

# CHAPTER 18

## INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 18

This chapter expresses the sovereign power of God over his creatures, and his usual methods of dealing with them; it threatens destruction to the Jews for their idolatry; and is closed with the prophet's complaint of his persecutors, and with imprecations upon them. The sovereign power of God is expressed under the simile of a potter working in his shop, and making and marring vessels at pleasure, (<sup><2480></sup>Jeremiah 18:1-4); the application of which to God, and the house of Israel, is in (<sup><2485></sup>Jeremiah 18:5,6); and is illustrated by his usual dealings with kingdoms and nations; for though he is a sovereign Being, yet he acts both in a kind and equitable way; and as the potter changes his work, so he changes the dispensations of his providence, of which two instances are given; the one is, that having threatened ruin to a nation, upon their repentance and good behaviour he revokes the threatening, (<sup><2487></sup>Jeremiah 18:7,8); and the other is, that having made a declaration of good to a people, upon their sin and disobedience he recalls it, and punishes them for their wickedness, (<sup><2489></sup>Jeremiah 18:9,10); then follows a prophecy of the destruction of the Jews in particular, in which they are exhorted to repentance to prevent it; their obstinacy is observed; their folly in departing from God, and worshipping idols, is exposed; and they are threatened with utter ruin, (<sup><2491></sup>Jeremiah 18:11-17); the conspiracy and evil designs of the Jews against the prophet, their malice and ingratitude, are complained of by him, (<sup><2493></sup>Jeremiah 18:18-20); his imprecations upon them, and prayers for their destruction, are delivered out in (<sup><2495></sup>Jeremiah 18:21-23).

**Ver. 1.** *The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying.*] The word of prophecy, as the Targum: this is a distinct prophecy from the former, though it may be connected with it; it referring to the destruction threatened in the latter part of the preceding chapter.

**Ver. 2.** *Arise, and go down to the potter's house,* etc.] Which, no doubt, was well known to the prophet; but where it was is not certain. Some think Jeremiah was in the temple, and this house was beneath it, and therefore he is bid to go down to it; but of this there is no certainty, nor even

probability: it is most likely that this house was without the city, perhaps near the potter's field, (<sup>f370</sup>Matthew 27:10); and which lying low, he is ordered to go down to it:

*and there I will cause thee to hear my words*; there the Lord would tell him what he had further to say to him, and what he should say to the people; and where by lively representations, by sensible objects before him, he would cause him to understand more clearly what he said and designed to do: as God sometimes represented things to the minds of the prophets in dreams and visions, setting before them mental objects, and raising in their minds ideas of things; so sometimes he represented things to them by real visible objects, and, by similes taken from thence, conveyed unto them a clear and distinct knowledge of his mind and will, and they to the people; which was the case here.

**Ver. 3.** *Then I went down to the potter's house*, etc.] He did as the Lord commanded him; he was obedient to the divine will; he went to hear what the Lord had to say to him there, and to observe such things, from whence he might learn instruction for himself and others:

*and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels*; the Targum renders it "upon a seat"; or "his seats", as Junius and Tremellius; but it signifies not the instrument on which the potter sat while he worked, but that on which he did his work. The Septuagint version renders it, "on stones"<sup>f375</sup>; and R. Jonah<sup>f376</sup> says, that in some countries the potter's instrument is in the likeness of two millstones, the lowermost is the greatest, and the uppermost is the least. Or rather the word may signify "frames", or "moulds"<sup>f377</sup>, made of stone, in which the potter put his clay, and fashioned it: though I see no reason to depart from the signification of "wheels", which are used in the potter's work, even two of them; and so the word here is of the dual number; though one is more properly called the "wheel", and the other the "lathe", and are described as follows:

"The "potter's wheel" consists principally in its nut, which is a beam or axis, whose foot or pivot plays perpendicularly on a free stone sole, or bottom; from the four corners atop of this beam, which does not exceed two feet in height, arise four iron bars, called the spokes of the wheel; which forming diagonal lines with the beam, descend, and are fastened at bottom to the edges of a strong wooden circle, four feet in diameter, perfectly like the felloes of a coach wheel; except that it hath neither axis nor radii; and is

only joined to the beam, which serves it as an axis, by the iron bars. The top of the nut is flat, of a circular figure, and a foot in diameter. On this is laid a piece of the clay, or earth, to be turned and fashioned. The wheel thus disposed is encompassed with four sides of four different pieces of wood, sustained in a wooden frame: the hind piece, which is that whereon the workman sits, is made a little inclining towards the wheel: on the fore piece are placed the pieces of prepared earth: lastly, the side pieces serve the workman to rest his feet against; and are made inclining, to give him more or less room, according to the size of the vessels to be turned; by his side is a trough of water, wherewith from time to time he wets his hands, to prevent the earth sticking to them.----The potter having prepared his clay or earth, and laid a piece of it suitable to the work he intends on the top of the beam, sits down; his thighs and legs much expanded, and his feet rested on the side pieces, as is most convenient. In this situation he turns the wheel round, till it has got the proper velocity; when, wetting his hands in the water, he bores the cavity of the vessel, continuing to widen it from the middle; and thus turns it into form, turning the wheel afresh, and wetting his hands from time to time.----The potter's "lathe" is also a kind of "wheel", but simpler and slighter than the former; its three chief members are an iron beam or axis, three feet and a half high, and two inches in diameter; a little wooden wheel, all of a piece, an inch thick, and seven or eight in diameter, placed horizontally atop of the beam, and serving to form the vessel on; and another larger wooden wheel, all of a piece, three inches thick, and two or three feet broad, fastened to the same beam at the bottom, parallel to the horizon. The beam, or axis, turns by a pivot at bottom, in an iron stand. The workman gives the motion to the lathe with his feet, by pushing the great wheel alternately with each foot; still giving it a lesser or greater degree of motion, as his work requires<sup>f378</sup>."

Thus Jeremiah saw the potter work, or somewhat like this; for, no doubt, pottery, as other things, has been improved since his time.

**Ver. 4.** *And the vessel that he made of clay*, etc.] Which is the matter the vessel is made of:

*was marred in the hand of the potter*; while he was working it; either it fell, as the Septuagint version renders it, out of his hands, or from the beam on

which it was laid; or was spoiled by some means or other, so that it was not fit for the purpose he first intended it: or the words should be read, according to some copies, “and the vessel was marred which he made, as clay in the hand of the potter”<sup>f379</sup>; while it was clay; or moist, as Jarchi interprets it; and while it was in his hands, forming and fashioning it:

*so he made it again another vessel*; put it into another form and shape it would better serve:

*as seemed good to the potter to make [it]*; just as he pleased, and as his judgment in his art directed him; he having power over the clay to mould it as he would, and as it best answered so to do.

**Ver. 5.** *Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying.*] While he was in the potter’s house, and after he had observed his manner of working, and the change he had made in his work, the Lord spoke to him, and applied it in the following manner.

**Ver. 6.** *O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord*, etc.] Make, and mar, and remake at pleasure? certainly he could. God is a sovereign Being, and has a sovereign and uncontrollable power over his creatures; he has an indisputable right unto them, and can dispose of them as he pleases; he has as good a right to them, and as great power over them, as the potter has to and over his clay, and a better and greater; since they are made by him, and have their all from him, their being, life, and motion; whereas the clay is not made by the potter; it is only the vessel that is made of the clay by him, which has its form from him; if therefore the potter has such power over the clay, which he did not make, as to cast it into another form as it pleases him, and especially when marred; the Lord has an undoubted power over men, and a just right to change their, state and circumstances as he pleases; nor have they any reason to complain of him, especially when they have marred themselves by their own sins and transgressions; which was the present case of the house of Israel, or the Jews; (see <sup><29></sup>Isaiah 29:16 45:9 <sup><30></sup>Romans 9:20,21);

*behold, as the clay [is] in the potter’s hand*; and he can form and fashion it as he pleases, and it is not in the power of the clay to resist and hinder him:

*so [are] ye in mine hand, O house of Israel*; and I can dispose of you as I please, and put you in what circumstances it seems good unto me, drive you from your land, and scatter you among the nations; nor can you hinder me from doing this, or whatever else is my pleasure. And this his sovereign

power and pleasure, and as exercised in a way of mercy and equity, are exemplified in the following cases.

**Ver. 7.** [*At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom*, etc.] By way of threatening: or, “the moment I shall speak”<sup>v380</sup>, &c; as soon as ever I have declared concerning any people whatever, Jews or Gentiles; that if they go on in their sins, and remain impenitent, and do not turn from them, that they must expect I will quickly come out against such a nation and kingdom in a providential way, as threatened:

*to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy [it]*; as the proprietor of a garden, when it do not turn to his account, plucks up the plants, and pulls down the fences, and lets it go to ruin.

**Ver. 8.** [*If that nation against whom I have pronounced*, etc.] Such a sentence as this, should immediately, upon the above declaration, do as Nineveh did:

*turn from their evil*; their evil of sin, their evil ways and works, as an evidence of the truth of their repentance for former sins:

*I will repent of the evil that one thought to do unto them*; as they change their course of life, God will change the dispensations of his providence towards them, and not bring upon them the evil of punishment he threatened them with; in which sense repentance can only be understood of God, he doing that which is similar to what men do when they repent of anything; they stop their proceedings, and change their outward conduct; so God proceeds not to do what he threatened to do, and changes his outward behaviour to men; he wills a change, and makes one in his methods of acting, but never changes his will.

**Ver. 9.** *And [at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom*, etc.] By way of promise on the other hand: or, “and the moment I shall speak”, etc. as in (~~SHU7~~ Jeremiah 18:7); in favour to a people; signifying, that if they do that which is right and good, and continue therein, it may be expected that I will appear for and among such a nation and kingdom:

*to build and to plant [it]*; to build up its fences that have been broken down, and to plant it with pleasant plants, and make it prosperous and flourishing, and protect and defend it, and keep it safe, and in a secure

condition; so that it shall be in very thriving circumstances, and be out of the power of its enemies to hurt it.

**Ver. 10.** *If it do evil in my sight*, etc.] What is sinful, contrary to the law and will of God, openly and publicly, in a bold and daring manner:

*that it obey not my voice*: in my word, and by my prophets, but turn a deaf ear to them, and slight and despise all instructions, admonitions, and reproofs:

*then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them*; or, “do them good”<sup>f381</sup>; that is, withhold it from them, and not bestow it on them; but, on the contrary, correct or punish them according to their deserts. Thus, though God is a sovereign God, yet, in the dispensations of his providence towards kingdoms and nations, he deals with them in such a merciful and equitable manner, that there is no just reason to complain of him; and yet he maintains and keeps up his power and authority, such as the potter exercises over the clay.

**Ver. 11.** *Now therefore go to*, etc.] This is the application of the above general rules of procedure to the people of the Jews, and particularly that which relates to the destruction of a nation or kingdom, and the declaration of it in order to reclaim them:

*speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, thus saith the Lord*; or, “to the man of Judah”<sup>f382</sup>; the body of the Jewish nation, and especially the inhabitants of the metropolis of it; which was the source of sin to the whole kingdom, and on which the calamity threatened would chiefly come, if not prevented by a reformation:

*behold, I frame evil against you*; as the potter frames his clay upon the wheel, to which the allusion is; which is to be understood of the evil of punishment, but not of any secret purpose, and settled determination, in the mind of God to bring it upon them; for that is never disannulled by himself or others, or ever changed; but some operation in Providence, which began to work towards their destruction; some providential step which God had taken, and which threatened their ruin:

*and devise a device against you*; the same as before; by which it looked as if he had thought of the matter, and had contrived a scheme, which if he went on with, would issue in the subversion of their whole state:

*return you everyone from his evil way*; that so the reformation may be as general as the corruption was: it supposes a sense of the evil of their former conduct, and repentance for their sins, of which their forsaking and abstaining from them would be an evidence:

*and make your ways and your doings good*; for it is not sufficient barely to abstain from sin, which is only a negative holiness; but there must be a performance of good works, a walking in them, a constant series and course of obedience to God, according to the rule of his word.

**Ver. 12.** *And they said, there is no hope*, etc.] Or, “but they said”<sup>f383</sup>; not that there was no hope of the grace and mercy of God, upon their repentance and reformation, for that is before declared; but that they were so hardened in their sins, so fixed in their wicked courses, and so determined to go on in them, that there was no room for the prophet to hope of ever reclaiming them; signifying, that it was to little purpose to talk to them, or exhort them; his labour would be in vain; for they were at a point, and resolved to continue in their evil practices, let the consequences be what they would. Jarchi’s note is,

“but I know that they will say to thee concerning thy words, that we do not care for them;”

no, not a rush; you may as well hold your peace and say nothing; we are in no pain about future judgments, these give us no uneasiness. The Targum is,

“we are turned from thy worship;”

and we are resolved to continue as we are, and not to return to say what you will:

*but we will walk after our own devices*; God may take his way, and we will take ours; he has devised evil against us, you say, and he may bring it if he pleases; we have devised sin, and we shall go on in it:

*and we will do everyone the imagination of his evil heart*; whatsoever our hearts suggest to us as pleasant and agreeable, that we shall do, let the issue be what it will: it is not to be thought that these people expressed themselves in so many words; but this was the language of their hearts, and of their actions, known unto the Lord, and are put into this form by him, or by the prophet, expressing the real sentiments of their minds.

**Ver. 13.** *Therefore thus saith the Lord*, etc.] This being the case of the people of the Jews, and they so resolutely bent on their own ways:

*ask ye among the Heathen*; inquire among the nations of the world, the Gentiles that know not the true God, and have not the external revelation of his will, only the dim light of nature to guide them; and see if anything like this is to be found among them, as with this people, favoured with the law of God, his word and ordinances to direct them, and his prophets to teach and instruct them; suggesting that they were worse than the Heathens, and that it would be more tolerable for them, one day, than for these people:

*who hath heard such things?* as expressed in the preceding verses; such desperate words, such bold and daring expressions, such impious resolutions; for generally, when persons are reprov'd and threatened for sin, they promise amendment; or what is after related concerning their idolatries; intimating that nothing like it was ever heard of among the Gentiles; (see <sup>2420</sup>Jeremiah 2:10,11);

*the virgin of Israel hath done a very horrible thing*; the congregation of Israel, as the Targum; the people of the Jews, ironically so called; because they had been espoused to the Lord as a chaste virgin, and ought to have remained so, pure and incorrupt in the worship of him; but had committed spiritual adultery, that is, idolatry; even very gross acts of it; horrible to hear and think of; enough to make a man's hair stand an end to be told of; or what was very filthy and abominable, and to be loathed and detested, which is explained, (<sup>2485</sup>Jeremiah 18:15); unless it can be thought to refer to what goes before, concerning their dreadful resolution to continue in their evil ways.

**Ver. 14.** *Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon, [which cometh] from the rock of the field?* etc.] Lebanon was a mountain on the borders of Judea, the top of which was covered in the summertime with snow, from the whiteness of which it had its name, Lebanon; as the Alps, for the same reason, which lie between France and Italy: now, the snow being dissolved by the heat, ran in flowing streams down the rocks into the field and plain, where they might be easily come at, and drank of; and would a thirsty traveller, on a summer's day, pass by such streams as these, and not drink of them? certainly he would not leave them, but stop and drink; he must be an unwise man that should do otherwise; and yet this was what the people of the Jews did; they forsook the Lord, "the fountain of living waters"; and



who, because of the plenty of good things in him, and flowing from him to them, were as streams from Lebanon; and yet they left these crystal streams for the black and muddy waters of Sihor, or idols of Egypt, (<sup>2015</sup>Song of Solomon 4:15 <sup>2123</sup>Jeremiah 2:13,18); or the words may be rendered, “will a man leave [what comes] from the rock of the field [for] the snow of Lebanon”<sup>f384</sup>? that is, will a man neglect to drink of the water that comes out of a rock in his field, pure and clear, and is near at hand, and choose to go to Mount Lebanon to drink of the snow water, which runs down the mountain, and can never be thought so clear as what comes out of the rock? surely he will not; he must act an unwise part if he does; and such a part, and worse, did the people of the Jews act, in forsaking God:

*[or] shall the cold flowing waters which come from another place be forsaken?* or, “strange waters”<sup>f385</sup>; which come from far, from some distant rock, being conveyed in pipes, in; which they come cool, and in flowing streams, for the service of a city and its inhabitants; and who, having such a privilege, would neglect them, and drink of standing water in a pond or puddle? or, the words, as the former, may be rendered, “shall for strange frozen waters, be left flowing ones?” see Grotius.

**Ver. 15.** *Because my people hath forgotten me*, etc.] Or, “that they have forgotten me”<sup>f386</sup>; this is the horrible thing they have done, which was unheard of among the Gentiles, who were always tenacious of their gods, and the worship of them; and that foolish and unwise thing, which was like leaving pure flowing streams of water for dirty puddles. This is to be understood of their forsaking the worship of God, as the Targum interprets it, and following after idols:

*they have burnt incense to vanity*; to idols, which are vain empty things, and which cannot give their worshippers what they expect from them: or, “in vain they burn incense”<sup>f387</sup>; even to the true God, while they also sacrificed unto idols; which to do was an abomination to the Lord, (<sup>2113</sup>Isaiah 1:13); and especially burning incense to idols must be a vain thing; and so the Targum,

“to no profit a they burn incense or spices:”

*and they have caused them to stumble in their ways*; that is, either the idols they worshipped, or the false prophets caused the professing people of the Jews to stumble and fall in the ways into which they led them: and

*[from] the ancient paths*; or, “the paths of eternity”<sup>f388</sup>; which lead to eternal life; or which were of old marked out by the revealed will of God for the saints to walk in; and in which the patriarchs and people of God, in all former ages, did walk; and which were appointed from everlasting, and will remain for ever; and these are the good old paths in (<sup><2456></sup>Jeremiah 6:16);

*to walk in paths, [in] a way not cast up*; a new way, unknown in former times; an unbeaten track, which the saints had never walked in; a rough path, unsafe and dangerous; and hence they stumbled, and fell, and came to ruin; as follows:

**Ver. 16.** *To make their land desolate*, etc.] Not that this was the intention either of those that led them out of the right way into those wrong paths, or of them that went into them; but so it was eventually; this was the issue of things; their idolatry and other sins were the cause of their land being desolate; through the ravage of the enemy, let in upon them by way of judgment; and through the destruction of men by them; so that there were few or none to cultivate and manure it:

*[and] a perpetual hissing*; to be hissed at perpetually by the enemy, whenever they passed by it, and observed its desolation; thereby expressing their hatred at its inhabitants; their joy at its desolation; and their satisfaction in it, which would be for ever; or, as Kimchi interprets, a long time. This is the present case of the Jews; and has been ever since their destruction by the Romans; and will be until the fulness of the Gentiles is gathered in:

*everyone that passeth thereby shall be astonished*: to see the desolations made, and the strange alterations in a place once so famous for fruitfulness and number of inhabitants:

*and wag his head*; either out of pity, or rather in a way of derision and exultation; (see <sup><2415></sup>Lamentations 2:15,16).

**Ver. 17.** *I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy*, etc.] As the east wind, which is generally strong and boisterous, drives the chaff and stubble, and anything that is light, before it, and scatters it here and there; so the Lord threatens to scatter the people of the Jews over the face of the earth, before their enemies, whom they should not be able to withstand. It denotes the power of the enemy God would make use of; the ease with

which this should be done; and the utter dispersion of them; and is their present case:

*I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity;* that is, will not look upon them in a favourable way, nor with any pity and compassion for them, nor hear their cries; but turn his back upon them, and a deaf ear unto them, and give them no help and relief, or deliver them out of their calamities; but suffer them to continue upon them, and them to sink under them; (see <sup>2025</sup>Proverbs 1:26-28); which refers to the same time of calamity as here.

**Ver. 18.** *Then said they, come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah,* etc.] Being enraged at the judgments threatened them, they propose to enter into a confederacy and consultation together, to think of ways and means to stop the mouth of the prophet, and even to take away his life; since he had told them that God had devised a device against them, they were for devising devices against him; that so they might walk after their own devices, without being teased and tormented with this prophet:

*for the law shall not perish from the priest;* whose business it is to teach it; we have other priests besides Jeremiah, and we shall seek the law at their mouths, and not at his; and perhaps these are the words of the priests themselves, the men of Anathoth; so Jarchi thinks; pleasing themselves with their character and office, and the perpetuity of it; that, notwithstanding what Jeremiah had said, there would be a constant succession of this order of them; nor should the law ever cease from being taught by them, to whose instruction men ought to listen, and not to such a prophet:

*nor counsel from the wise;* we have wise rulers and governors, counsellors of state, and members of the sanhedrim, and judges of all controversies, and who are capable of giving advice upon any occasion; nor shall we ever want such, to whose prudent counsel we do well to attend, and not to what this babbling man says; does he think to know better than our statesmen and sages, our counsellors in church and state?

*nor the word from the prophet;* we have prophets among us, that prophesy as well as he, and better things; and whose words of prophecy shall be fulfilled, when his will not; who assure us that we shall have peace and prosperity; and therefore let us not regard what this man says, or be intimidated by his threatenings:

*come, and let us smite him with the tongue*; by saying all the evil we can of him: by threatening him with pains and penalties; by loading him with reproaches and calumnies; by taking away his good name, and lessening his character and reputation among the people; and so the Targum,

“let us bear false witness against him;”

or, “let us smite him in the tongue”<sup>f389</sup>; cut it out, as Abarbanel; or stop his mouth, and hinder him from speaking any more in this manner to the people; or, “let us smite him for the tongue”<sup>f390</sup>; because of the words he says, or the prophecies he delivers out:

*and let us not give heed to any of his words*; or, “to all his words”<sup>f391</sup>; all which they reckoned his own, and not the words of the Lord. The Septuagint version is, “and we shall hear all his words”; we shall provoke him to say all he has to say, and shall hear and have enough out of his mouth to condemn him; and in all this, and in many other things that follow, Jeremiah was a type of Christ, to whom Jerom applies the whole passage.

**Ver. 19.** *Give heed to me, O Lord*, etc.] To his prayer, since his enemies would not give heed to his prophecies; and God does give heed to the cries and complaints of his ministers, when men will not give heed to their words and doctrines; they have a God to go to, who will hear them, when men despise them:

*and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me*; hear their reproaches and rantings, their blasphemies and evil speakings, their lies and falsehoods, and judge between me and them; let it appear who is in the right; vindicate my cause, and plead with them that plead against me.

**Ver. 20.** *Shall evil be recompensed for good?* etc.] For all the good that I have done them, shall this be all the recompence I shall have, to be evilly treated by them, to have my good name, and even life, taken away by them? shall this be suffered to be done? and, if it is, shall it go unpunished? the prophet taxes the people with ingratitude, which he afterwards instances in, and proves:

*for they have digged a pit for my soul*; or “life”; they lay in wait to take it away; or they had formed a design against it, and brought a charge and accusation against him, in order to take it away, under colour of law and

justice. Kimchi interprets it of poison, which they would have had him drink of:

*remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, [and] to turn away thy wrath from them*; he was an intercessor for them with God; pleaded with him on their behalf, that good things might be bestowed upon them, and that wrath might be averted from them; so Christ did for the Jews that crucified him, (~~Q234~~ Luke 23:34); this is an instance of their ingratitude; that though he had been an advocate for them, stood in the gap between God and them, and was importunate for their good, yet this was all the recompense he had from them; they sought his life to take it away. This kindness of his for them was forgotten by them; but he trusts the Lord will remember it, and not suffer them to act the base part they intended; and now he determines no more to plead their cause, but to imprecate evils upon them, as follows:

**Ver. 21.** *Therefore deliver up their children to the famine*, etc.] To be starved, and perish by it, as they were in the siege of Jerusalem, both by the Chaldeans, and the Romans:

*and pour out their [blood] by the force of the sword*: or, “upon the hands of the sword”<sup>f392</sup>; by means of it; that is, the blood of the parents of the children; let the one perish by famine, and the other by the sword; which, when thrust into a man, blood gushes out, and runs upon the sword to the handle of it:

*and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and [be] widows*; let them have neither husbands nor children; which latter might be a comfort to them, when they had lost their husbands; but being stripped of these also, the affliction and distress must be the greater:

*and let their men be put to death*; or “slain with death”<sup>f393</sup>; with the pestilence, as Kimchi rightly interprets it; (see ~~Q118~~ Revelation 6:8); Jarchi understands it of the angel of death; (see ~~S124~~ Hebrews 2:14);

*[let] their young men [be] slain by the sword in battle*; such being commonly employed in military service, as being the most proper persons for it.

**Ver. 22.** *Let a cry be heard from their houses*, etc.] A shrieking of women and children, not only for the loss of husbands and parents, but because of

the entrance of the enemy into the city, and into their houses, to take away their lives and their substance; as follows:

*when thou shalt bring a troop suddenly upon them*; or an army, as the Targum; either the Chaldean army, or rather the Roman army:

*for they have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet*: and therefore it was a just retaliation, that a troop or army should suddenly come upon them, and seize their persons and substance; though Kimchi understands it, as before, of poison, which they would have given him; but Jarchi, of a suspicion and vile calumny they raised of him, that he was guilty of adultery with another man's wife; a "whore" being called a "deep ditch" by the wise man, (<sup>3127</sup>Proverbs 23:27); and so it is in the Talmud<sup>f394</sup>.

**Ver. 23.** *Yet, Lord, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay [me]*, etc.] However deep they had laid them; and however unknown they were to him; or however private and secret they might be thought to be by them; God is an omniscient God, and knows and sees all things; the thoughts of men's hearts, and all their secret designs in the dark against his ministers, people, and interest:

*forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight*; they had sinned the unpardonable sin; or, however, a sin unto death; for which prayer for the forgiveness of it was not to be made, (<sup>6156</sup>1 John 5:16); this the prophet knew: what he here imprecates, and both before and after, must be considered, not as flowing from a private spirit, or from a spirit of malice and revenge; but what he delivered out under a spirit of prophecy, as foretelling what would be the sad estate and condition of these persons; for, otherwise, the temper and disposition of the prophet were the reverse; and he was inclined to sue for mercy for these people, as he often did; wherefore this is not to be drawn into a precedent and example for any to follow:

*but let them be overthrown before thee*; by the sword, famine, and pestilence: or, "let them be made to stumble before thee"<sup>f395</sup>; and fall into perdition; they having made others to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths of truth and goodness; so that it was but a righteous thing that they should be punished after this manner; (see <sup>4185</sup>Jeremiah 18:15);

*deal [thus] with them in the time of thine anger*; the set time for his wrath to come upon them to the uttermost; then do unto them according to all

the imprecations now made; which the prophet foresaw, and believed he would do; and therefore thus spake.