympathized, and considered their calamities and distresses as his own; for these are the words of the prophet, lamenting the sad estate of his people.

*My wound is grievous*; causes grief, is very painful, and hard to be endured:

*but I said*; within himself, after he had thoroughly considered the matter:

*this is a grief*; an affliction, a trial, and exercise:

*and I must bear it*; patiently and quietly, since it is of God, and is justly brought upon the people for their sins.

**Ver. 20.** *My tabernacle is spoiled*, etc.] Not the temple at Jerusalem only, rather Jerusalem itself, as Kimchi; or the whole land, as the Targum,

“my land is wasted:”

the allusion is to the tents of shepherds, and denotes the unstable condition of the Jewish nation:

*and all my cords are broken*: all the rest of the cities of the land are destroyed, as Kimchi; and so the Targum,

“my cities are spoiled:”

as the cords are what the parts of the tabernacle or tent are fastened and kept together with, they may intend the strength of the nation, which lay in

its wealth, its fortresses, and the numbers of its people, now weakened, loosed, and broke.

*My children are gone forth of me*; into captivity, as the Targum interprets it; the prophet, representing Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah. The Septuagint adds, “and my sheep”; keeping on the metaphor of a shepherd, his tent, and flock.

*And they are not*; either not in the world, being destroyed by one judgment or another; or rather not in their own land, being carried captive.

*There is none to stretch forth my tent any more, and to set up my curtains*; which shows the great destruction and desolation of the land, and its inhabitants, that there would be none to set up a shepherd’s tent; perhaps the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the rest of the cities, may be meant.

**Ver. 21.** *For the pastors are become brutish*, etc.] The “kings” of Judah, so the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, as Jehoiakim and Zedekiah; though it need not be restrained to these only, but may include all inferior civil magistrates, and even all ecclesiastical rulers, who were the shepherds of the people; but these being like the brute beasts, and without understanding of civil and religious things, and not knowing how to govern the people either in a political or ecclesiastical way, were the cause of their ruin.

*And have not sought the Lord*; this is an instance of their brutishness and stupidity, and opens the source of all their mistakes and misfortunes; they did not seek the Lord for counsel, by whom kings reign well, and princes decree justice; nor doctrine from the Lord, as the Targum, as the priests and prophets should have done, in order to instruct the people, and feed them with knowledge and understanding; nor did either of them seek the glory of God in what they did, but their own interest, worldly advantage, or applause:

*therefore they shall not prosper*; in their kingdom, and in the several offices and stations in which they were. Some render the words, “therefore they do not act prudently”<sup>f219</sup>; not consulting the Lord, nor warning the people, nor giving them notice of approaching danger:

*and all their flocks shall be scattered*; the people of the Jews that were under their government, civil or ecclesiastical, should be dispersed in several nations, and especially in Chaldee; wherefore it follows:

**Ver. 22.** *Behold the noise of the bruit is come*, etc.] Or, “the voice of hearing”<sup>f220</sup>; that is, the voice heard; the report that was made that the king of Babylon had invaded the land, and was coming up to besiege Jerusalem: “and a great commotion out of the north country”; a large army from Babylon, which lay north of Judea, which came with great noise, and caused a great trembling and shaking among the inhabitants of the land whither they were coming:

*to make the cities of Judah desolate, and a den of dragons*; this shows that the whole paragraph is to be understood of the Jewish nation, and of their destruction. (See Gill on “<sup>24915</sup>Jeremiah 9:11”).

**Ver. 23.** *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself*, etc.] Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of that well known man Nebuchadnezzar, whose way was not in himself, and was not master of his own resolutions, but was under the influence and direction of divine Providence: when he set out of Babylon, he thought to have gone against the Ammonites; but when he came to a place where two ways met; the one leading to the children of Ammon, the other to Jerusalem; God changed his mind, and he steered his course to Jerusalem, to chastise Zedekiah for the breach of his oath: but the words seem to have a more general meaning; and the sense to be, that the prophet knew that it was not with him, nor with any of the godly, to escape the judgments that were coming upon them; that they were entirely in the hands of the Lord, to be guided, directed, and disposed of at his pleasure. The words may be accommodated to spiritual things and the affair of salvation; and be rendered thus, “I know, O Lord, that not for man is his way”<sup>f221</sup>; his own way is not good for him; not his sinful way, for this is opposite to God’s way, and a going out of it; it is not according to his word; it is after the course of the world; and it is a dark and crooked way, and leads to, and ends in, destruction and death, if grace prevent not: nor the way of his own righteousness; this is no way of access to God, no way of acceptance with him, no way of justification before him, no way of salvation, no way to heaven, and eternal happiness; that which is the good and right way, the only way of salvation, is not of man, in him, or with him naturally; it is not of his devising and contriving, and much less of his effecting; it is not even within his knowledge; and so far as he knows anything of it, he does not approve of it: but it is of God; the scheme of it is of his forming; it is a work wrought out by Christ; it is a way of salvation revealed in the Gospel; and the thing itself is savingly made known, and

applied by the Spirit of God; all which is known and owned when men are spiritually enlightened:

*it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*; as not in natural and civil things, much less in religious ones; a good man is one that “walks”, which supposes life and strength, without which there can be no walking; and a progression, a going on in a way; which ways are Christ, and his ordinances the path of doctrine and of duty; yet it is not even in this good man “to direct” and order “his steps” of himself; it is the Lord that must do it, and does; he can take no step aright without him; he is guided by him and his Spirit, both in the path of truth and of obedience; and hence it is that the saints persevere unto the end; (see <sup><49723></sup>Psalm 37:23 <sup><4185></sup>Proverbs 3:5,6).

**Ver. 24.** *O Lord, correct me, but with judgment*, etc.] The prophet here represents the body of the Jewish nation, especially the godly among them; he considers the troubles coming upon the nation as a correction and chastisement of the Lord; he does not refuse it, or desire it might not come upon them; he knew the chastisements of a father are for good; he only entreats it might be “with judgment”; not in strict justice, as his and the sins of his people deserved, then they would not be able to bear it; but in measure and moderation, with a mixture of mercy and tenderness in it; and in a distinguishing manner, so as to make a difference between his own people and others, in the correction of them; (see <sup><3546></sup>Ezekiel 34:16,17):

*not in thine anger*; in vindictive wrath, and hot displeasure, which is elsewhere deprecated by the saints, (<sup><4911></sup>Psalm 6:1 38:1):

*lest thou bring me to nothing*; or “lessen me”<sup>f222</sup>, or “make me little”; or make us few, as the Arabic version; or bring to a small number, as the Syriac; and so to utter ruin.

**Ver. 25.** *Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not*, etc.] Make a difference between thy people that know thee, and make a profession of thy name, and worship thee, and the Heathen, the nations of the world who are ignorant of God, and worship stocks and stones; while thou correctest thine own people in measure, in love, and not in wrath, pour out without measure all thy fury upon the Gentiles that know not God, and are guilty of the grossest idolatry:

*and upon the families that call not on thy name*; this does not signify single families, commonly so called; but kingdoms, as the Targum interprets it;

Heathen kingdoms and nations, that call not upon or worship the God of Israel, but their own idols; such as the family of Egypt, (<sup><3847></sup>Zechariah 14:17,18) and so it is expressed in a parallel place, (<sup><1946></sup>Psalm 79:6), which is either taken from hence, or this from thence:

*for they have eaten up Jacob, and devoured him, and consumed him, and have made his habitation desolate*; a heap of words to express the great destruction and desolation of the land of Israel, of Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah; and of their houses and dwelling places, private and public; and of their spoiling them of all their goods, substance, wealth, and riches; which is given as a reason of the above imprecation.