

# CHAPTER 44

## INTRODUCTION TO JEREMIAH 44

This chapter contains a sermon of Jeremiah's to the Jews in Egypt, reproving them for their idolatry there; their answer to it, expressing their resolution to continue in their idolatrous practices; and a denunciation of judgments upon them, of which a sign is given. The sermon begins with observing to them the destruction of Jerusalem, and the causes of it, idolatry and contempt of the prophets, (<sup>2440</sup>Jeremiah 44:1-6); then follows an expostulation with the present Jews for doing the same things, and exposing themselves and their posterity to the same punishment, (<sup>2447</sup>Jeremiah 44:7-10); upon which they are threatened with the sore judgments of God that should come upon them, and cut them off in general, (<sup>2441</sup>Jeremiah 44:11-14); yet such were the impudence and obstinacy of this people, that they declared they would not hearken to the prophet, but persist in their idolatry; it having been better with them when they practised it than when they left it, (<sup>2445</sup>Jeremiah 44:15-19); to which the prophet replies by observing, that for the idolatry of their fathers their land was become a desolation and a curse, as at this day, (<sup>2440</sup>Jeremiah 44:20-23); and assures them that destruction would come from the Lord upon them, which he had sworn to, (<sup>2446</sup>Jeremiah 44:24-28); and a sign of it is given; the delivery of the king of Egypt into the hand of the king of Babylon, (<sup>2440</sup>Jeremiah 44:29,30).

**Ver. 1.** *The word which came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, etc.*] Or, "unto all the Jews"<sup>f788</sup>; the word came to him, that it might be delivered to them; or, "against all the Jews"<sup>f789</sup>; they having gone into Egypt contrary to the will of God, and committing idolatry; and the word or sermon is full of threatenings and judgments denounced upon them:

*which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros:* this prophecy was delivered after the Jews were come to Tahpanhes, or Daphne; (see <sup>2437</sup>Jeremiah 43:7); and had divided themselves, and were settled in different parts of the kingdom: some continued at Tahpanhes, where were the king's court and palace: others

went to Migdol, a place near the Red sea, just at the entrance into Egypt, from the land of Canaan, (<sup>1242</sup>Exodus 14:2); called, by Herodotus, Magdulus<sup>f790</sup>; and by Adrichomius<sup>f791</sup> said to be distant about a mile and a quarter from Pelusium, or Sin, the strength of Egypt, (<sup>3705</sup>Ezekiel 30:15); others took up their residence at Noph, generally thought to be the city of Memphis. The Targum calls it Mappas; the same which is now called Grand Cairo; or, however, this city is near the place where Memphis stood: others dwelt in the country of Pathros, which perhaps had its name from Pathrusim, a son of Mizraim, (<sup>0103</sup>Genesis 10:13,14). It is thought by Bochart and others to be the country of Thebais in Egypt, the same with the Nomos Phanturites, or Phaturites, of Pliny<sup>f792</sup>; and in this country Jeremiah seems to have been when this word came to him, (<sup>2445</sup>Jeremiah 44:15); and from hence sent or carried it to the other places: saying; as follows:

**Ver. 2.** *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,* etc.] In which manner the prophecies of this book are frequently prefaced; (see <sup>2425</sup>Jeremiah 42:15,18 43:10);

*ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah;* they saw it with their bodily eyes; they could not but serve it in their minds; nay, had an experimental knowledge of it; they suffered it in part themselves, and must be convicted in their own consciences that it was from the hand of the Lord:

*and, behold, this day they [are] a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein;* lie waste, at this very time; the walls are broken down the houses are demolished; the goods in them carried off; no inhabitants left, or very few, to rebuild the cities, till the land, and dwell therein.

**Ver. 3.** *Because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger,* etc.] The cause of this desolation was the wickedness they were guilty of; whereby they provoked the anger of God to bring this destruction on them. Sin is always provoking unto God; and though it may not be done on purpose to provoke him, which it sometimes seems to be; yet it eventually does, and is always the cause of punishment: God never punishes man without a cause, or for anything but sin:

*in that they went to burn incense, [and] to serve other gods:* the particular wickedness they were guilty of, and which was the cause of their ruin, was burning incense to idols, and worshipping them, than which nothing is

more provoking to God: and it was an aggravation of their sin, that they were gods

*whom they knew not, [neither] they, you, nor your fathers;* what they were; from whence they were; their original, and perhaps not their names; however, did not know that they were gods; nor could they prove them to be such; nay, might know that they were not: and now, since this was the sin which brought on the destruction they were eyewitnesses of, it should have been a caution to them that they went not into the same idolatrous practices, which yet they did not avoid; taking no warning from such awful instances of the divine displeasure.

**Ver. 4.** *Howbeit, I sent unto you all my servants the prophets,* etc.] As many as he raised up, and employed in the work and service of prophesying; and these were many; and as many as they were, he sent them to them, one after another, to warn them of their sin and danger; but all to no purpose; which was a further aggravation of their wickedness: nay, though he was

*rising early, and sending [them];* was very early in his messages to them; gave them timely warning, and let slip no opportunity of admonishing them; and this he did constantly; (see <sup>247B</sup>Jeremiah 7:13, 25);

*saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate;* all sin is abominable in itself, and hateful to God, especially idolatry; and therefore should not be done; it should be abominable to men, and hateful to them, because it is so to God; and after such a remonstrance as this, to commit it must be very aggravating and provoking.

**Ver. 5.** *But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear,* etc.] To the prophets sent unto them; to God by the prophets; to the words of his mouth, particularly to the above pathetic expostulation with them; at least, if they heard the words said, they did not attend unto them; they had not such an effect upon them, nor were they wrought upon by them, so as

*to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense to other gods;* to turn from their sins in general, and from their idolatry in particular; one instance of which is given, and which is put for the whole of idolatrous worship.

**Ver. 6.** *Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth,* etc.] Like melted metal, scalding lead, liquefied pitch, or anything of a bituminous

and sulphurous nature, which spreads, is consuming, and very intolerable; (see <sup>242B</sup>Jeremiah 42:18);

*and was kindled in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem;* which, like a fire, burnt up and destroyed these cities, and particularly the large and spacious city of Jerusalem:

*and they are wasted [and] desolate, as at this day;* now lie in ruins, as may be seen by everyone; the thing is notorious; this is their present case; they are become desolate, and so continue.

**Ver. 7.** *Therefore now thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel,* etc.] The same epithets as before, (<sup>244D</sup>Jeremiah 44:2); with an addition, that his words might carry more weight with them:

*wherefore commit ye [this] great evil against your souls;* the sin of idolatry, which is a great evil; a sin against God; a giving the glory to another, that belongs to him and not only so, but is against the souls of men; pernicious and ruinous to them, which brings destruction, even eternal wrath and damnation, on them; and this is an interesting argument why it should not be committed; nay, it was not only against God, and against themselves, but against their families, and the interest of them:

*to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain;* not that they did this great evil or committed idolatry with this intention, to ruin their families and posterity; but so it was eventually; hereby they provoked the Lord to anger, to cut off the men that offered incense to idols; and the women their wives, whom they allowed so to do; and their children, who were brought up in the same practices; so that they would have none to succeed them, to bear their name, and inherit their land; unless God should be merciful, and not deal according to their deserts; for such was the nature of their crime, as to deserve an utter extirpation of them.

**Ver. 8.** *In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands,* etc.] Their sinful actions, particularly their idolatry, by worshipping images, the works of men's hands; and though it was the queen of heaven they worshipped, which their hands made not, yet it was before images they did that; besides, the things they did to her were the works of their hands, as sacrificing, pouring out drink offerings, and as follows:

*burning incense;* which they did, not only to her, but

*to other gods in the land of Egypt*; where they were very numerous:

*whither ye be gone to dwell*; against the express will and command of God:

*that ye might cut yourselves off*; as from the worship of God, so from being his people, and from being under his care and protection, and from all privileges temporal and spiritual:

*and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth?* not that this was their view, end, and design, but this was the event so it was, that they were looked upon as an accursed people of God and man, and their names were taken up for a proverb and a reproach everywhere.

**Ver. 9.** *Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers*, etc.] And what judgments it brought upon them; meaning not their more remote ancestors in the wilderness, and the idolatry they committed, and the punishment inflicted upon them for it; but more near, such who lived a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, and whose sins had brought on that; and therefore could not be easily forgotten by them; or, if they were forgotten, it argued great stupidity:

*and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives*; by whom they were drawn into idolatry, particularly Solomon; and it is in the original text, “the wickedness of his wives”<sup>f793</sup>; and Dr. Lightfoot thinks respect is had to Solomon’s wives; but it may be understood distributively of everyone of their wives, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it<sup>f794</sup>:

*and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which you have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem?* where they had built altars, and worshipped strange gods, they, and their wives, as well as those who were carried captive; and which were the cause of all those evils that came upon them; these, being recent things, could not be forgotten by them; or however should have been remembered, and that so as to have deterred them from going into such practices again, as they now did in Egypt.

**Ver. 10.** *They are not humbled [even] unto this day*, etc.] Not contrite under a sense of their sins, nor truly penitent for them; not humbled before God nor man, so as to acknowledge them, mourn over them, and forsake them. The Targum is,

“they cease not unto this day;”

that is, from committing the same things; which shows they had no true humiliation and contrition for them. This is to be understood, not of the Jews in Babylon only, but chiefly of those in Egypt; there being a change of person from you to they; the Lord not vouchsafing to speak to them who were so obdurate and impenitent, but of them, and to some other, as the prophet, concerning them:

*neither have they feared;* the Lord; neither his goodness nor his judgments; or served and worshipped him with reverence and godly fear, as became them:

*nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you, and before your fathers;* a full proof this that they neither had true repentance for their sins, nor the fear of God in their hearts; for, had they, these would have led them to obedience to the divine will.

**Ver. 11.** *Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,* etc.] Because of these sins of idolatry, impenitence, and disobedience:

*I will set my face against you for evil;* to bring the evil of punishment upon them, for the evil of sin committed by them: this the Lord determined with himself, and resolved to do; which the phrase, “setting [his] face against [them]”, is expressive of, by way of retaliation for their setting their faces to go down to Egypt, as well as of his wrath and indignation against them:

*and to cut off all Judah;* not the whole tribe of Judah; not those that were in Babylon, which were by far the greatest number of that tribe; but those that were in Egypt.

**Ver. 12.** *And I will take the remnant of Judah,* etc.] Such as remained of that tribe in the land of Judea after the captivity: and not all of them, but such

*that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there:* who were bent upon going thither, notwithstanding all the remonstrances made to them to the contrary; and were gone thither, and were now actually sojourners there: this describes such persons who wilfully, and of their own accord, went thither; and excepts those who were over-persuaded or over-powered to go along with them:

*and they shall all be consumed, [and] fall in the land of Egypt;* not by natural death, one after another; but by the judgments of God, as follows:

*they shall [even] be consumed by the sword [and] by the famine;* by the sword of the king of Babylon; and by famine, occasioned by a foreign army and sieges:

*they shall die; from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine;* which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and to express the universality of the destruction; that it should reach to persons of every age, state and condition, rank and degree, young and old, high and low, rich and poor:

*and they shall be an execration, [and] an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach;* (see Gill on “<sup>2428</sup>Jeremiah 42:18”).

**Ver. 13.** *For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt,* etc.] Or “visit”; in a way of wrath and vengeance; meaning not the native inhabitants of Egypt; though these should be punished, and in whose punishment the Jews would be involved; but here it means the Jews that dwelt in Egypt, who went thither contrary to the will of God, and there settled:

*as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence;* signifying that the same punishment that came upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and other cities of Judea, should come upon these Jews in Egypt, and as sure as they came upon them; even those which they thought to have escaped, by leaving Judea, and going to Egypt.

**Ver. 14.** *So that none of the remnant of Judah,* etc.] Which were left in the land of Judea after the captivity:

*which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain;* escape either the sword, or the famine, or the pestilence, or remain in the land of Egypt, or in the land of the living; so general should be the destruction:

*that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return there;* or, “have lift up their souls<sup>1795</sup> to return there”: most earnestly desire it, and have raised hopes and expectations of it; for it seems that those Jews that went into Egypt did not go with a design to settle there for ever; but to return to their own land, when there should be

better times, and more safety and security there; particularly when they thought the affair of the death of Gedaliah would be no further inquired into:

*for none shall return but such as shall escape*; out of the hands of Johanan, and the rest of the captains; and should get out of the land of Egypt before the Chaldeans came into it. Some understand this of those that should escape out of Babylon; that none should return to Judea but those of that captivity, who should be released by the proclamation of Cyrus. Jarchi interprets it of Jeremiah and Baruch, whom Nebuchadnezzar removed to Babylon, when Egypt fell into his hands, in the twenty seventh year of his reign, as is related in the Jewish chronicles<sup>f796</sup>.

**Ver. 15.** *Then all the men which knew that their wives had burnt incense unto other gods*, etc.] Which was a rite God appointed to be used in his worship; and is here put for the whole of religious worship, which was given to idols by the Jewish women; this their husbands knew of, and winked at, and did not restrain them from it, as they should; they seem to be themselves irreligious persons, a sort of atheists, who had no regard for the true God, nor any other gods, and cared not who were worshipped:

*and all the women that stood by*; the wives of the men that stood by their husbands, and other women that stood and heard Jeremiah's sermon, and were conscious to themselves of being guilty of what they were charged with by him:

*a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros*; in that part of Egypt so called, which was Thebais: here it seems Jeremiah was with that part of the people that took up their residence there; and by this it appears there was a large number of them, men and women, and who were all become idolaters, or connivers at, and encouragers of, such as were: these

*answered Jeremiah, saying*, one in the name of the rest made a reply, as follows:

**Ver. 16.** *[As for] the word that thou has, spoken unto us in the name of the Lord*, etc.] Which they did not believe that it came from the Lord, but was a device of the prophet's, and a lie, as in (<sup>24RD</sup>Jeremiah 43:2); and if it did come from the Lord, their impudence was risen to such a pitch, that they were determined not to regard it:

*we will not hearken unto thee*: to thy words; neither to thy exhortations, reproofs, or menaces, even though thou comest and speakest in the name of the Lord. This, and what follows, is an unparalleled instance of the pride, obstinacy, enmity, and rebellion of the carnal mind against God.

**Ver. 17.** *But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth out of our own mouth*, etc.] And not what went out of the mouth of God, or his prophet: but whoever they had resolved on within themselves to do, and had declared with their mouths they would, or had vowed with their lips; so Abarbinel interprets it of a vow; this they were determined to perform, let God and his prophet say what they would:

*to burn incense unto the queen of heaven*; which, according to Abarbinel, was the moon, which is the queen of heaven, as the sun is king; it was called by the Heathens Coelestis and Urania: but there are some that think that some great star in heaven, that is king over the rest, is meant; so the Targum renders it, the star of heaven; which they understand of the sun, as Kimchi observes; the sun being much worshipped in Egypt; but Kimchi himself derives the word for “queen”, here used, not from the root which signifies “to reign”; but from another, which signifies “to work”; and so renders it, “the work”, or “frame of heaven”; the sun, moon, and stars; and so the Syriac version is “the host of heaven”; (see Gill on “<sup>2478</sup>Jeremiah 7:18”); and to this deity, be it what it will, they burned incense; and they were determined to continue it, and all other idolatrous rites and practices particularly:

*and to pour out drink offerings unto her*; which was another part of ceremonial worship, which the true God required of the people of Israel; but were here resolved to give it to another god:

*as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem*; they plead custom and prescription, antiquity and authority; the examples of ancestors and kings; the general practice of their nation, both in the metropolis of it, and in its several cities, where it not only universally obtained, but was visibly and openly done; and, more, they plead the temporal advantage of it:

*for [then] had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil*: had fulness of bread, and of all provisions; health, peace, and safety; and no judgment was upon them, seen or felt by them; the sword, famine, or pestilence. The goddess Coelestis, or the moon, which seems to be here

meant, was, as Tertullian<sup>f797</sup> says “pluviarum pollicitatrix”, “the promiser of rains” and so of all good things: or, “were merry”<sup>f798</sup>, as the Heathens were at their new moons, when they indulged to their cups, and lived jovially; hence that of Horace<sup>f799</sup>.

**Ver. 18.** *But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven,* etc.]

Or were restrained from it, as the Targum, through the force of the prophet’s sermons, or by the authority of their governors: this Abarbinel thinks was in the times of Jehoiakim, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah; but perhaps it only regards some space of time in the latter part of Zedekiah’s reign, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, when they refrained from their idolatry; fearing the wrath of God, and what was coming upon them; though Kimchi is of opinion that they never ceased; but they would say, when any evil came upon them, it was because they ceased to burn incense to the queen of heaven, of were not so ready to it as at first:

*and to pour out drink offerings to her:* another part of worship they performed to her but for a while left off: and from that time they say,

*we have wanted all [things], and have been consumed by the sword, and by the famine;* wanted all the necessaries of life, meat and drink, and clothing and a habitation to dwell in; and multitudes were destroyed by the sword of the king of Babylon; and others perished with famine during the siege; these evils they imputed to their cessation from idolatry, when it was the very thing that brought them on them.

**Ver. 19.** *And when we burnt incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her,* etc.] Which they owned they did, and which they were not ashamed of, and were determined to go on with; and were only sorry that they had at any time omitted such service:

*did we make cakes to worship her;* or, “to make her glad”<sup>f800</sup>, as Kimchi; interpreting the word by an antiphrasis; it having a contrary signification, to grieve or to make sorrowful; and from hence idols have their name sometimes, because in the issue they bring grief and trouble to their worshippers; hence some render it, “to make her an idol”<sup>f801</sup>; or them, the cakes, an idol; these had, as Jarchi says, the likeness of the idol impressed upon them:

*and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?* they own they did these things but not without the knowledge and consent at least, if not with the presence, of their husbands; hence these words seem to be the words of

the women. Some indeed think they speak all along, from (<sup>24416</sup>Jeremiah 44:16); or one in the name of the rest; it may be one of Zedekiah's daughters; but however, if the men spoke what is said in the preceding verses, the women, being provoked, could hold their peace no longer, but broke in, and uttered these words; though some render the last clause, "without our principal men"<sup>f802</sup>; and so take them to be the words of the people in general; who urge, in their own defence, that what they did they did with the direction, approbation, and leading example of their kings and governors.

**Ver. 20.** *Then Jeremiah said unto all the people*, etc.] Immediately, being influenced, directed, and assisted by the Spirit of God; though what he says, in (<sup>24421</sup>Jeremiah 44:21-23); he does not declare as coming from the Lord; but what was upon his mind, and was a full refutation of all that had been said: and which he delivered

*to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him [that] answer*; in which they all agreed, though delivered by one; and to which he made a reply:

*saying*; as follows:

**Ver. 21.** *That incense that ye burnt in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem*, etc.] To false gods, to the queen of heaven, to the host thereof:

*ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land*; on which account they pleaded antiquity, authority, and the general consent of the people, as on their side, which the prophet allows; but it all signified nothing:

*did not the Lord remember them, and came it [not] into his mind?* either the incense they offered up to strange gods, or the persons that did it? did he take no notice of these idolatrous practices, and of these idolaters? he did; he laid up these things in his mind; he showed a proper resentment of them, and in due time punished for them.

**Ver. 22.** *So that the Lord could no longer forbear*, etc.] He did forbear a long time, and did not stir up all his wrath, but waited to see if these people would repent of their sins, and turn from them; during which time of his forbearance, things might be well with them, as they had said, and they enjoyed peace and plenty; but persisting in their sins, and growing worse

and worse, he could bear with them no longer, but brought down his judgments upon them. The reason is expressed,

*because of the evil of your doings, [and] because of the abominations which ye have committed*; the incense they had burnt; the drink offerings they had poured out to idols; and such like idolatrous practices, which were evil in themselves, contrary to the law and will of God, and abominable unto him:

*therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day*; the land of Israel, wasted by the Chaldeans, and left uncultivated, was like a barren wilderness, to the astonishment of all that passed through it, who had known what a fruitful country it had been; the curse of God being apparently on it, and scarce an inhabitant left in it; which was the case at this present instant, as the Jews, to whom the prophet directs his discourse, well knew; and to whom he appeals for the truth of it: now all this was for the sins, particularly the idolatry, they had been guilty of; as is further explained in (<sup>24423</sup>Jeremiah 44:23).

**Ver. 23.** *And because ye have burnt incense*, etc.] Not to Jehovah, but to the queen of heaven; which they owned they did, and determined they would; asserting it was better with them when they did it than when they omitted it; for which reason the prophet particularly mentions it, and assigns it as the cause of the present ruin and destruction of their land, city, and temple:

*and because ye have sinned against the Lord*; by worshipping idols; all sin is against the Lord, but especially idolatry:

*and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord*; by his prophets, who cautioned them against idolatry, reproved them for it, and told them what would be the consequence of it; but this they hearkened not unto, which was an aggravation of their sin:

*nor walked in his law*; the moral law, according to it; which is a rule of walk and conversation:

*nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies*; as not in the moral law, so neither in the ceremonial law, and the rites of that; nor in the judicial law, and the testifications of the will of God in either of them:

*therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day:* that is, the desolation on their land, as in (<sup>2423</sup>Jeremiah 44:23).

**Ver. 24.** *Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women,* etc.] To all the people in general, and to the women in particular, who had a principal concern in these idolatrous practices:

*hear the word of the Lord, all Judah that [are] in the land of Egypt;* all of the tribe of Judah that were in Egypt; not in Pathros only, but in other parts of Egypt; this distinguishes them from those of Judah that were in Babylon, and in other provinces; and tacitly points at their sin in going to Egypt, which was the leading step to then fresh acts of idolatry they had been guilty of; these are called upon to hear the word of the Lord: what the prophet had said before was what was upon his mind without immediate inspiration, or as a direct message from the Lord; but what follows is.

**Ver. 25.** *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel,* etc.] Which is an usual preface to prophecies coming from him:

*saying;* as follows:

*ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand;* they had said they would burn incense to the queen of heaven, and they had done it; they had been as good as their word, true to it, though in a bad thing: their words and works agreed, and so did the men and their wives: the women had before said they did not perform worship to the queen of heaven without their men; this is acknowledged by the Lord, and their confession is improved against them:

*saying, we will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her;* they thought, because they made a vow that they would do it, that it was therefore obligatory upon them, and this would be sufficient to justify them before God, and excuse it to him; whereas nothing that is sinful ought to be vowed or performed; and to vow and perform in such a case is doubly criminal: a vow cannot make that lawful which is unlawful; and the performance of it can never be a laudable action:

*ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows;* they were resolutely set upon it, and nothing would hinder their performance of it; this shows the obstinacy and firmness of their minds: though some think these words are spoken ironically.

**Ver. 26.** *Therefore hear ye the word of the Lord, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt,* etc.] (See Gill on “<sup>244b</sup>Jeremiah 44:24”); since you have made your vows, and will perform them, I will take an oath, and abide by it:

*behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord;* by his name Jehovah, which is incommunicable, and expressive of his eternity and immutability; or by himself, his name being himself, and than which he can swear by no greater, (<sup>363b</sup>Hebrews 6:13);

*that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, the Lord God liveth:* this cannot be understood of the name of the Lord being called upon them, or of their being called by his name, and reckoned his people, which is the sense of Abarbinel; since this respects not a name by which they should be named, but which they should name; and intends their use of the divine name in an oath, of which this is a form, “the Lord God liveth”: or as sure as the Lord lives, or by the living God, it is so and so; and especially as used in their vows to burn incense to the queen of heaven, they vowing by the living God that they would do so, which must be very abominable to him; and therefore he solemnly swears there should not be a Jew in all Egypt that should use it; the reason is, because everyone of them that did should be cut off, as follows:

**Ver. 27.** *Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good,* etc.]. To bring the evil of punishment upon them, the particulars of which are after mentioned, and not the blessings of goodness, as formerly; and this he would be as careful and diligent to bring about, as one that watches all opportunities to do hurt to another; and it must be dreadful to be under the vigilant avenging eye of God:

*and all the men of Judah that [are] in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword, and by the famine, until there be an end of them;* that is, the greatest part of them, excepting a few that shall escape, hereafter mentioned, particularly Jeremiah and Baruch; but as for the main body of such, who went of their own accord to Egypt, and settled, and fell: into the idolatry of the country; these should all perish one after another, till there were none of them left; either by the sword of the king of Babylon; or by famine, which his army and sieges would produce; or by pestilence, though not here mentioned, yet is in (<sup>244c</sup>Jeremiah 44:13).

**Ver. 28.** *Yet a small number that shall escape the sword*, etc.] The sword of the king of Babylon, and the other judgments, and which would be but very few; “men of number”<sup>f803</sup>, as in the Hebrew text, which might easily be numbered; Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah, and some few righteous persons among them, as Kimchi and Abarbinel observe:

*shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah*; they shall make their escape out of the land of Egypt, whither they did not go willingly; and, by one providence or another, shall come back to their native country, the land of Judea, When the rest will not; which must be a distinguishing your to them:

*and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know what words shall stand, mine or theirs*; those that are left of the sword, famine, and pestilence, shall know experimentally, by facts laid down, whose words have their effect and accomplishment, stand firm and sure; whether theirs, that promised impunity and safety, peace and prosperity, in their idolatrous practices; or the Lord’s, which threatened with ruin and destruction. The Lord is true, and every man a liar; whatever devices are in a man’s heart, the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.

**Ver. 29.** *And this [shall be] a sign unto you, saith the Lord, that I will punish you in this place*, etc.] In Egypt, as before threatened; and what follows is a confirming sign that so it would be; and which, when observed by some, gave the hint to them to make their escape; though others, being hardened in their idolatry, impenitence, and unbelief, continued, and perished:

*that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil*; which sign, when they should see, they might assure themselves that the threatenings of evil to them would certainly be accomplished, as sure as they saw the sign given, which is as follows:

**Ver. 30.** *Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will give Pharaohophra king of Egypt*, etc.] Pharaoh was a common name of the kings of Egypt, who usually had some surname, by which they were distinguished; and the surname of the then present king of Egypt was Hophra; whom the Septuagint and others call Vaphres; and, Herodotus<sup>f804</sup> Apries. The Targum renders it Pharaoh the broken; and the Syriac version Pharaoh the

lame: now it is here predicted as a sign of the destruction of the Jews in Egypt, which should follow after, that God would deliver this king

*into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life;* either into the hands of his rebellious subjects, headed by Amasis, by whom he was kept alive for a while after taken, and then put to death, as Herodotus reports; or rather into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar; for Josephus says<sup>f805</sup>, that he, in the twenty third year of his reign, which was four or five years after the destruction of Jerusalem, having subdued the Syrians, Ammonites, and Moabites, entered Egypt in a hostile manner, and slew the then remaining king, and set up another; and this is confirmed by what follows:

*as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and that sought his life;* in like manner, and as sure as he had done the one, he would do the other; and he puts the Jews in mind of what he had done by him, and which they had full and certain knowledge of; and might from hence conclude that this also would be accomplished, here given as a sign of their own ruin; and which, when they saw come to pass, might know that it was at hand; and, indeed, the king of Egypt, in whom they trusted, being taken by his enemies, and his country wasted, they must in course fall a prey to the conqueror.