

## INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM

This book is called, in the Vulgate Latin version, “the Prophecy of Nahum”; and in the Syriac and Arabic versions, “the Prophecy of the Prophet Nahum”; and in (~~3400~~ Nahum 1:1); it is called “the Book of the Vision of Nahum”; which is very singular; and from whence we learn of what place this prophet was; but of this more will be said on that verse. His name signifies “consolation”: and though the subject of his prophecy chiefly relates to the destruction of the Assyrian empire, and of Nineveh, the chief city of it; yet this was a comfort to the people of the Jews, that an enemy so powerful, and who was so troublesome to them, and whom they dreaded, should one day be destroyed. In what age Nahum lived is not said; and writers very much disagree about it. Some make him to be the most ancient of all the prophets; who suppose him to prophesy of the destruction of Nineveh, before the reigns of Joash king of Judah, and Jehu king of Israel, as Huetius<sup>f1</sup> observes; and others bring him down as low, placing him after Ezekiel, in the times of Zedekiah, Clemens of Alexandria<sup>f2</sup>; neither of which is likely. The Jewish chronologers<sup>f3</sup> generally make him to live in the times of Manasseh, and so Abarbinel; but Josephus<sup>f4</sup>, with more probability, puts him in the times of Jotham; though perhaps what the greater number of interpreters give into may be most correct; as that he lived in the times of Hezekiah, and was contemporary with Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah; and that this prophecy was delivered out after the ten tribes were carried captive by the king of Assyria, which was in the sixth year of Hezekiah, and before Sennacherib’s invasion of Judea, and siege of Jerusalem, which was in the fourteenth year of his reign; and which is thought to be referred to in the “first” chapter of this prophecy. Mr. Whiston<sup>f5</sup> places him in the year of the world A. M. 3278, or 726 B.C.; and says that he foretold the destruction of Nineveh an hundred fifteen years before it came to pass, so says Josephus<sup>f6</sup>. How long this prophet lived, and where he died, and was buried, is uncertain. Pseudo-Epiphanius<sup>f7</sup> says he died and was buried in Begabar. Isidore<sup>f8</sup> says it was in Bethafarim; both which are to be corrected by Dorotheus, who calls the place Bethabara, as Huetius<sup>f9</sup> observes; the same where John was baptizing, (~~4028~~ John 1:28); but Benjamin of Tudela<sup>f10</sup> says his grave was to be seen in a place called Einsiphla, in the land of Chaldea; and speaks of a synagogue of this prophet in the province of Assyria<sup>f11</sup>; but on these things

we cannot depend. Of the authority of this prophecy there need be no doubt, as appears from the inscription of the book, the sublimity and majesty of the style, and its agreement with other prophets; (see Na 1:15); compared with (~~2517~~ Isaiah 52:7); and the accomplishment of the prophecies contained in it, which respect the ruin of the Assyrian empire, and particularly Nineveh, the metropolis of it; the cause of which were their sins and transgressions, the inhabitants thereof were guilty of, and are pointed at in it.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO NAHUM 1

This chapter begins with the title of the book, showing the subject matter of it; and describing the penman of it by his name and country, (<sup>300E</sup>Nahum 1:1); which is followed with a preface to the whole book; setting forth the majesty of a jealous and revenging God; the power of his wrath and fury; of which instances are given in exciting tempests; drying up the sea and the rivers; making the most fruitful mountains barren, which tremble before him; yea, even the whole world, and the inhabitants thereof, his indignation being intolerable; and yet he is slow to anger, good to them that trust in him, whom he knows, and whose protection he is in a time of trouble, (<sup>300E</sup>Nahum 1:2-7). Next the destruction of the Assyrian empire, and of the city of Nineveh, is prophesied of; and is represented as an utter and an entire destruction, and which would come upon them suddenly and unawares, while they were in their cups, (<sup>300E</sup>Nahum 1:8-10). A particular person among them is spoken of, described as a designing wicked man, an enemy to the Lord and his people, thought to be Sennacherib king of Assyria, (<sup>301B</sup>Nahum 1:11); from whose evil designs, yoke and bondage, the Jews should be delivered; and he and his posterity be cut off, because of his vileness, (<sup>301D</sup>Nahum 1:12-14); and the chapter is concluded with tidings of joy to Judah, who are exhorted to keep their feasts and perform their vows on this occasion, (<sup>301E</sup>Nahum 1:15).

**Ver. 1.** *The burden of Nineveh*, etc.] Of the city of Nineveh, and the greatness of it, (see Gill on “Jon 1:2”); (see Gill on “Jon 3:3”); Jonah was sent to this city to threaten it with ruin for its sins; at that time the king and all his people humbled themselves and repented, and the threatened destruction was averted; but they relapsing to their former iniquities, this prophet foretells what would be their certain fate; very rightly therefore the Targum, and some other Jewish writings<sup>f12</sup>, observe, that Jonah prophesied against this city of old; and that Nahum prophesied after him a considerable time, perhaps at a hundred years distance. This prophecy is called a burden; it was taken up by the prophet at the command of the Lord, and was carried or sent by him to Nineveh; and was a hard, heavy, grievous, and

burdensome prophecy to that city, predicting its utter ruin and desolation; and which, as Josephus<sup>f13</sup> says, came to pass hundred fifteen years after this prophecy; and which event is placed by the learned Usher<sup>f14</sup> in the year of the world 3378 A.M., and which was 626 B.C.; and by others<sup>f15</sup> in the year of the world 3403 A.M., of the flood 1747, in 601 B.C.; but by Dean Prideaux<sup>f16</sup> and Mr. Whiston<sup>f17</sup>, in 612 B.C.;

*the book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite*; no other prophecy is called, a book but this, as Abarbinel observes; and gives this reason for it, because the other prophets immediately declared their prophecies, as Jonah; but Nahum never went to the Ninevites, but wrote his prophecy in a book, and sent it to them. It is called “the book of the vision”; what it contains being made known to him by the Lord in a vision, as was common; hence the prophets are called seers; and the prophet is described by the place of his birth, an Elkoshite; though some think he is so called from his father, whose name was Helkesi, and said to be a prophet too, as Jerom relates; and with this agrees the Targum, which calls him Nahum of the house or family of Koshi; but Jarchi says that Elkosh was the name of his city; Aben Ezra and Kimchi are in doubt which to refer it to, whether to his city, or to his ancestors; but there seems no reason to doubt but that he is so called from his native place; since Jerom<sup>f18</sup> says, that there was a village in Galilee called Helkesi in his days, and which he had seen; though scarce any traces of the old buildings could be discerned, it was so fallen to ruin, yet known, to the Jews; and was shown him by one that went about with him; and which is, by Hesychius<sup>f19</sup> the presbyter, placed in the tribe of Simeon. This is another instance, besides that of Jonah, disproving the assertion of the Jews, that no prophet rose out of Galilee, (~~John~~ John 7:52).

**Ver. 2.** *God [is] jealous, and the Lord revengeth*, etc.] He is jealous of his own honour and glory, and for his own worship and ordinances; and will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images; and therefore will punish all idolaters, and particularly the idolatrous Assyrians: he is jealous for his people, and cannot bear to see them injured; and will avenge the affronts that are offered, and the indignities done unto them:

*the Lord revengeth, and [is] furious*; or, is “master of wrath”<sup>f20</sup>; full of it, or has it at his command; can restrain it, and let it out as he pleases, which man cannot do; a furious and passionate man, who has no rule over his spirit. The Lord’s revenging is repeated for the confirmation of it; yea, it is a third time observed, as follows; which some of the Jewish writers think

has respect to the three times the king of Assyria carried the people of Israel captive, and for which the Lord would be revenged on him, and punish him:

*the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries*; on all his adversaries; particularly the Assyrians are here meant, who were both the enemies of him and of his people. The Targum explains it,

“that hate his people:”

vengeance belongs to the Lord, and he will repay it sooner or later; if not immediately, he will hereafter; for it follows:

*and he reserveth [wrath] for his enemies*: and them for that; if not in this world, yet in the world to come; he lays it up among his treasures, and brings it forth at his pleasure. The word “wrath” is not in the text; it is not said what he reserves for the enemies of himself and church; it is inconceivable and inexpressible.

**Ver. 3.** *The Lord [is] slow to anger*, etc.] He is not in haste to execute it; he takes time for it, and gives men space for repentance. Nineveh had had a proof of this when it repented at the preaching of Jonah, upon which the Lord deferred the execution of his wrath; but lest they should presume upon this, and conclude the Lord would always bear with them, though they had returned to their former impieties; they are let to know, that this his forbearance was not owing to want of power or will in him to punish: since he is

*great in power, and will not at all acquit [the wicked]*; he is able to execute the wrath he threatens, and will by no means clear the guilty, or let them go free and unpunished; though he moves slowly, as he may seem in the execution of his judgments, yet they shall surely be brought on his enemies, and be fully accomplished:

*the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds [are] the dust of his feet*; he spoke to Job out of the whirlwind; he descended on Mount Sinai in a storm and tempest; and the clouds are his chariots; in which he rides swiftly; and which, for their appearance and number, are like the dust raised by a multitude of horsemen riding full speed, The wrath of God may be compared to a whirlwind, and a storm, which is sometimes hastily and suddenly executed upon men: respect seems to be had to the armies of the Medes and Chaldeans against the Assyrians;

who, as the Babylonians against the Jews, came up as clouds, and their chariots as the whirlwind, (<sup>24113</sup>Jeremiah 4:13); and the figures beautifully describe the numbers of them, the force with which they came; and in an elegant manner represent the vast quantity of dust raised by an army in full march; at the head of which was the Lord himself, ordering, directing, and succeeding, before whom none can stand.

**Ver. 4.** *He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry*, etc.] As he did the Red sea, when the children of Israel passed through it as on dry land; which shows his power and sovereignty over it; that it is at his command, as a servant at his master's; and since the wind and sea obey him, what is it he cannot do? (see <sup>28110</sup>Isaiah 50:2 51:10);

*and drieth up all the rivers*; that is, he can do it if he will; he divided the waters of Jordan, through the midst of which the Israelites passed on dry ground; and will dry up the river Euphrates, to make way for the kings of the east; and as for Tigris, on the banks of which the city of Nineveh stood, of which the inhabitants boasted, and in which they trusted for their security, he could dry up, and make way for the enemy to enter in; or make that their enemy, and overflow them with it, as he did; (see Na 1:8 Na 2:8). By the "sea" and "rivers" may be meant the whole Assyrian empire, and many nations and people, as Jarchi and Abarbinel interpret it, of whom it consisted; (see <sup>26136</sup>Jeremiah 51:36 <sup>66715</sup>Revelation 17:15);

*Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth*; when the Lord restrains the heavens from giving rain, then Bashan, famous for its fat pastures and fruitful meadows, and Carmel for its rich grain fields, and Lebanon for its tall shadowy cedars, these, and the glory of all, wither and fade away, being parched and dried up for want of moisture. These were places in the land of Israel, but may be put for like flourishing and fruitful hills and countries in the land of Assyria, which should become desolate; (see <sup>194733</sup>Psalms 107:33,34).

**Ver. 5.** *The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt*, etc.] As Sinai of old did, when the Lord descended on it, (<sup>121918</sup>Exodus 19:18 <sup>101816</sup>Judges 5:5). Mountains figuratively signify kings and princes; and hills large countries, as Jarchi and Abarbinel observe, and the inhabitants of them; particularly the kingdoms and nations belonging to the Assyrian empire, which would tremble and quake, and their hearts melt with fear, when they should hear of the destruction of Nineveh their chief city; and of the devastation made

by the enemy there and in other parts, under the direction of the Lord of hosts; his power and providence succeeding him:

*and the earth is burnt at his presence*; either when he withholds rain from it, and so it becomes parched and burnt up with the heat of the sun; or when he rains fire and brimstone on it, as he did on Sodom and Gomorrah; or consumes any part of it with thunder and lightning, as he sometimes does; nay, if he but touch the mountains, they smoke; (see <sup><B></sup>Psalm 104:32);

*yea, the world, and all that dwell therein*; as in the last day, at the general conflagration, when the world, and all the wicked inhabitants of it, will be burnt up; (see <sup><C></sup>2 Peter 3:10).

**Ver. 6.** *Who can stand before his indignation?* etc.] No creature whatever; no man nor body of men; not Nineveh, and the inhabitants of it; nor the whole Assyrian empire:

*and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?* not the great men of the earth; not kings or generals of armies; not kingdoms and nations, ever so numerous and powerful; but all must be consumed by him, who is a consuming fire; (see <sup><D></sup>Jeremiah 10:10 <sup><E></sup>Revelation 6:15-17);

*his fury is poured out like fire*; or like metal that is melted by fire, and poured out by the force of it; or like fire of lightning poured out of the heavens, which is quick, powerful, and penetrating, and there is no resisting it:

*and the rocks are thrown down by him*; by the Lord, by his wrath and fury; kingdoms that seemed as strong and immovable as rocks and mountains are thrown down; as such have been by the force of fire bursting from the midst of them, as Etna, Vesuvius, and others.

**Ver. 7.** *The Lord [is] good*, etc.] To Israel, as the Targum adds; to Hezekiah and his people, that betook themselves to him, and put their trust in him; whom he defended and preserved from the king of Assyria, to whom he was dreadful and terrible, destroying his army in one night by an angel; and so delivered the king of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from that terror that had seized them, and that danger they were exposed unto; and so the Lord is good in himself, in the perfections of his nature, in the works of his hands, in all his persons to his people, that fear him, trust in him, and seek him, and wait for him, and on him:

*a strong hold in the day of trouble*; or, he is “good for a strong hold”<sup>f21</sup>, etc. it was a day of trouble, rebuke, and blasphemy, with Hezekiah and his people, when they were besieged by the army of Sennacherib king of Assyria, and had received from Rabshakeh by his orders a railing and reproaching letter; and then the Lord was a strong hold to them, to whom they betook themselves, and he protected and defended them. The whole time of this life is a time of trouble to the saints, though it is but a day, a short time; in which they meet with much from their own corrupt hearts, and the sin that dwells in them; from Satan and his temptations; from carnal professors, their principles and practices; and from a profane and persecuting world; and from the Lord himself, who sometimes lays his afflicting hand upon them, and hides his face from them; and yet he is their rock and their refuge, their strong tower and place of defence; where they find safety and plenty in all their times of distress and want:

*and he knoweth them that trust in him*; in his word, as the Targum; and they are such that know him, and are sensible of the vanity of all other objects of trust; who betake themselves to him for shelter and protection; lean and stay themselves upon him, and commit all unto him, and expect all from him: these he knows, loves, and has the strongest affection for; he approves of them, and commends their faith and confidence; he takes notice of them, visits them, and makes himself known unto them, even in their adversity; he owns and acknowledges them as his own, claims his right in them now, and will confess them hereafter; and he takes care of them that they perish not, whoever else do; (see <sup><3006></sup>Psalm 1:6 <sup><3018></sup>Timothy 2:18,19); he knows the necessities of those that trust in him, as Jarchi; he knows them for their good, takes care of them, provides for, them, and watches over them, as Kimchi. The ancients formerly had their *γνωσθηρας* and *μυνητας*, “notores”<sup>f22</sup>, such as knew them, and were their patrons and defenders; as when a Roman citizen was condemned to be whipped or crucified in a province where he was not known, and claimed the Roman privileges, such persons were his witnesses and advocates; and thus the Lord is represented as one that knows his people, and is their patron and advocate. The goodness of God expressed in this text is set off with a foil by the terribleness of his wrath and vengeance against his enemies.

**Ver. 8.** *But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof*, etc.] Of Nineveh, against whom this prophecy was, and upon whom it lay as a burden, (<sup><3001></sup>Nahum 1:1); and now though the Lord



was good to them that trust in him, and a strong hold to them in a time of trouble; yet he was determined to destroy their enemies the Assyrians, and Nineveh their chief city; and that by the means of a powerful army, which, like a flood or inundation of water breaking in, overruns and carries all before it; and very fitly may the Medes and Babylonians, who joined together in an expedition against Nineveh, be compared to such a flood for their number and force; since, as the historian tells<sup>f23</sup> us, they were no less than four hundred thousand men: though this may be literally understood; for as the same writer<sup>f24</sup> observes,

“there was an oracle received by the Ninevites from their ancestors, that Nineveh could never be taken by any, unless the river (on which it stood) first became an enemy to it; and so it was, that, in the third year of the siege, the river, being swelled with continual rains, overflowed part of the city, and broke down the wall for the space of two and half miles; hence the king concluded the oracle was fulfilled, and gave up all hopes of safety; and through the breach of the wall the enemy entered, and took the city;”

and an “utter end” was made of it, and of the place of it, insomuch that historians and geographers disagree about it; some say it was situated upon the river Euphrates, others upon the river Tigris, which is the most correct; some say on the east of that river, others on the west; some will have it to be above the river Lycus, and others below it; so true is that of Lucian<sup>f25</sup>, that Nineveh is now entirely lost, and no traces of it remain; nor can one easily say where it once was; and travellers in general, both ancient and modern, agree that it lies wholly in ruins, and is a heap of rubbish. Benjamin Tudelensis<sup>f26</sup>, who travelled into these parts in the twelfth century, relates, that between Almozal or Mosul, and Nineveh, is only a bridge, and it (Nineveh) is a waste; but there are villages, and many towers. Haitho, an Armenian<sup>f27</sup>, who wrote more than a hundred years after the former, says,

“this city (Nineveh) at present is wholly destroyed; but, by what yet appears in it, it may be firmly believed that it was one of the greatest cities in the world.”

Monsieur Thevenot<sup>f28</sup>, who was upon the spot in the last century, observes,

“on the other side of the river (Tigris from that on which Mosul stands) at the end of the bridge begins the place, where, in ancient times, stood the famous city of Nineveh. --There is nothing of it,

(adds he) now to be seen, but some hillocks, which (they say) are its foundations, the houses being underneath; and these reach a good way below the city of Mosul:"

*and darkness shall pursue his enemies*; the enemies of God and his people, who would make such a devastation of Nineveh; even he would cause all manner of calamities, often signified in Scripture by darkness, to follow and overtake them; so that they should be brought into the most uncomfortable and distressed condition imaginable.

**Ver. 9.** *What do ye imagine against the Lord?* etc.] O ye Ninevites or Assyrians; do you think you can frustrate the designs of the Lord, resist his power, and hinder him from executing what he has threatened and has determined to do? or what mischief is it you devise against his people, which is the same as against himself? can you believe that you shall prosper and succeed, and your schemes be carried into execution, when he, the all wise and all powerful Being, opposes you?

*he will make an utter end*; of you, as before declared, and will save his people; which may be depended on will certainly be the case:

*affliction shall not rise up the second time*; either this should be the last effort the Assyrians would make upon the Jews, which they made under Sennacherib, and this the last time they would afflict them; or rather their own destruction should be so complete that there would be no need to repeat the stroke, or give another blow; the business would be done at once. This seems to contradict a notion of some historians and chronologers, who suppose that Nineveh was destroyed at two different times, and by different persons of the same nations; and so the whole Assyrian empire was twice ruined, which is not likely in itself, and seems contrary to this passage; for though some ascribe it to Arbaces the Mede, and Belesis the Babylonian as Diodorus Siculus<sup>f29</sup>; and others to Cyaxares the Mede as Herodotus<sup>f30</sup>, and to Nebuchadnezzar the first, or Nabopolassar the Babylonian in a later period; so Tobit<sup>f31</sup> says it was taken by Nebuchadnezzar and Ahasuerus, the same with the Cyaxares of Herodotus; yet all seem to agree that it was taken by the conjunct forces of the Medes and Babylonians; and there are some things similar<sup>f32</sup> in all these accounts, which show that there was but one destruction of Nineveh, and of the Assyrian empire.

**Ver. 10.** *For while [they be] folden together [as] thorns*, etc.] Like them, useless and unprofitable, harmful and pernicious, fit only for burning, and, being bundled together, are prepared for it; and which is not only expressive of the bad qualities of the Ninevites, and of the danger they were in, and what they deserved; but of the certainty of their ruin, no more being able to save themselves from it, than a bundle of thorns from the devouring fire:

*and while they are drunken [as] drunkards*; dead drunk, no more able to help themselves than a drunken man that is fallen; or who were as easily thrown down as a drunken man is with the least touch; though there is no need to have recourse to a figurative sense, since the Ninevites were actually drunk when they were attacked by their enemy, as the historian relates<sup>f33</sup>; that the king of Assyria being elated with his fortune, and thinking himself secure, feasted his army, and gave them large quantities of wine; and while the whole army were indulging themselves, the enemy, having notice of their negligence and drunkenness by deserters, fell upon them unawares in the night, when disordered and unprepared, and made a great slaughter among them, and forced the rest into the city, and in a little time took it:

*they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry*; as easily, and as inevitably and irrecoverably.

**Ver. 11.** *There is [one] come out of thee*, etc.] That is, out of Nineveh, as the Targum explains it; meaning Sennacherib, who had his royal seat and palace there; or Rabshakeh that was sent from hence by him with a railing and blaspheming letter to the king of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This is said to be at the present time of writing this prophecy, though it was after it, because of the certainty of it, as is usual in prophetic language; unless it can be thought that this prophecy was delivered out exactly at the time when Sennacherib had entered Judea, and was before the walls of Jerusalem; but not yet discomfited, as after predicted:

*that imagineth evil against the Lord*; against the people of the Lord, as the Targum; formed a scheme to invade the land of Judea, take the fenced cities thereof, and seize upon Jerusalem the metropolis of the nation, and carry the king, princes, and all the people captive as Shalmaneser his father had carried away the ten tribes:

*a wicked counsellor*; or “a counsellor of Belial”<sup>f34</sup>; who, by Rabshakeh, advised Israel not to regard their king, nor trust in their God but surrender themselves up to him, (<sup><1289></sup>2 Kings 18:29-31).

**Ver. 12.** *Thus saith the Lord, though [they be] quiet, and likewise many,* etc.] The Assyrian army under Sennacherib before Jerusalem, though they were quiet and secure and thought themselves out of all danger; not at all fearing that the besieged would sally out against them they being so numerous, and therefore betook themselves to sleep and rest:

*yet thus shall they be cut down*; or “shorn”<sup>f35</sup>; as the wool is shorn off the back of a sheep with sheers; or grass or corn is mowed with a scythe; or else as the hair of a man’s head and beard are shaved with a razor; which sometimes was done, not only in a way of ignominy and contempt, as David’s servants were served by Hanun, (<sup><1004></sup>2 Samuel 10:4); but as a token of servitude; hence those words of the poet<sup>f36</sup>,

“after thou art a servant, dost thou let thy hair grow?”

upon which it is observed<sup>f37</sup>, that it belongs to freemen to let the hair grow; and so the philosopher says<sup>f38</sup>, to let the hair grow, or to nourish it, is commendable with a Lacedemonian, for it is a sign of liberty; for it is not for him who lets his hair grow to do any servile work; and it was usual with conquerors to shave the conquered, and such as were carried captives<sup>f39</sup>, which some think is referred to in (<sup><1530></sup>Deuteronomy 32:42); and render the latter clause of that verse,

“and there shall be captivity, by reason of the head of nakedness of the enemy;”

that is, there should be captives whose heads should be made bare, or shaved by the enemy the conqueror<sup>f40</sup>; hence the king of Assyria, when a conqueror, is compared to a sharp razor, that should shave the head, and feet, and beard, even all sorts of people, (<sup><2171></sup>Isaiah 7:20); but now he and his army should be shaved themselves; that is, conquered, slain, or taken captives, and become slaves, and treated with contempt; all which may be taken into the sense of this phrase, and serve to illustrate it:

*when he shall pass through*; when the angel should pass through the camp of the Assyrians, then were they cut down by him in great numbers, a hundred and fourscore and five thousand slain at once, (<sup><1295></sup>2 Kings 19:35);

*though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more:* or “any longer”<sup>f41</sup>; though the Lord had afflicted the people of the Jews by the Assyrian king, the rod of his anger, again and again, yet after this he would afflict them no more by him; for otherwise they were afflicted afterwards, yet not by the Assyrians, but by the Babylonians, Syrians, and Romans, Some understand this, as before, of the Ninevites and Assyrians, that should be utterly destroyed at once, and their affliction should not be a second time; (see Na 1:9); so Abarbinel: or, “I will not hear thee any more”<sup>f42</sup>; as he did formerly, when they repented at the preaching of Jonah.

**Ver. 13.** *For now will I break his yoke from off thee,* etc.] The Assyrian yoke from off the Jews, who had been obliged to pay tribute, or send presents to the king of Assyria, from the times of Ahaz; and were in bondage, while shut up and besieged by his army, and the country all around laid under contribution; from all which they were delivered when his army was in that dreadful manner destroyed:

*and will burst thy bonds in sunder;* and set thee entirely free from the bondage of the enemy, and all fear of it; a type of that freedom from the yoke of sin, Satan, and the law, which the people of God have by Jesus Christ.

**Ver. 14.** *And the Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee,* etc.] This is directed to Sennacherib king of Assyria, as the Targum expresses it; and so Jarchi and Kimchi; and signifies the decree of God concerning him, what he had determined to do with him, and how things would be ordered in Providence towards him, agreeably to his design and resolution:

*[that] no more of thy name be sown;* which is not to be understood that he should have no son and heir to succeed him; for Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead, (<sup><12957></sup>2 Kings 19:37); and after him, according to Ptolemy’s canon, Saosduchinus and Chyniladanus but the memory of his name should no be spread in the earth; or the fame of it, with any marks of honour and glory, but of shame and disgrace. So the Targum,

“neither shall be any memory of thy name any more:”

*out of the house of thy gods will I cut of the graven image and the molten image;* called “the house of Nisroch his god”, (<sup><12957></sup>2 Kings 19:37); where he was slain; and some say that after that it ceased to be a place of worship, being polluted with his blood. Josephus<sup>f43</sup> calls it his own temple, where he usually worshipped, for which he had a peculiar regard, and for

his god Nisroch; but who this deity was is not certain. Selden says<sup>f44</sup>, he knew nothing, nor had read anything of him, but what is mentioned in the Scripture. Some of the Jewish writers<sup>f45</sup> take it to be a plank of Noah's ark; and Mr. Basnage<sup>f46</sup> is of opinion that it is Janus represented by Noah's ark, who had two faces, before and behind; a fit emblem of Noah, who saw two worlds, one before, and another after the flood. Some say Dagon the god of the Philistines is meant, which is not likely; (see Gill on "~~2373~~ Isaiah 37:38"); but, be he who he will, there were other idols besides him, both graven and molten, in this temple, as is here expressed; very probably here stood an image of Belus or Pul, the first Assyrian monarch, and who; was deified; and perhaps Adrammelech the god of the Sepharvites was another, since one of Sennacherib's sons bore this name; and it was usual with the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Babylonians, to give the names of their gods to their princes, or insert them in theirs: here also might be the Assyrian Venus, Derceto, Semiramis, and others: fishes also were worshipped by the Assyrians, in honour of Derceto; and doves in remembrance of Semiramis, said to be nourished by one in her infancy, and turned into one at her death; hence those creatures became sacred in Assyria, and were not suffered to be touched and killed, as Philo observed at Askelon; (see Gill on "~~2811~~ Hosea 11:11"); and Lucian<sup>f47</sup> at Hieropolis in Syria; where, he says, of all birds, they think the dove most holy; so that they count it very unlawful to touch them; and if by chance they do, they reckon themselves unclean that whole day; hence you may see them frequently in their houses conversing familiarly with them, generally feeding on the ground, without any fear; and he also says<sup>f48</sup> the Assyrians sacrifice to a dove, and which he must have known, since he himself was an Assyrian, as he tells us; but, whatever these graven and molten images were, it is here predicted they should be utterly demolished. The sense is, that whereas Sennacherib's empire should be destroyed, and his capital taken, the temple where he worshipped would be defaced, and all his gods he gloried of, all his images, both graven and molten, would be cut to pieces, falling into the conqueror's hands, as was usual in such cases; these would not be able to defend him or his, or secure them from the vengeance of God, whom he had blasphemed:

*I will make thy grave, for thou art vile:* the Targum is,

“there will I put thy grave;”

that is, in the house of thy god, as Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it; where he was slain by two of his sons, as before observed; and this judgment came upon him by the will of God, because he was a loose vile creature; because he had vilified the true God, and reproached him, as unable to deliver Hezekiah and his people out of his hands. The Targum paraphrases it,

“because this is easy before me;”

what the Lord could easily do, make his idol temple his grave; or, however, take away his life, and lay his honour in the dust: or it may be rendered, “I will put [upon] thy grave that thou art vile”<sup>f49</sup>; he, who thought to have a superb monument over his grave, and an epitaph inscribed on it to his immortal honour, as kings used to have; this shall be the sepulchral inscription,

“here lies a vile, wicked, and contemptible man;”

so Abarbanel. There was a statue of this king in an Egyptian temple, as Herodotus<sup>f50</sup> relates, according, as many think, with this inscription on it,

“whosoever looks on me, let him be religious;”

though I rather think it was a statue of Sethon the priest of Vulcan, and last king of Egypt. Here ends the first chapter in some Hebrew copies, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions, and in Aben Ezra.

**Ver. 15.** *Behold upon the mountains*, etc.] Of the land of Israel, as the Targum; or those about Jerusalem:

*the feet of him that bringeth good tidings*; see how they come one after another with the news of the havoc and slaughter made in the army of Sennacherib by an angel in one night; of his flight, and of the death of him by the hands of his two sons; and, after that, of the destruction of Nineveh, and of the whole Assyrian empire; all which were good tidings to the Jews, to whom the Assyrians were implacable enemies, and whose power the Jews dreaded; and therefore it must be good news to them to hear of their defeat and ruin, and the messengers that brought it must be welcome to them:

*that publisheth peace*; to the Jewish nation, who might from hence hope for peaceable and prosperous times: like expressions with these are used in (<sup>2517</sup>Isaiah 52:7) on account of the return of the Jews from the Babylonish

captivity; and are applied by the apostle to Gospel times and Gospel preachers, (<sup><6015></sup>Romans 10:15) as these may also, and express the good tidings of victory obtained by Christ over sin, Satan, the world, hell and death; and of salvation wrought out, and peace made by him; it being usual for the prophets abruptly and at once to rise from temporal to spiritual and eternal things, particularly to what concern the Messiah, and the Gospel dispensation; (see Gill on “<sup><2517></sup>Isaiah 52:7”):

*O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts*; of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; which had been interrupted or omitted through the invasion of the land, and the siege of Jerusalem, by the enemy; but now, he being gone and slain, they had full liberty, and were at leisure to attend these solemnities:

*perform thy vows*; which they had made when in distress, when the enemy was in their land, and before their city; promising what they would do, if it pleased God to deliver them out of his hands, and now they were delivered; and therefore it was incumbent on them to make good their promises, and especially to offer up their thanksgivings to God for such a mercy; (see <sup><6014></sup>Psalm 50:14 66:13,14 <sup><2104></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:4,5):

*for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off*; or Belial, the counsellor of Belial, as in (<sup><3011></sup>Nahum 1:11) the king of Assyria; who, though he had passed through their land, had invaded it, and made devastation in it, should do so no more; being dead, cut off in a judicial way, through the just judgment of God, suffering his sons to take away his life while in the midst of his idolatrous worship; and this may reach, not only to him, and his seed after him, being wholly cut off, but to the whole Assyrian empire, who should none of them ever give any further trouble to Judah.